



SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH IDIOMS IN MONSTER, INC MOVIE

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis interpretasi idiom bahasa Inggris dalam film *Monsters, Inc* berdasarkan pendekatan semantik dan pragmasemantik. Permasalahan dalam penelitian ini adalah sulitnya memahami makna idiom secara literal tanpa memperhatikan konteks penggunaan. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dengan teknik dokumentasi, yaitu mengumpulkan data dari transkrip dan subtitle film, pendekatan makna kontekstual dari Leech dan Palmer. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa idiom yang digunakan dalam film ini didominasi oleh idiom murni (pure idioms) yang memiliki makna tidak langsung dan bergantung pada konteks situasi. Fungsi idiom dalam film ini tidak hanya sebagai elemen bahasa, tetapi juga berperan penting dalam mengekspresikan emosi, membangun karakter, dan menyampaikan humor. Berdasarkan temuan tersebut, dapat disimpulkan bahwa pemahaman idiom dalam film dapat ditingkatkan melalui pendekatan kontekstual. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi terhadap pengajaran idiom dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris melalui media film.

Kata kunci: idiom, film animasi, semantik, konteks, *Monsters, Inc*

Abstract

This study aimed to analyze the interpretation of English idioms in the *Monsters, Inc* movie through semantic and pragmasemantic approaches. The research addressed the issue that idiomatic expressions are difficult to understand literally without considering their contextual use. A descriptive qualitative method was employed, using documentation techniques by collecting data from the movie's transcript and subtitles, contextual meaning approaches from Leech and Palmer. The findings showed that the idioms in this film were mostly pure idioms, which convey non-literal meanings highly dependent on situational context. Idioms in the film functioned not only as linguistic elements but also as tools for expressing emotion, building character identity, and delivering humor. It was concluded that idiom comprehension in films can be enhanced through contextual interpretation. This study contributes to English language teaching by promoting the use of animated films as engaging and contextual learning media.

Keywords: idiom, animated film, semantics, context, *Monsters, Inc*





INTRODUCTION

Language is a fundamental means of human communication that allows people to express thoughts, emotions, intentions, and ideas. It functions not only as a system of sounds and symbols but also as a social tool that shapes interactions and builds connections within a community. Through language, humans are able to convey both direct and indirect meanings, enabling deeper interpretation beyond the literal level. As language evolves, so do the ways in which speakers utilize it to reflect cultural norms, values, and shared knowledge. One of the most intriguing features of language is its ability to carry figurative meaning, which often challenges literal interpretation (Moats, 2020).

English, as one of the most widely spoken languages in the world, is rich in such figurative expressions. It is a global language that spans numerous domains—education, media, diplomacy, technology—and serves as a second or foreign language in many countries. For English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, mastering English does not only involve learning grammar and vocabulary, but also understanding the subtleties of meaning conveyed through figurative language, such as idioms, metaphors, and colloquialisms. These elements often pose difficulties because their meanings are not directly deducible from the individual words (Anjarini & Hatmanto, 2022).

In linguistic studies, the field of semantics is dedicated to the exploration of meaning in language. Semantics seeks to explain how words, phrases, and sentences carry meaning, both literally and figuratively. It helps distinguish between different types of meaning, such as lexical, contextual, connotative, and pragmatic meaning. In relation to figurative language, semantic analysis allows researchers to explore how idioms and other expressions deviate from literal interpretations and acquire meaning through usage, convention, and cultural background. Thus, semantics plays a key role in explaining how idioms function in communication (HUO Ying & SONG Yan, 2020).

Semantics, in modern linguistic studies, is defined as the study of meaning in language, encompassing both literal and contextual interpretation. It focuses on how words, phrases, and utterances convey meaning depending on their usage in real communicative events. Recent developments in semantics have moved beyond static dictionary definitions toward a dynamic view of meaning that is constructed in use. In this view, meaning is influenced by discourse context, speaker intention, and social interaction (Boleda, 2020). Semantics plays a central role in understanding how words and expressions convey ideas in the study of meaning. Semantics investigates the relationship between signs and what they refer to in the world, including how meaning is constructed, interpreted, and influenced by context. Within semantics, idioms are a fascinating subject because they challenge the traditional form-meaning correspondence. An idiom such as “kick the bucket” or “spill the beans” cannot be interpreted by analyzing the literal meanings of each word. This is where idioms intersect with pragmatics and require semantic interpretation in relation to context, metaphor, and speaker intention (HUO Ying & SONG Yan, 2020). Lexical semantics focuses on the meaning of words and the relationships among them, such as synonymy, antonymy, and polysemy (Jackendoff, 2022). Distributional semantics posits that the meaning of a word or expression can be inferred from the linguistic environments in which it appears. This approach relies on the analysis of large language corpora to identify semantic patterns and contextual co-occurrences (Westera & Boleda, 2019).

Idioms are fixed expressions whose meanings are often non-literal and culturally bound. They represent a unique linguistic phenomenon where the intended meaning differs





significantly from the sum of the meanings of individual words. For instance, expressions like “spill the beans” or “kick the bucket” do not relate to beans or buckets in a literal sense, but rather convey meanings such as “reveal a secret” or “die.” Understanding idioms requires not only linguistic knowledge but also cultural familiarity and contextual interpretation. As such, idioms can be a rich subject of study in both semantics and pragmatics, especially when analyzed in authentic settings (Abd & Ali, 2021). Idiom transparency and familiarity are enhanced by visual imagery and context, especially in multimodal environments like films (Boers & Webb, 2018).

One of the most effective ways to study idioms in authentic contexts is through films. Films provide naturally occurring dialogue, emotional tone, and visual cues that contribute to the interpretation of idiomatic expressions. In particular, animated films often contain humorous, expressive, and emotionally rich dialogue that integrates idioms as part of everyday speech. *Monsters, Inc.*, a popular animated film produced by Pixar Animation Studios, offers various instances of idiomatic language used in conversations between characters. This study aims to identify and semantically interpret the idioms found in *Monsters, Inc.*, focusing on how these expressions function within context and contribute to the narrative, emotional expression, and character development.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. The qualitative approach was chosen because this research aims to understand and interpret the meaning of idioms in the movie *Monsters, Inc.* based on the natural context of language use. Qualitative research emphasizes on the process of meaning and interpretation of data in its context, not just on numerical or statistical data. As explained by (Zaini et al., 2023), a qualitative approach is used to understand phenomena in depth through data collection in the form of words and actions, and inductive data analysis. In this context, data in the form of dialogue excerpts from films containing idioms are analyzed contextually to determine the idiomatic meaning contained therein.

The method used is descriptive method because the main purpose of this research is to describe linguistic phenomena systematically, factually, and accurately. This method is in accordance with (Sugiyono, 2019) opinion which states that the descriptive method aims to describe a situation or phenomenon as it is. Through this method, researchers not only identify the idioms that appear, but also explain the form, type, and meaning of idioms based on the communication situation in the movie. Therefore, the qualitative approach and descriptive method are the right choice for analyzing idioms because it allows researchers to explore the contextual meaning and function of idioms in interactions between character.

The data collection technique in this study was carried out through the documentation method, namely by examining written or recorded sources that contain information relevant to the research focus. According to (Sugiyono, 2019), documentation is a data collection technique used to obtain written data, images, or monumental works of a person or object under study. In the context of this research, documentation was conducted on the film *Monsters, Inc.*, especially on the dialog parts containing English idioms. The steps of data collection began with watching the movie thoroughly to understand the context of communication and interaction between characters. Next, the researcher downloaded or took the official subtitles from the movie to be used as transcription material.

The transcription process was done manually by matching the dialog in the film with the available subtitle text. The researcher then selected the parts of the dialog that contained



idioms, recorded them systematically, and ensured the correspondence between the text and the visual context in the movie scenes. Each idiom found was classified into an initial list of idiom data for further analysis. This technique allows researchers to capture idioms as a whole, both in terms of lexical form and situational context in the movie. The use of this documentation technique is very relevant in semantic and pragmasemantic studies because it allows researchers to observe linguistic phenomena in the original and natural context, as recommended by (Ugwu, Chinyere, N; Eze Val, 2017) that in qualitative research, context is an important element that cannot be ignored in the process of data collection and analysis.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Data Findings / Data Tabulation

	Idioms	Dialogue Snippets	Types of Idioms	Meaning of Idioms	Transparency of Meaning	Conceptual Metaphors
1.	Breaking a sweat	I'm not breaking a sweat	Pure idiom	<i>Tidak mengalami kesulitan</i>	Opaque	Effort is physical exertion
2.	The camera loves me	The camera loves me	Pure idiom	<i>Terlihat bagus di kamera</i>	Opaque	Affection is attraction
3.	The winds of change	It's the winds of change	Pure idiom	<i>Masa perubahan</i>	Semi-transparent	Change is wind
4.	In the bag	Records on the bag	Pure idiom	<i>Sudah pasti berhasil</i>	Opaque	Success is possession
5.	Out of our hair	She's out of our hair	Pure idiom	<i>Tidak mengganggu lagi</i>	Opaque	Burden is something physical
6.	Busy bee	Somebody's certainly been a busy bee	Pure idiom	<i>Sangat sibuk/aktif</i>	Semi-transparent	Human is animal
7.	The angry mob	Not to mention the angry mob that'll come after us when there's no power	Pure idiom	<i>Kerumunan yang marah</i>	Semi-transparent	Group is force/threat
8.	Take a load off	Come on, take a load off, buddy	Pure idiom	<i>Istirahat sejenak</i>	Transparent	Stress is a physical load
9.	Put words in my mouth	Don't put words in my mouth, Mike!	Pure idiom	<i>Menyatakan sesuatu yang tak dikatakan</i>	Opaque	Speaking is object insertion
10.	A piece of cake	Relax, it'll be a piece of cake!	Pure idiom	<i>Sangat mudah</i>	Opaque	Ease is food/sweetness



11	In hot water	We're gonna be in hot water when the boss finds out!	Pure idiom	<i>Dalam masalah besar</i>	Opaque	Trouble is heat
12	A close one	No, thanks guys, that was a close one	Semi idiom	<i>Hampir celaka/sulit</i>	Transparent	Risk is distance
13	Take a break	Okay people, take a break	Semi idiom	<i>Istirahat sejenak</i>	Transparent	Work is a burden
14	Shut down	We gotta shut down for a half hour	Semi idiom	<i>Berhenti sementara</i>	Transparent	Operation is a machine
15	What a day	Oh, what a day	Literal idiom	<i>Hari yang melelahkan/menantang</i>	Transparent	—
16	Going through a rough time	We're just going through a rough time	Semi idiom	<i>Mengalami masa sulit</i>	Semi-transparent	Life is a journey
17	Going under	Keep it from going under	Semi idiom	<i>Bangkrut/gagal</i>	Opaque	Failure is sinking
18	Struck with an idea	Watnoose is suddenly struck with an idea	Semi idiom	<i>Mendapat ide mendadak</i>	Semi-transparent	Ideas are physical impacts
19	What it takes	Show them what it takes to be a top scarer	Semi idiom	<i>Apa yang dibutuhkan untuk berhasil</i>	Opaque	Success is a combination of qualities
20	On a roll	You were on a roll, my man!	Pure idiom	<i>Sedang dalam momentum sukses</i>	Opaque	Success is momentum
21	On your agenda	What's on your agenda?	Literal idiom	<i>Apa rencana atau kegiatan</i>	Transparent	Plans are lists
22	More to life than	There's more to life than scaring	Semi idiom	<i>Hidup tak hanya soal menakut-nakuti</i>	Transparent	Life is a container of purpose
23	Stink it up	Yup, stink it up	Pure idiom	<i>Lakukan seburuk mungkin</i>	Opaque	Failure is a bad smell

This section presents a semantic analysis of 23 idioms found in the movie Monsters, Inc, focusing on their types, levels of transparency, and conceptual metaphors. This analysis aims to explain how idioms are interpreted in context and how figurative meanings are constructed, especially from the perspective of English language learners.

1. Classification of Idioms





Based on the data collected from the movie dialogs, idioms are classified into three types: pure idioms, semi-idioms, and literal idioms. Pure idioms, such as "piece of cake" and "sweating", have vague meanings and cannot be taken literally. Semi-idioms, such as "having a hard time", contain both literal and figurative meanings. Literal idioms, such as "what a day" and "on your agenda", retain their literal interpretation and are easily understood even by novice learners.

2. Semantic Transparency

Semantic transparency refers to the extent to which the figurative meaning of an idiom can be deduced from its literal components. Idioms such as "rest" or "switch off" are considered transparent because their literal meaning corresponds to their intended figurative meaning. On the other hand, idioms such as "sweating" or "in hot water" are obscure and require contextual or cultural understanding to be interpreted correctly. The analysis reveals that most of the idioms in *Monsters, Inc* are pure idioms and thus pose interpretive challenges for EFL learners unless they are supported by contextual cues such as tone, visuals, or body language.

3. Conceptual Metaphors

Many of the idioms identified in the movie are motivated by conceptual metaphors, a cognitive framework proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), in which abstract concepts are understood through more concrete experiences. For example:

"In the hot water" → PROBLEM IS HOT

"Take a load off" → STRESS IS PHYSICAL WEIGHT

"Busy bees" → HUMANS ARE ANIMALS

"Getting through the tough times" → LIFE IS A JOURNEY

These metaphors allow students to form connections between idiomatic meanings and life experiences, facilitating comprehension even when the idioms are unfamiliar. This supports (Chen & Lai, 2013) finding that metaphor-based teaching helps students systematize idioms meaningfully.

4. Contextual Support in Interpretation

Since *Monsters, Inc* is an animated movie, many idioms are visually and emotionally reinforced. For example, in the scene where Mike says "Relax, it's going to be really easy", his confident tone and relaxed body language help the audience understand that the task at hand is perceived as easy. These multimodal cues enhance the ability to interpret idioms, especially for learners who have limited understanding of idiomatic English.

C. Discussion

1. Context Analysis of Idiom Usage in *Monsters, Inc* Movie

Pure idiom is a type of idiom whose meaning cannot be guessed from the literal meaning of the words. In pure idioms, the relationship between the constituent words and their idiomatic meaning is arbitrary, so the understanding of these idioms is highly dependent on the context of use, the speaker's expression, voice intonation, and visual or situational clues. In the movie *Monsters, Inc*, pure idioms are used quite frequently, and the context analysis shows how the multimodality in the movie (audio, visual, and gestures) helps clarify the idiomatic meaning for the audience, especially EFL learners.

One of the pure idioms that appears is "a piece of cake", which means "very easy." In the scene where Mike assures Sulley that their task will be easy, the relaxed facial expression and confident tone of voice reinforce the idiom's meaning. Without that context, the idiom could be misinterpreted literally as "a



piece of cake.” Another example is the idiom “breaking a sweat” in the sentence “I’m not breaking a sweat”, which literally means “not breaking a sweat,” but idiomatically means “not having a hard time.” The scene shows Mike performing the task effortlessly without pressure, which emphasizes that he is not feeling burdened.

Another example is “in hot water”, which means “in big trouble.” This idiom is used when characters realize that their actions will have serious consequences from superiors. The context of the scene shows panic and high emotional stress, so the audience can infer that the idiom does not relate to literal hot water, but rather serious difficulty or conflict. Likewise, the idiom “out of our hair” means “not bothering anymore.” In the scene, the character is relieved that someone troublesome is gone. The relaxed mood and relieved expression help to convey that the burden or annoyance is gone, even if the literal meaning is confusing if taken literally.

Other characters in the movie also use idioms such as “on a roll”, which idiomatically means being on a positive roll or momentum. It is used when a character manages to do something consecutively with success, and is said in an excited tone. This suggests that the success is likened to a “roll” that keeps moving. Without the context of successive successes, this idiom would be difficult for language learners to understand.

Overall, the use of pure idioms in *Monsters, Inc* shows that the understanding of their meaning is highly dependent on narrative context and emotional markers. Idioms like this have a low level of semantic transparency, so the visual context, tone of voice, and interactions between characters become very important to construct idiomatic meaning. For EFL learners, understanding of pure idioms can be enhanced by utilizing authentic media such as films that provide multimodal support in the interpretation process.

A semi-idiom is an expression whose meaning can still be understood in a literal sense, but still has an idiomatic meaning that depends on the context of use. Such semi-idioms are generally easier for English learners to understand because they have familiar lexical elements, but still require adjustments in meaning based on the communication situation (Nikulina, 2020).

One example of a semi-idiom that appears in the movie is “a close one”, which is uttered after a character has survived a dangerous situation. With a relieved facial expression and a tone of voice that reflects gratitude, the visual context helps the audience understand that the phrase means “something bad almost happened.” Similarly, in the expression “take a break”, which is conveyed to a group of workers to pause, the relaxed body gesture and the change in atmosphere from busy to calm emphasize the idiomatic meaning as an invitation to take a break, even though “break” also literally means rest.

Other idioms such as “struck with an idea” show that the character gets an idea suddenly. Although “struck” literally means hit, the use of this idiom is understood through a facial expression that shows enlightenment. This visual context helps learners understand that ideas can “come” like a bump or a surprise. In the idiom “what it takes”, the competitive context is very important. The phrase appears in motivational sentences, encouraging characters to demonstrate the qualities needed



to be successful. The idiomatic meaning arises from use in the context of drive and ambition.

Finally, the phrase “more to life than...” appears in a reflective moment, when the character begins to realize that life is not just about a certain job or task. With a calm tone and gentle expression, the audience understands that this phrase conveys the value of life beyond the routine. The literal meaning of “more than life” translates into the philosophical meaning of “life has a deeper meaning.”

Overall, the idioms classified as semi-idioms in this movie proved to be highly dependent on emotional and visual contexts to be conveyed effectively. For EFL learners, such semi-idioms provide a good learning opportunity as the meaning is not completely hidden, but still requires an understanding of the context of the interaction and the conversational situation. Movies as a multimodal medium provide visual and tonal clues that reinforce the interpretation of idioms, thus enriching the experience of learning idioms in an authentic context.

Literal idioms are a type of idiom that has a meaning that is still close or identical to the literal meaning of the words. Although this idiom is a fixed form of expression, its meaning is relatively easy to understand because it does not deviate far from the lexical meaning of its constituents. In the context of the movie *Monsters, Inc*, the use of literal idioms shows that not all idiomatic expressions are ambiguous or difficult to understand. For English language learners, this type of idiom is easier to recognize and understand because it is not too different in structure or meaning from everyday usage (Anjarini & Hatmanto, 2022).

One example of a literal idiom in a movie is “what a day”, which is uttered by a character in a situation of exhaustion after facing an intense event. Literally, the phrase means “what a day,” but idiomatically it is used to express that the day was particularly hard or challenging. The context of the scene shows the character taking a deep breath, bowing his head, and speaking in a tired tone—all of these elements help to emphasize the idiom's meaning as an expression of fatigue or boredom with the events that have just occurred.

Another idiom that includes literals is “on your agenda”, which is used in conversation to ask about plans or scheduled activities. In the movie, this idiom is spoken by a character who is arranging business or asking about other activities to be done. Since the word “agenda” is generally recognized as a list of activities, this idiom does not require a complex figurative interpretation. The visual context of the character looking at a note or list also reinforces the literal understanding of the idiom. Therefore, this idiom is easily understood by both native speakers and foreign learners.

Both idioms show that in some cases, idioms can still convey idiomatic meaning without abandoning their literal meaning. Unlike pure idioms which require the help of context to understand their meaning, literal idioms can be understood only by understanding the meaning of individual words. This makes this type of idiom very useful in the language learning process as it can serve as an initial bridge for students to recognize idioms before moving on to more complex idioms.

Thus, literal idioms in *Monsters, Inc* function as a means of expression that is easily captured by the audience because it does not undergo much shift in meaning. The visualization in the film supports the explicit conveyance of meaning, and the



narrative context helps to reinforce the message conveyed through the idiom. The literal use of idioms also reflects how colloquial language in movies can incorporate simple yet communicatively effective forms of expression.

2. Pragmasemantic interpretation of the idiom's function (based on the situation and the speaker's intent)

In pragmasegmentic studies, idioms are not only understood from their lexical meaning or semantic structure, but also from their communicative function in certain speech situations. Idioms are part of a linguistic strategy to convey certain intentions indirectly, expressively, and often contain social or emotional values. (Zhang & Yuan, 2017) Therefore, in the context of Monsters, Inc, idioms are used by the characters not only to convey messages, but also to express emotions, regulate social relations, avoid overly direct expressions, and strengthen the sense of humor and familiarity.

For example, the idiom "put words in my mouth" is used by a character when he feels misunderstood or accused of saying something he never said. The function of this idiom pragmasegmentically is as a self-defense and clarification strategy in interpersonal interactions. By uttering the idiom, the speaker rejects the accusation in a subtle, yet firm manner. This shows the expressive function (expressing discomfort) as well as directive (correcting the speech partner). Another example is the idiom "take a load off", which is used to invite someone to take a break. The function of this idiom is to establish an atmosphere of relaxation and familiarity, as well as to show the speaker's concern for the physical or emotional condition of the interlocutor.

The idiom "we're in hot water", in the context where the characters realize that they are about to face a serious problem, has the function of a warning marker and situational solidarity. By using the idiom, the speaker shows that he and the interlocutor are in one difficult situation, thus creating a sense of togetherness in the face of consequences. The function of this idiom is interactional and cooperative, as it aims to build collective awareness of danger or pressure. Likewise, the idiom "on a roll", uttered in a winning streak situation, functions as a motivational strategy and provides positive reinforcement, while creating an atmosphere of enthusiasm.

In many cases, idioms are also used to avoid direct expression of sensitive or emotional situations. For example, "going through a rough time" is more subtle than saying explicitly that someone is having severe problems or depression. In this case, idioms function as a politeness strategy that allows speakers to get their point across in a more empathetic and polite way. In addition, idioms such as "a piece of cake" or "what a day" are used to reduce communication tension, add an element of humor, or as a marker of evaluation of recently experienced events.

Overall, the functions of idioms in the movie Monsters, Inc pragmasegmentically vary greatly, ranging from expressive, directive, interactional, to aesthetic functions. The speech situation, the relationship between characters, and the speaker's intention play an important role in the selection of idioms used. Through idioms, speakers not only convey messages implicitly, but also shape attitudes, build social relations, and harmonize meaning with emotional and social contexts. Understanding the function of idioms in this context is important,



especially for EFL learners, so that they can understand not only the semantic meaning of idioms, but also the communicative purposes and effects that speakers want to achieve.

3. Interpretation of Idioms semantically (meaning in context)

Semantic interpretation of idioms focuses on how the meaning of idioms is understood based on the context of their use in speech. In semantic studies, meaning is not only determined by dictionary definitions, but also by the context of the situation, the relationship between characters, and the pragmatic functions that accompany language use. Idioms, as part of figurative expressions, often hold meanings that cannot be directly captured from the constituent words. Therefore, the semantic approach in this study is used to interpret idioms by considering the level of transparency of meaning, idiomatic structure, and underlying conceptual metaphor.

For example, the idiom “in hot water”, if interpreted literally, means being in hot water. But in the context of the movie *Monsters, Inc*, this idiom is used to suggest that the characters will be in big trouble when their actions are discovered by their superiors. By understanding the context of the conversation, which is full of worries and tense situations, the meaning of this idiom can be interpreted as a warning against serious consequences. This suggests that the idiom contains the conceptual metaphor “trouble is heat”, where a problematic situation is equated with a hot or uncomfortable condition.

Other idioms such as “take a load off” can literally be understood as “put a load off,” but semantically it means “take a break” or “release the pressure.” In the scene where the character sits down and sighs with relief, the visual and narrative context reinforces this meaning. This shows that the interpretation of the idiom involves an understanding of everyday human experience expressed in the form of a metaphor: stress is a physical load. Similarly, the idiom “going through a rough time” implies that life is a journey, and a rough time is described as a rough path. The emotional context and interactions between characters help lead the audience to understand the meaning of idioms naturally.

In addition, idioms like “put words in my mouth” show how the meaning of an idiom cannot be taken from its lexical meaning. In the context of the movie, this idiom is used when a character feels accused of saying something he never said. The semantic meaning that emerges comes from the conflict situation and the character's need to defend himself. Therefore, this idiom functions in the context of meaning as assertive correction, which is the act of correcting the interlocutor's perception through idiomatic expressions.

Semantic interpretation of idioms is also influenced by the level of transparency of the idiom. Idioms like “what a day” or “on your agenda” tend to be easier to understand because their literal meaning is not far from the idiomatic meaning. On the other hand, idioms such as “on a roll” or “breaking a sweat” have more obscure meanings and require a strong narrative context to be interpreted correctly. This is where it is important to understand that idiom meanings are not fixed entities, but rather meanings that are shaped in and by context.

Thus, the semantic interpretation of idioms in *Monsters, Inc* shows how idioms contain rich and varied meanings depending on the communication situation. Film as a medium that combines dialog, facial expressions, body movements, and visual





situations provides a strong context for interpreting the meaning of idioms more accurately. This provides more value for language learners to understand idioms not only as language expressions, but also as representations of real experiences, emotions and social relationships.

4. Analyze the function of idioms in building expression, character, and narrative

Idioms in the movie *Monsters, Inc* not only serve as a means of communication, but also as a tool to build the emotional expression of the characters. Many idioms are used to convey feelings such as joy, anger, fear, or relief in an indirect yet powerful way. For example, when a character says “that was a close one”, the facial expression and tone of voice show a sense of relief after surviving the danger. These idioms not only convey information about the events experienced, but also reinforce the emotional atmosphere in the scene, making it more vivid and realistic for the audience.

Apart from building expression, idioms are also used to strengthen characterization. The character Mike, for example, often uses idioms such as “a piece of cake”, “the camera loves me”, or “on a roll”, which portrays him as confident, humorous, and expressive. The choice of light and stylish idioms reflects Mike's optimistic and easy-going personality, in contrast to Sulley who is more calm and cautious. Idioms are part of the linguistic characteristics that show each character's speaking style, helping the audience to recognize and understand the psychological dynamics and relationships between characters.

In the context of narrative, idioms serve as storytelling devices that help bridge transitions between scenes or explain conflicts without having to use direct narration. For example, the idiom “we're in hot water” effectively signals that conflict is brewing and characters are under pressure. This speeds up the delivery of narrative information in a way that is natural and appropriate to the conversational style. In addition, idioms such as “going through a rough time” mark the emotional changes of the characters, as well as eliciting sympathy from the audience as it gives an idea that the characters are facing personal challenges.

Finally, idioms in the film also serve to reinforce the authenticity of the dialog, so that the conversations feel natural and reflect the everyday language use of native speakers. This is very important in the context of language learning, as it provides concrete examples of how idioms are used in real situations involving emotions, interactions and conflicts. By integrating idioms in character expressions, character building, and story development, *Monsters, Inc* shows that idioms are not only an element of language style, but also an important instrument in building a complete and communicative cinematic experience.

5. The relevance of idioms to cultural understanding and English language learning

Idioms are an important part of language that is closely related to the culture, social values, and worldview of the speaking community. Therefore, studying idioms involves not only linguistic aspects, but also an understanding of the cultural background that shapes the idiomatic meaning. In the movie *Monsters, Inc*, the use of idioms reflects how native English speakers express certain ideas, emotions or situations through metaphorical and indirect language. For example, idioms such as “in hot water”, “busy bee”, or “on a roll” arise from distinctive



cultural experiences and associations, so to understand them properly, learners need to understand the cultural logic and underlying concepts.

From an English language learning point of view, idioms are often a challenge for EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners as they can rarely be translated literally (Abdelwahab & Rahmtallah, 2024). However, through media such as the animated movie *Monsters, Inc.*, idioms are presented in a visual and emotional context that helps clarify their meaning and usage. Viewers can see how facial expressions, tone of voice, and conversational situations support the understanding of the idiom. This allows learners to understand the idioms more intuitively and naturally, as they can relate the words to the authentic context of use.

The use of idioms in movies also helps learners develop pragmatic awareness, which is the ability to use and interpret language according to the social situation and the relationship between speakers. For example, idioms used to express feelings, convey warnings, or build familiarity, teach learners about the norms of communication in English-speaking cultures. Thus, understanding idioms not only improves linguistic competence, but also intercultural competence, which is crucial in cross-cultural communication.

Overall, idioms have a high relevance in English language teaching as they combine linguistic, cultural and pragmatic aspects. A movie like *Monsters, Inc.* is an effective learning resource because it presents idioms in a context that is fun, meaningful, and easily understood by learners. The use of movies as idiom learning media is also in line with the communicative and contextual approach in language teaching, which emphasizes the importance of exposure to language use in real situations. Therefore, idioms not only enrich learners' vocabulary, but also broaden their understanding of how to think and communicate in the culture of native English speakers.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that idioms in *Monsters, Inc.* serve not only as figurative expressions but also as essential tools for conveying emotions, building character identity, and advancing the narrative. Most idioms found are pure idioms with low semantic transparency, requiring contextual understanding. Their meanings are shaped by narrative situations, speaker intentions, and conceptual metaphors. For English learners, films like *Monsters, Inc.* offer rich, authentic contexts that support idiom comprehension and enhance both linguistic and cultural understanding. The use of idioms in *Monsters, Inc.* shows how language, culture, and communication interact dynamically. Idioms reflect cultural values and thinking patterns of English-speaking communities, thus becoming an important aspect in understanding native-level discourse. For language learners, idioms in movies offer authentic examples of how figurative language is used naturally, contextually, and expressively. Films serve as effective media for learning idioms as they combine visual cues, character expressions, and social interaction that support interpretation. In summary, idioms in *Monsters, Inc.* are not only linguistic features, but also narrative devices that enhance the emotional, cultural, and communicative dimensions of the film. The findings of this study highlight the pedagogical value of idioms and suggest the importance of integrating authentic audiovisual materials in English language learning to improve learners' comprehension of idiomatic and culturally embedded expressions.





SUGGESTION

Integrate Visual Media in Learning Teachers should consider using animated films like Monsters, Inc in English lessons to help students understand idiomatic expressions through visual and contextual clues. Focus on Contextual Teaching of Idioms Educators should not only explain idioms literally but also teach them through situational examples, body language, and emotional tone to enhance pragmatic understanding. Introduce Conceptual Metaphor Early Language instructors can introduce metaphor-based interpretation to help learners grasp abstract idiomatic meanings through familiar real-life experiences. Develop Idiom-Based Learning Modules Future research or teaching practice may include creating structured lesson plans or worksheets based on idioms found in movies to make learning more engaging. Expand Research on Other Films or Media Further studies are encouraged to analyze idioms in different genres or compare idiom usage across various films to enrich the database for idiomatic learning.

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Semantic Analysis Of English Idioms In Monster, Inc Movie..... 505-518
Syifa Nurhikmah Lestari, Nova Agus Mulia, Ririn Yusrini Mudawamah, Tatu Siti Rohbiah

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