Abstract

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Conceptual Metaphor in the Narrative and Visual Structures of Suzanne Collins' The Hunger Games

Abstract—This research paper is divided into two parts. It first discusses how metaphorical constructions of meaning, conceptual/semiotic metaphors, take place across linguistic and visual narrative structures. It aims at showing how conceptual/semiotic metaphors depicted in both the novel and movie of Suzanne Collins' The Hunger Games (2008) have different meanings and multiple interpretations. The researchers adopt Theo van Leeuwen’s theory in Introducing Social Semiotics (2005) that the “semiotic resources” as represented by language, gestures and images in addition to colour, dress and everyday objects as modes of communication that have both a significant message and a cultural value to convey. Hence the present study attempts to strike a comparison between the written text and the visual version of The Hunger Games to reflect how meaning is created through conceptual/semiotic metaphor in both modes of representation through the multiple semiotic interactions that help both readers and viewers analyze the scene Selected for discussion. In addition, complementing cognitive theories that attribute the understanding of visual metaphors to situational and cultural contexts, this study adopts a social semiotic perspective to investigate how visual images themselves are constructed to cue conceptual metaphors. The visual realization of metaphors in representational, interactive and compositional meaning structures is elucidated based on Gunther Kress and van Leeuwen's Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design (2006). Moreover, the researchers focus on the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) that argues that metaphor is a conceptual phenomenon realized in both language and other communication modes, such as visual image, gesture and architecture. The researchers also refer to George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's Metaphors We Live By (1980) for the definition of conceptual metaphors. In the second part, the reaping scene, which is one of the most significant scenes in both the novel and the movie, is analyzed giving full details of how the language, description and images in the written text are represented in the movie language, gestures, symbols, colours, locations and actors' appearance. The hidden message and the meaning created by both modes of representation is fully investigated to assimilate the significance of the cultural values the story aims at manifesting in a society that has become so harsh towards its inhabitants making life and death a matter of an entertainment show. Key Words: Cinematography, Conceptual metaphor, Semiotic metaphor, Social semiotics, Visual/pictorial metaphor