

UNLOCKING THE POWER OF WORDS: EXPLORING FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE IN ‘DEAD POETS SOCIETY’

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Abstract:

This study investigates the use of figurative language in the film Dead Poets Society, focusing on how figures of speech function as systematic resources for meaning-making in cinematic dialogue. Drawing on cognitive linguistics and stylistic analysis, the paper examines metaphors, similes, irony, and proverbs as interrelated components of a coherent figurative language system. The analysis is based on a qualitative examination of selected dialogue excerpts, which are presented as numbered data and interpreted through close textual analysis.

The findings demonstrate that figurative language in the film is not merely decorative but plays a central role in structuring abstract concepts such as mortality, time, agency, conformity, and identity. Metaphor emerges as the conceptual foundation of this system, while similes make metaphorical mappings explicit, irony encodes evaluative stance, and proverbs and idiomatic expressions conventionalise figurative meaning. Together, these figures of speech contribute to the film’s philosophical coherence and guide audience interpretation without overt exposition.

By treating figurative language as a structured and functional system rather than as isolated devices, the study contributes to linguistic approaches to film discourse and supports the view that cinematic dialogue constitutes a productive site for figurative language analysis. The paper also acknowledges the interpretive, corpus-based, and cultural limitations of the study, pointing to directions for future research in cross-textual, cross-linguistic, and reception-oriented investigations.

Keywords: *Figurative language; Metaphor; Cognitive linguistics; Stylistic analysis; Dead Poets Society.*