

A SEMANTIC STUDY OF DENOTATIVE AND CONNOTATIVE MEANINGS IN THE STORY “THE POWER OF A BANDAGE”

(ANALISIS MAKNA DENOTATIF DAN KONOTATIF DALAM CERITA

“THE POWER OF A BANDAGE”)

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the denotative and connotative meanings found in the children's story The Power of a Bandage by The Bronchi Pair using Charles W. Kreidler's semantic theory. The story provides health education through narrative, making it a suitable object for semantic analysis in children's literature. Using a qualitative descriptive method, the research reveals how linguistic expressions in the story carry both literal (denotative) and emotional or cultural (connotative) meanings. The findings show that several lexical items, such as “bandage”, “wound”, “home”, and “infection”, convey deeper symbolic meanings beyond their literal use. The study highlights how children's literature can effectively combine language and life lessons through semantic depth.

Keywords: semantics, denotation, connotation, children's literature, lexical meaning.

ABSTAK

Penelitian ini menganalisis makna conotative dan denotative yang ditemukan dalam cerita anak-anak The Power of a Bandage oleh The Bronchi Pair dengan menggunakan teori semantics Charles.W. Kreidler. Cerita ini menyampaikan edukasi kesehatan melalui narasi, menjadikannya objek yang cocok untuk analisis semantik dalam sastra anak. Dengan metode deskriptif kualitatif, penelitian ini mengungkap bagaimana ungkapan-ungkapan dalam cerita membawa makna literal (denotatif) dan juga emosional atau budaya (konotatif). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa beberapa kata seperti “bandage”, “wound”, “home”, dan “infection” memiliki makna simbolis yang lebih dalam dari makna literalnya. Studi ini menyoroti bagaimana sastra anak dapat menggabungkan bahasa dan nilai-nilai kehidupan melalui kedalaman semantic.

Kata kunci: semantik, denotasi, konotasi, sastra anak, makna leksikal

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INTRODUCTION

Children's literature is not only a medium of entertainment but also an effective tool for education, especially regarding moral and health values. One such example is *The Power of a Bandage*, a short story written by The Bronchi Pair. The narrative follows a boy named Leo who learns about hygiene and wound care. In analyzing this story, semantics plays a crucial role in uncovering how the language used conveys not only direct meanings but also emotional and symbolic messages.

According to Charles W. Kreidler (2014), meaning in language is divided into denotative (literal/referential) and connotative (emotional/cultural) meanings. Understanding both helps reveal how simple words can carry profound messages, particularly in children's stories which aim to teach life lessons in a gentle and engaging way.

Children's literature, particularly stories with health themes, provides a unique opportunity to educate while entertaining. In an age where children's understanding of hygiene, safety, and emotional resilience is vital, stories like *The Power of a Bandage* function as educational tools. Analyzing this story through a semantic lens enables readers to recognize how simple expressions can convey both literal and symbolic meaning. Moreover, semantic analysis, especially in early-age educational texts, supports the development of early literacy and emotional intelligence.

This research thus aims to contribute to the study of semantics in applied linguistics, especially regarding the subtle yet impactful ways language carries layered meaning in children's literature.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using a descriptive method. Its objective is to systematically, factually, and accurately describe the denotative and connotative meanings found in the children's story *The Power of a Bandage* by The Bronchi Pair. The research is grounded in the semantic theory of Charles W. Kreidler (2014) as the primary framework for analyzing meaning.

The data source of this research is a children's story obtained from the Free Kids Books website, which provides simple narratives rich in educational value, particularly in aspects of health and empathy.

The research steps are conducted as follows:

1. Reading the text thoroughly to gain an understanding of the story's context.
2. Identifying phrases or keywords that potentially carry more than one meaning (ambiguity).
3. Classifying those phrases into two categories of meaning: denotative meaning (literal meaning) and connotative meaning (symbolic, emotional, or cultural meaning).
4. Analyzing each phrase by considering the context of the story, narrative situation, and its impact on child readers.
5. Recording the analysis results in a coding table labeled D1–D10 to aid in data categorization.

This method was chosen for its ability to uncover hidden meanings within the linguistic structure used in children's literary texts. In semantic research, it is essential to consider both social and emotional contexts, as meaning does not reside solely in words, but also in their use within specific communicative situations.

Through this approach, the researcher aims to demonstrate how simple language in children's texts carries deep symbolic power and has great potential to educate young readers about important life values.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study analyzed ten phrases from the children’s story The Power of a Bandage using Charles W. Kreidler’s semantic framework. The analysis revealed that each selected phrase contains both denotative (literal) and connotative (emotional or symbolic) meanings. These dual meanings enrich the text and enhance its effectiveness in conveying moral and educational messages to young readers.

The table below summarizes the denotative and connotative meanings identified in the selected expressions:

Data Code	Phrase	Ambiguity Type	Denotative Meaning	Connotative Meaning
D1	We can now put on a bandage	Polysemy	A cloth/plaster used to cover wounds	Symbol of care and safety
D2	The power of a bandage is amazing	Polysemy	Strength or healing ability	Emotional healing and protection
D3	I fell down and scraped my wound	Polysemy	Physical injury	Vulnerability, weakness
D4	He looked at the bruise	Homonymy	Skin discoloration from injury	Imperfection or pain
D5	I’m going to play soccer	Homonymy	A sport	Joy, togetherness
D6	Clean your wound carefully	Polysemy	To remove dirt	Purity, safety, moral cleansing
D7	This will help prevent infection	Polysemy	To provide assistance	Emotional support, protection
D8	Leo can continue playing	Polysemy	Resume clarity	Resilience, moving forward
D9	He feels uncomfortable	Polysemy	Physical discomfort	Emotional unease or anxiety
D10	Let’s go back home	Polysemy	Direction to a physical place	Return to comfort, healing space

This analysis demonstrates that seemingly simple and literal words in a children’s story may carry deeper symbolic meanings when viewed through a semantic lens. For instance, the word “bandage” (D1, D2) not only refers to a medical item but also evokes feelings of being cared for or protected, typically by

a parent or caregiver. This aligns with Kreidler's (2014) explanation that connotative meaning involves emotional, cultural, or social associations beyond literal interpretation.

Likewise, the phrase "Let's go back home" (D10), while denoting a physical return to a house, carries the connotation of emotional safety, healing, and belonging. Children reading this phrase are subtly invited to associate "home" not only with a place but with feelings of warmth, acceptance, and recovery.

This layered use of language is particularly valuable in educational contexts. It shows how children's literature can support language learning while also fostering emotional intelligence. Teachers and parents can use such texts to help children identify both the literal and symbolic messages, thus strengthening their cognitive and affective development.

Furthermore, this study highlights the role of lexical ambiguity, particularly polysemy and homonymy, in enriching the meaning of texts. Polysemous phrases like "bandage" or "wound" encourage readers to interpret beyond the surface level, while homonymous phrases like "bruise" and "play" reveal how one word can simultaneously evoke different mental images depending on the context.

Ultimately, this analysis proves that *The Power of a Bandage* is more than a story about hygiene; it is a narrative tool that introduces children to resilience, empathy, and emotional healing through subtle language use. From a semantic perspective, the story effectively combines education and emotion, making it a powerful example of how children's literature can influence both language acquisition and character development.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that meaning in children's stories is not only literal (denotative), but also rich in emotional and symbolic content (connotative). Through semantic analysis based on Charles W. Kreidler's theory, it was found that various phrases in *The Power of a Bandage* carry dual meanings that play a crucial role in conveying moral and educational messages.

Denotatively, words such as "bandage," "wound," "infection," and "home" refer to literal meanings easily understood by children, such as physical injuries or a place to live. However, connotatively, these words convey deeper meanings such as emotional protection, a sense of security, psychological healing, and social support from the surrounding environment. This indicates that the language used in children's stories serves a dual function: as a tool for communication and as a medium for conveying life values.

The application of the descriptive qualitative method in this research helps illustrate how implied meanings operate within a simple narrative. By understanding this duality of meaning, teachers, parents, and educators can utilize children's literature as a means to build emotional and moral awareness in children from an early age. Furthermore, the findings of this study emphasize the importance of a semantic approach in analyzing children's literature, particularly in the context of language education and character development.

In conclusion, *The Power of a Bandage* not only educates children on the importance of hygiene and health, but also delivers important messages about love, courage, and resilience. This analysis reinforces the understanding that children's literature is a rich space for exploring meaning and learning essential life values.

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