

A Semantic Onomastic Analysis of Character and Place Naming in Zootopia (2016)

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ABSTRACT

This study considers how character and place names in the film Zootopia (2016) contribute to meaning, momentum, and plot in writing for animation. The aim of this essay is to discuss the onomastic role of anthroponyms (character names) and toponyms (place names) as far as character presentation and world-building are concerned. In this study, the research method employed was a qualitative descriptive with a Semantic Onomastics approach. The material from the film used on this occasion consisted of a number of characters and locations which were subject to analysis in the light of Ainiala, Saarelma and Sjoblom (2012)'s onomastic theory and Fillmore (2006)'s Frame Semantics. Analyses were conducted according to Spradley's stages of ethnographic analysis, which involved domain, taxonomy, component and cultural theme analysis. The findings of the current study have demonstrated that there is a high degree of semantic clarity present in the names within Zootopia, which are observed to be highly effective when it comes to creating a fictitious world full of context. To conclude, it can be stated that naming in Zootopia is a narrative strategy that serves to underscore the film's message of equality, tolerance and resistance to discrimination.

Keywords: Zootopia, Onomastics, Semantic Analysis, Character Names, Place Names.

1. Introduction

Names in language are an important linguistic issue, because names should not be considered mere labels, but rather meaningful linguistic elements that contain identity, cultural values, and social relationships. Within the linguistic packages of meaning, names are seen as culturally motivated (socially and semantically) forms to make sense of meanings that individuals and communities unite

upon in language making (Ainiala et al. 2012). Accordingly, the study of names, known as onomastics. Onomastics is the study of the history, development, and geographical distribution of proper names. Focuses on naming practices in order to explain how linguistic and social meanings are constructed and interpreted. Names in animation play an important role introducing the characters, their names conveying certain idea about the character's personality or characteristic who can be identified easily for its profession and cultural background. These are names that give clear information about the characters without directly stating their background. Moreover, animated films use fun and memorable names, as in *Zootopia* (2016). In that world, character names carry animal-specific and societal-caste meanings: for example, Judy Hopps's name not-so-subtly designates her as a rabbit (to hop) who jumps with boundless energy. Such naming conventions help to develop characters and enhance the atmosphere of the story, thus transforming character names into a form of strategic resource for the creation of distinctive and memorable figures –those that can be recognized at first glance by spectators.

Ackermann (2013) states that animated films are a good source for studying onomastics because their meanings are easy to understand. In animated movies with anthropomorphic characters, the name is a bridge between an animal form and human social practice. A good example of such film is *Zootopia* (2016), in which the characters and places are all given names that have their origin in a language, for example, Judy Hopps, Nick Wilde, Bunnyburrow, Tundratown, and Sahara Square. In light of this, the present work will seek to examine character and place names in the movie *Zootopia* (2016) from an onomastic perspective with an emphasis on semantics in order to investigate their relevance for characterization as well as world-building.

The literature demonstrates that the naming of children is significant and is culturally determined. For instance, Lopes & Ferreira (2018) investigated personal naming in the Parkatêjê language and found that names meaningfully index collective memory, social identity and historical experience within the community. What they discovered is the significance of names, not merely as arbitrary labels but as linguistic artefacts, was something that we simply did not understand. Budiarta & Gaho (2021) conducted a pragmatic study of the use of deixis in *Zootopia* film script. They directed their attention on personal, spatial and temporal deixis aiming to analyze how meaning is constructed within character speech with the help of context-sensitive locutions. They discovered that deixis is used to explicit the role of participating entities and context in a narrative. Nevertheless, they study the pragmatic meaning in dialogue while we concentrate on the semantic meaning of character and place names.

This study aims to examine how the names of characters and places in *Zootopia* (2016) function as meaningful linguistic sources from an onomastic and semantic perspective. It also examines how character names (anthroponyms) create a semantic framework that supports characterization, and how place names (toponyms) create meaning. Both aspects are related to the social structure and development of the world in the story. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to determine how names function narratively and semantically in animated films, rather than merely as markers of identity.

Agustina et al. (2021), on the way in which animal representations metaphorize social stereotypes and even discrimination by means of predator–prey demarcation. Similarly, Sihombing et al. (2022), analysed how the film mirrors social stratification and power through animal iconography. Semantically, naming and labelling is a meaning making process with the potential for framing, classifying and categorizing aspects of social order (Nevala & Tyrkkö, 2023). Tanujaya & Purnomo (2023), investigated the metaphorical meaning of Taylor Swift's *Reputation* album employing a semantic method this study was interested in uncovering how the metaphorical language expresses emotional experiences and social messages. Their research demonstrates that the semantic analysis correctly extracts hidden meanings from art-related texts. Unfallenina Contrast: However, this kind

of research (Talmy, 2004) concentrated on song lyrics as verbal text and it did not deal with naming practices in narrative media. This highlights the lack of studies that integrate semantic analysis with onomastics in examining character and place names in animated films. Therefore, we examine the character and place names in the film *Zootopia* (2016), an animated buddy cop thriller, through the onomastic and semantic lenses to see how naming help shape character construction and world building.

As far as *Zootopia* is concerned, a few works have dissected the film's symbolism and ideology. While studies on naming, symbolism and social meanings do exist; fewer are the ones that cover the intersection of onomastics theory with semantic analysis in relations to characters and places' name of animated works. Based on design theory However, Algeo (1992) proposed that the names of characters and places in fiction stories are important for character development and world creation according to Yuniar (2025). But this study focuses on literary works, not cartoons. The purpose of this study is to fill that gap by conducting a semantic onomastic analysis of character and place names in *Zootopia* (2016).

In Ainiala et al. (2012) on onomastics, they emphasize that names are a meaningful aspect of language that was influenced by culture and society. Names function not only serve as identities for people or places, but also as a way for audiences to understand about the character and storyline. In fiction, naming people or places is a creative activity in shaping meanings that can convey values or general descriptions from characters or places being told. Therefore, identifying naming patterns was important so that we can understand the meanings that are being formed and conveyed through language in fictional media.

Ainiala et al. (2012), classify names based on their references into two categories: anthroponyms (personal names) and toponyms (place names). Anthroponyms (personal names) were delivered as clues about the character, role, and social background of a character, which supports character development. Toponyms (place names) were delivered to support the storyline through the naming of settings and become symbols of spatial, ecological, or ideological detail on the plot. In the animated films *Zootopia* 2016 and *Zootopia* 2025, naming of characters and places reflected social structures and environmental arrangements, which helped the audience understand about the storyline.

Fillmore's semantic frame theory (2006) states that the meaning of a word cannot be interpreted without a clear context, we must look at the situation and specific frame of experience. Frame can be interpreted as a "picture of a situation," what we imagine when a word appears. This theory is very relevant to our research on character and place naming in *Zootopia* (2016), because the naming in animated film *Zootopia* is a semantic framework about the characteristics, habitat, and social roles of the animals that appear in the animated film *Zootopia*. This theory was employed to helps us explain in detail how a name produces a meaning, showing that a name can be activated as a structure of knowledge about culture that was commonly referred to as a "frame." Names appear when it evokes certain associations of meaning or when it appears based on the audience's experience, according to Atillah et al. (2020). For example, names that were inspired by animals can cause the audience to analyze the general characteristics.

2. Methodology

2.1 Data and Data Sources

This study used *Zootopia* animated film from the official streaming platform Disney+. The data used in this study consists of character names (anthroponyms) and place names (toponyms). The main data was taken from dialogues and subtitles that allowed for accurate identification of names and narratives. The data analyzed only uses names that play an important role in character development

and world-building in the story used in this study. These names include animal species, social roles, professions, and the division of space and territory in Zootopia.

Secondary data were also used, such as movie reviews and analyses of Zootopia carried out by earlier academics. Sihombing et al.'s (2022) study on animal symbolism, societal representations, and the movie's ideology served as one example. In order to strengthen the comprehension of the narrative and ideological background that underpins the analysis of character and place names, secondary data were employed. Instead of being used as study data, Ainiala et al. (2012)'s onomastic theory and Fillmore's (2006) frame semantics method served as the theoretical frameworks and analytical tools.

2.1.1 Data Collection

The main data in this study consists of character names and place names from the animated film Zootopia (2016). The data collection process involved watching the film and recording every detail of character names and place names along with their contextual use in dialogue and narrative sequences. Names play a very important role in developmental character, highlighting personality and affecting how audiences perceive them. To support the semantic onomastic analysis, the collected names were first grouped into two categories, namely character names and place names. This step follows common practices in qualitative research, where data are organized systematically and interpreted within their context (Chand, 2025). A similar approach has also been applied in recent social onomastic studies, which rely on qualitative data collection to examine naming patterns within specific communities (Liani, 2024).

2.1.2 Data Analysis

The data analysis in this research follows the ethnographic principles outlined by Spradley, which consists of domain analysis, taxonomic analysis, componential analysis, and cultural theme analysis. Through these stages, the data are examined by identifying different types of names, analyzing their meanings, and understanding their social roles. This analytical process makes it possible to examine how character and place names operate within the Disney animated film Zootopia. In addition, the analysis draws on the semantic onomastic perspective proposed by Ainiala et al. (2012) and the semantic framework developed by Fillmore (2006) to support the interpretation of the data.

The focus analysis in this study was to find out the function of character name and place name not only served as an identity but also as a semantic frame and contribute to developing the characters and world building. In this study we collect the data from identifying several character and place names that appear in this film. And then we classified these names into two categories, anthroponyms (personal name) and toponyms (place name). After we classified the data, the final step was to analyze the semantic meanings, including lexical and associative meaning of each name. This aims, examine the semantic frame that was appears from each name, such as animal stereotypes, social strata, work responsibility, and geographical aspect that was develop the world of Zootopia.

Table 1. Character and Place Naming Component Analysis in *Zootopia* (2016)

	Semantic Transparency	Frame Activation	Characterization Function	World-Building Function
Character Names	v	v	v	v
Place Names	v	v	x	v

Note: x = non-dominant; v = recognized function.

This study uses the onomastic framework of Ainiala et al. (2012) to analyze character and place names in *Zootopia*. In this view, names in fiction are chosen based on their meaning. These names help shape the characters and the world of the story. This theory was used to see how names evoke shared ideas that could help people understand the story. This research used character names and place names, such as Judy Hopps, Nick Wilde, Bellwether, *Zootopia*, Tundratown, Sahara Square, etc as the data, and those names were used as linguistic data, and the meanings were analyzed based on their parts of speech, sounds, and their integration into the story. This analysis focuses on how names point to social roles, suggest particular ideas, and organize the fictional world in the story.

This study looks at four main things: semantic transparency, frame activation, characterization, and world-building. Semantic transparency is simply about whether a name's meaning is easy to understand just by seeing the words used. Frame activation focuses on the ideas a name brings to mind, such as stereotypes, power, or how natural spaces are grouped. Characterization then looks at how names help shape who a character is. Including their identity, personality, and the conflicts they are involved in within the story. The function of world building analyzed how place names help organize cities socially and spatially, as well as how they support the overall message of the film.

The table showed that both character and place names in *Zootopia* generally have clear meanings and evoke familiar ideas. Character names mostly helped to shape how viewers see the roles, power, and identity formation of characters, as well as supporting world-building. Place names help organize the city based on natural and social areas, but do not play a major role in character development. This showed that the naming in the film *Zootopia* was carefully planned to strengthen the storyline, provide criticism, and create a world that reflects a diverse level of social structure.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1 Result

The purpose of this study was to answer the research question of how character names and place names in the animated film *Zootopia* (2016) activated semantic frames within an onomastic framework to build characterization and the story world. The analysis's findings indicate that the movie's naming arrangement exhibits a high level of semantic transparency, frequently activates specific semantic frames, and achieves several narrative purposes related to place and character names. Place names are of greater significance for establishing the tale world, whilst character names usually correspond to more important aspects in character development.

The research results are arranged through the onomastic significance of names in Table 2, which examines four distinct areas of analysis: world-building function, frame activation, semantic

transparency, and characterization function.

Table 2. Onomastic Functions of Names in *Zootopia* (2016)

Names	Type	Semantic Transparency	Frame Activation	Characterization Function	World-Building Function	Short Explanation
Gideon Grey	Character	v	v	v	v	“Grey” = fox color → harsh stereotype → character change (bully → nice)
Judy Hopps	Character	v	v	v	v	“Hopps” = jump → rabbit stereotype → active & persistent
Benjamin Clawhauser	Character	v	v	v	v	“Claw” = claws → predator stereotype → irony: gentle & friendly
Bellwether	Character	v	v	v	v	“Bellwether” = leader sheep → seems tame → irony: mastermind of conflict
Nick Wilde	Character	v	v	v	v	“Wilde” = wild → sly fox stereotype → critique of social prejudice
Chief Bogo	Character	v	v	v	v	“Bogo” = buffalo → strong stereotype → softened leadership and empathy
Mr. Big	Character	v	v	v	v	“Big” = big → small body irony → powerful crime boss
Zootopia	Place	v	v	x	v	<i>Zoo + Utopia</i> → ideal city → irony of social discrimination
Tundratown	Place	v	v	x	v	Tundra zone → polar animal habitat → regional segregation
Sahara Square	Place	v	v	x	v	Sahara desert zone → desert animal lifestyle
Rainforest District	Place	v	v	x	v	Rainforest zone → environmental diversity & adaptation

Names	Type	Semantic Transparency	Frame Activation	Characterization Function	World-Building Function	Short Explanation
Bunnyburrow	Place	v	v	x	v	“Burrow” = rabbit hole → large population stereotype → rabbit village
Savanna Central	Place	v	v	x	v	Savanna Central → centrality, openness, & social hierarchy

Table 2 shows the frame's deactivation and semantic transparency for each Zootopia name data. This suggests that the names were not chosen at random; rather, the audience can directly understand their meaning and have a conceptual grasp. The research topic that names in films serve both identifying and narrative functions is explicitly addressed by the study's findings. The table additionally indicates several primary functional variations between place names and character names. Character names perform a predominantly characterizing function, while place names play a greater role in world building. According to Ainiala et al. (2012) anthroponyms and toponyms have different roles in fictional stories, a difference that confirms the division of onomastic functions.

3.1.1 Character Names

An analysis of the names of characters in the animated film Zootopia shows that these names have a fairly high degree of clarity of meaning and also evoke specific images related to character development, social roles, and species stereotypes. The naming of characters in animated films helps viewers form initial assumptions about the characters, which can be reinforced by the storyline. The characters in Zootopia are created to represent social stereotypes and convey criticism of social inequality symbolically, which shapes the audience's initial perception of each character (Beaudine et al., 2017).



Figure 1. Scene from the animated film Zootopia showing character naming (07:29)

Figure 1 visually depicted Judy Hopps officially becoming a new member of the Zootopia Police Department. In addition, the dialogue “*Judy Hopps,*” accompanied by enthusiastic applause from the audience, shows her achievements and social recognition even though she was a small rabbit

who was often underestimated by a society dominated by large mammals. Although Judy was portrayed as a character who was frequently doubted because of her physical appearance and species, this did not prevent her from pursuing her dream of becoming a police officer. Hopps consistently pursues her goals despite repeated obstacles, reflecting her belief that effort and persistence are essential to achieving success. This narrative portrayal reinforces the semantic transparency of the name Hopps, which evokes continuous movement, endurance, and forward momentum rather than passive stasis. Nick Orsi, the visual development artist who initially designed Hopps, *"Judy mostly stayed the same throughout all the versions of the story. She is a small bunny trying to break into this large-mammal-dominated police force, so we really played up the size and scale difference. She's an underdog who has to try way harder than the others, just to prove that bunnies can be cops."* (Orsi, as cited in Julius, 2016).

Nick Wilde is a character in Zootopia who embodies stereotypes about humans and undermines the first protagonist's abilities. Nick is described by audiences as a character that cannot be explained due to his name. Nick Wilde's name is derived from the word "wilde," which means cunning and clever fox. However, this character challenges the aforementioned stereotype by strengthening moral principles. In addition, the characters Benjamin Clawhouse and Gideon Grey also have ironic names. The words "grey" and "claw" are always associated with predators or aggression. However, in the story, these two characters have different ironies. Clawhouse's character is calm and cooperative. In other situations, Gideon Grey changes into a more positive character. Ironically, these names serve as social criticism of species-based prejudice because their meanings contradict the nature of the characters.

Semantic transparency is demonstrated by the character Chief Bogo. This name has no meaning in modern English; it sounds like the terms "bovine" or "buffalo," animals that are extensively associated with physical strength, which is an appropriate match for this character. The title "Chief" conveys authority and leadership, while also activating the audience's perception of discipline and institutional power, and the short, decisive sound of "Bogo" reinforces the character's rigid nature. From the beginning, his name presents a figure who enforces rules and rejects deviation, thus characterologically reflecting resistance to change, for example, towards Judy Hopps, and reinforcing the stereotype that large figures tend to dominate socially. However, as the story unfolds, Bogo begins to show an empathetic side and places greater value on cooperation and collective values, adding a moral dimension without altering the name's original function (Fasikh & Natali, 2021). Thus, he continues to represent the official power structure in Zootopia, but now appears more human.

Several character names in the animated film Zootopia have highly semantically transparent, but at the same time is ironic. For the example is Mr. Big. Literally, the word "big" means "besar," which contrasts with reality because the name Mr. Big in the animated film Zootopia belongs to a mouse with a small body. Therefore, the meaning of transparency was derived from visual contradiction, not physical harmony. This character's name evokes images of a crime boss or mafia figure. Today's culture, the term "Mr. Big" refers to a leader of criminal activity or someone influential in the criminal world, who simply orders his subordinates to do the work, while he sits quietly behind the scenes waiting for satisfactory results. Physical appearance is not a benchmark for making the audience immediately imagine the character before the character speaks, where the character here is already described as a figure who has criminal authority, hidden threats, and honor, as in mafia movies. As explained by Dore (2020), Zootopia consistently uses character representations and certain cultural markers to construct criminal stereotypes and otherness, which helps the audience recognize the character's social role. Functionally, the naming of the character Mr. Big emphasizes the dominance of the name Mr. Big in the criminal world in the animated film Zootopia, based on the power he wields rather than his physical appearance.

Some character names in Zootopia demonstrate a clear correspondence between lexical meaning and characterization, rather than relying on irony. For example, naming Judy Hopps has compatibility with her personality and she is energetic, persistent, and optimistic in this film. In addition, naming Bellwether was to develop the character frame as a leader who can control others and also enhance her role as the organizer behind the main conflict in the film. In literal meaning the “leader sheep” explained the narrative meaning that cautiously censured public opinion about inability and stagnation. The transparency and irony in the character names created an impression that matches with their roles. For example, the name Chief Bogo who is a rigorous law enforcer, matches with the animal he was depicted as the Cape Buffalo. Later, the naming also developed by transparency and irony is Mr. Big, where this name functions through visual contrast, not physically evident. The name Mr. Big exists for small mice, which is contrary to the word “big”. The word “big” was defined about the power in the world of crime. Therefore, overall, the naming of the characters in the animated film Zootopia not only uses a strategy to explain the characters' identities but also serves as a critical media about social tendencies, public opinion, and the power systems that exist in society. Scott Kersavage, VFX supervisor, stated, *“These animals live harmoniously, but we want to maintain their animal nature. They're not people in animal suits. They have their own animal qualities, and they've built their surroundings in their mindset.”* (Kersavage, as cited in Julius, 2016).

3.1.2 Place Names

It can be concluded from Table 2 that semantic transparency and frame activation are high for place names in the animated film Zootopia, thus forming a specific image of the environment. World-building is not only used to develop characters in the story, but also functions to name places such as Zootopia, Tundratown, Sahara Square, Rainforest District, Bunnyburrow and Savana Central. This is reinforced by production designer Dave Goetz's statement, *“We included buildings of all ages and styles, because we found that the more we mixed it up, the more it felt like a real place.”* (Goetz, in Julius, 2016). The creation of these place names helps viewers recognize and understand the structure of the world in the animated film Zootopia, as well as the division of urban space depicted in the film.



Figure 2. Scene from the animated film Zootopia showing place naming (12:41)

This demonstrates that the naming of places influences the perception of the city. This is supported by an explanation in the book entitled *The Art of Zootopia*, in which Matthias Lechner, art director of environments, states that, *“These animals have evolved to a human level of consciousness so we put thought and love into everything surrounding them. That imbues every building and object with an attitude, a soul, which makes it appealing”* (Lechner, in Julius, 2016). As seen on the billboard

featuring Gazelle with the dialogue *"I'm Gazelle. Welcome to Zootopia."* Gazelle is a pop singer in the city of Zootopia, and her appearance builds an image of popularity and serves as an icon of the city. Meanwhile, the mention of the name Zootopia describes the city as harmonious and upholding diversity. This reinforces that the environment in the city of Zootopia not only functions as the visual backdrop of the story, but also carries social and ideological meaning.

The name Zootopia is a combination of the words zoo and utopia, forming an ideal city to live in. Zootopia depicts a contemporary metropolis where various kinds of animals exist together, however prejudices and struggles continue. Tundratown, Sahara Square, Rainforest District, Bunnyburrow, and Savanna Central are merely some of the areas that make up the city. These names apparently appear to only describe the surrounding environment since they originated from particular locations in nature. However, the use of these names also separates the city into different zones, not only ecologically but socially as well. This film shows that life in Zootopia is not as simple as it seems. Tundratown is depicted as a harsh, cold, snowy region, similar to the North Pole, with mostly large animals that are able to survive in extreme weather. Tundratown feels distant and isolated compared to the city center, and access to the area is very limited.

Sahara Square is an extraordinary place for people living in the desert because most animals there are operating at night, so this area is most lively at night and has an atmosphere similar to midnight. In the middle of Sahara Square, there are streets decorated with lights, casinos, and great hotels, as well as water parks, race tracks, and stadiums. However, due to the dry and hot temperatures, some people cannot live comfortably there. Because of the high crime rate here, there are more police here than in all other districts of Zootopia. The Rainforest District is an ever-changing, complex, and crucial place. It has many man-made structures that control water flow and humidity, as well as narrow trails that require coordination and physical training. The names of the areas help visitors understand their ecological and social characteristics without giving long explanations.

Bunnyburrow was a rural area in Zootopia. The locals lived simple lives and close social ties. This area was mostly inhabited by rabbits who lived alongside other animals, which showed togetherness, cooperation, and mutual respect. It contrasts with the lifestyle of the urban districts of Zootopia. The name Bunnyburrow combined the identity of rabbits with their natural underground habitat, showing a traditional and modest way of life. Its way of life highlighted a contrast between Zootopia's more modern and fast-paced city life. Bunnyburrow also gave a prime social background to Judy Hopps. It shaped her character traits and values, also influenced her perspectives and motivations all over the story.

In other cases, Savanna Central was the regional center in animated film Zootopia and also the center of economy, politics, and social activity. This place was designed as a neutral area that can be easily accessible for all the characters that appear in animated film Zootopia. This place served as a center of government, transportation and interaction between species. This place has many facilities such as train stations, city hall, police department and others. From an environmental perspective, this area was described as a grassland with a stable environment and temperature that supported many species living side by side. The starting point for the development of Zootopia, this symbolizes unity and coexistence, and reinforces Savanna Central as a meeting place for various social and environmental elements.

This makes it easier for the audience to imagine a city divided based on habitat and social differences between regions. This is supported by Matthias Lechner, art director of environments, who stated that *"We tried to incorporate elements that alluded to natural habitats, such as tree structures, rock formations, cave openings, and burrow walls. And we added lots of foliage everywhere."* (Lechner, in Julius, 2016). Meanwhile, Clark Spencer, the film's producer, also emphasized that the construction of this world must still be understandable to the audience, because *"But it still has to be*

relatable to humans or the audience will be taken out of the film” (Spencer, in Julius, 2016).

This is in line with the view of Ainiala et al. (2012) that place names in works of fiction serve to shape and construct conceptual space and help the audience understand the concepts or structure of the world in the story. In the animated film *Zootopia*, it can be seen that place naming is not only used to mark locations between regions, but also to present social and ecological divisions in the film. From a Frame Semantic perspective, these place names form an environmental frame that is familiar to the audience, allowing them to quickly recognize the meaning of urban space. This strengthens the world-building process in the film because place naming becomes a cognitive trigger.

3.3 Discussion

The analysis of character and place names in *Zootopia* (2016) shows that naming serves not only as linguistic identity but also as a construction of meaning that supports the ideological framework of the narrative. According to Ainiala et al. (2012), the function of names in this animation plays a role through four categories, namely semantic transparency, frame activation, characterization, and world-building.

Using Fillmore's Frame Semantics theory to analyze in depth the naming of characters and places in the animated film *Zootopia*. According to Fillmore, the meaning of a linguistic element cannot be understood independently, but is always connected to a broader knowledge structure known as a 'frame'. He explains that *“to understand any one of them you have to understand the whole structure in which it fits.”* So, when a linguistic element appears, the mind automatically connects it to other elements in that structure (Fillmore, in Geeraerts et al., 2006).

The use of language is not merely to name people or places, but can also trigger the audience to use the conceptual knowledge they have gained from culture or society. Names cannot stand alone; when introduced in a text or narrative, it is important to direct the reader towards an understanding of a series of interconnected ideas within a single framework. Based on linguistic structure, names not only have meaning but also activate networks of knowledge.

The naming of characters and places in the application of Frame Semantics theory in the animated film *Zootopia* serves to activate the frame, allowing viewers to quickly understand what is meant in the film's story world. The naming reflects social status and environment. Therefore, the naming in the animated film *Zootopia* (2016) is also a strategy to guide the audience's understanding of the fictional world and narrative constructed in this animated film. This is in line with Fillmore's theory, which states that *“when one of the things in such a structure is introduced into a text, or into a conversation, all of the others are automatically made available”* (Fillmore, in Geeraerts et al., 2006).

First, the naming of characters indicates that the functions of characterization and frame activation are dominant. Names such as Judy Hopps and Nick Wilde utilize common associations with certain types of animals, allowing the audience to immediately understand the stereotypes associated with these characters. However, there are several characters who break the stereotype, such as Gideon Grey and Benjamin Clawhauser, whose names refer to murderous traits, but the development of the story shows their warm nature and moral change. Thus, the meaning of these names provides social criticism of prejudice based on species, in line with the film's main theme of discrimination and bias in a culturally diverse life. Second, the way places are named in *Zootopia* demonstrates clear and appropriate use of names. Names such as Tundratown, Sahara Square, and Rainforest District trigger knowledge from the real world and help the audience imagine a city structure divided based on animal habitats. This naming helps create an ecologically plausible imaginary world, but in terms of the story, it also shows social separation. Therefore, the naming of places in the creation of the world helps reinforce social class differences and the environment that is the source of conflict in the story.

The function of character naming in the animated film *Zootopia* is to create a clear narrative, so that it forms the audience's understanding not only as an element of comedy. The creation of these names, both character names and place names, is intended to be ideological symbols that encompass many meanings, such as social status, diversity, and identity. This is in line with the view of Ainiala et al., who state that, "*Because a name, as a genuine linguistic sign, has semantic content in the human mind in addition to a linguistic form and an extralinguistic referent, it is natural that people sometimes try to 'explain' names that seem strange with some story associated with them.*" (Ainiala et al. 2012).

Therefore, the names of characters and places in the animated film *Zootopia* are very important in shaping the social meaning of the story, which criticizes injustice. This animated film teaches us to uphold equality and live side by side despite species differences. From this naming, it can be concluded that onomastic studies are based on an understanding of linguistic structure and meaning, as emphasized by Ainiala et al. that "*the structure of a place name cannot be perceived without understanding its semantics and vice versa.*" (Ainiala et al., 2012).

Semantic changes related to frames help explain this phenomenon. According to Fillmore, the basis of the schematic structure remains the same, even though there are types of semantic changes that alter the relationship between frames and words. As he states, "*A second kind of semantic change ... is one in which the links between words and their frames are changed, but the underlying schematization remains unchanged*" (Fillmore, in Geeraerts et al., 2006). Gideon Grey and Nick Wilde are examples of character names that retain the frames of their original characteristics. However, the narrative of *Zootopia* shows that the names and characteristics of the characters do not match their philosophical values. From this change, it can be concluded that *Zootopia* does not need to change the story world, but rather reflect stereotypes and social issues.

In the animated film *Zootopia*, locations are named according to their ecological zones: *Zootopia*, *Sahara Square*, *Rainforest District*, *Tundratown*, *Bunnyburrow*, and *Savanna Central*. Cacciafoco and Cavallaro (2023) state that "*this grouping constitutes a toponymic system.*" A system called a toponymic system or spatial naming system is formed by grouping place names within a single region. It is this naming of places that helps viewers understand the social and spatial structure in the animated film *Zootopia*. From an onomastic point of view, each name used in the animated film *Zootopia* (2016) is associated with social criticism in the story. These names are used to maintain, establish, and refute existing social statuses in real life. According to Nevala and Tyrkkö (2023), not all names are neutral; many are used to place an individual or group of people into a certain social status, as seen in the story of the animated film *Zootopia*.

Additionally, this phenomenon is found in several characters that do not conform to or contradict stereotypes about their species and names. Due to the inconsistency between names, character behavior, and stereotypical perceptions, this story contradicts the laws of nature, causing viewers to question their social beliefs. Therefore, the naming in *Zootopia* (2016), an animated film, can be considered a tactic or narrative approach to criticize the social inequality that often occurs in society.

It can be concluded from the discussion that the semantic and frame semantics approaches in character and place naming in the animated film *Zootopia* (2016) help us to better understand language, where language can function as an ideological meaning system. Perhaps character and place naming are rarely considered, even though naming plays a very important role in creating an interesting story, which helps shape the audience's social perception, both in terms of quickly understanding the storyline and conveying the film's moral message indirectly but very effectively. From this, research on onomastics is also useful for culture, social representation, and media analysis, not only in the field of language studies.

4. Conclusion

This study aims to determine how anthroponyms (character names) and toponyms (place names) in the animated film *Zootopia* (2016) form meanings that support the delivery of messages in the story. The selection of character names in fictional stories is based on the nature, role, or social identity of the character (Ainiala et al., 2012). In addition, names have a motivational relationship with the meaning to be conveyed. Naming in fiction is not done arbitrarily, but has semantic reasons related to character, social role, cultural background, and function in the narrative. The results of this study support this opinion by showing that the names of characters in *Zootopia* were deliberately chosen to help tell the story and convey social messages.

The examination of *Zootopia*'s character names demonstrates how naming provides a significant narrative appliance as compared to not even a labeling procedure. In the character naming industry, names such as Judy Hopps, Nick Wilde, and Bellwether show that personal traits and the way they speak are closely related. The transparency and irony in the character names created an impression that matches with their roles. For example, the name Chief Bogo who is a rigorous law enforcer, matches with the animal he was depicted as the Cape Buffalo. Later, the naming also developed by transparency and irony is Mr. Big, where this name functions through visual contrast, not physically evident. The name Mr. Big exists for small mice, which is contrary to the word "big". Therefore, overall the naming of the characters in the animated film *Zootopia* not only uses a strategy to explain the characters' identities but also serves as a critical media about social tendencies, public opinion, and the power systems that exist in society.

In the animated film *Zootopia* place names such as Tundratown, Sahara, Square, Rainforest District, Bunnyburrow and Savanna Central were clear evidence of semantic transparency. These names serve as strong supports to building a fictional world based on the characters' habitats and make it easier for the audience to understand the storyline through the visuals shown. Not only that, the meanings of these place names also explain the social groups that are formed in the story and have conflicts. The results of this study show the function of naming characters or places in fictional stories as a meaningful narrative resource rather than purely linguistic labels. The names of characters and places mentioned in the animated film *Zootopia* (2016) contribute to the development of the storyline and characters as well as the message to be conveyed. Therefore, the onomastic element here shows its function as a narrative strategy used to convey moral values about equality, diversity, and rejection of discrimination aimed at the audience.

From the results of this study, naming of characters and places in the animated film *Zootopia* has a significant narrative and ideological role. The names that were chosen and used can help convey moral messages about equality, diversity, and rejection of discrimination, so that names were not only linguistic but also a tool for presenting social life in fictional narratives.

In addition, the names in *Zootopia* have semiotic benefits for the audience. The names and locations of characters that are semantically clear help the audience understand, remember, and give meaning to the background of the story and characters. With a complementary sign system consisting of names, visual representations of characters, and their environment, the audience can understand the roles of characters and social structures without lengthy verbal explanations. This naming allows animated films, as part of popular culture, to convey complex social issues effectively to audiences of all ages and cultural backgrounds. Creative strategies for writing scripts that allow for implicit yet powerful social commentary also include naming.

This study confirms the relevance of onomastics in the analysis of audiovisual texts, especially animated films, as a medium of social and ideological representation. Furthermore, this paper shows how onomastics can be applied to explain the relationship between power, language, and identity in

fictional stories. It is expected that this examination will eventually be used as a reference in various literary, film studies, and linguistic circles.

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