

A NARRATIVE DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF THE ADVENTURES OF TINTIN: A STUDY BASED ON LABOV'S NARRATIVE STRUCTURE

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Abstract

Film not only serves as an entertainment medium, but also as a form of discourse that builds meaning through narrative structure. Therefore, this study aims to (1) identify the narrative structure in the film *The Adventures of Tintin* (2011), (2) analyze how each element of the narrative structure is realized in the storyline, and (3) explain the contribution of the narrative structure to the formation of the meaning of the story. This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach with the Theory of Narrative Structure of Labov and Waletzky (1967) as the framework of analysis. The research data is in the form of dialogue, conversation, and narrative parts in the film that represent the six elements of narrative structure, namely Abstract, Orientation, Complicating Action, Evaluation, Resolution, and Coda. Data is collected through documentation techniques by watching the film repeatedly, matching dialogue with transcripts, identifying relevant data, and classifying it based on six narrative elements. The results of the study show that all elements of narrative structure are found in films. Complicating Action appears twice, indicating that the conflict progresses gradually, while Resolution and Coda serve to close the main conflict and open up the possibility of the next adventure. These findings show that the narrative structure in films is built systematically and that each element has an important role in developing the plot and shaping the meaning of the story. Thus, this study proves that Labov and Waletzky's Narrative Structure Theory can be applied effectively to analyze narrative structure in film media.

Keywords: Narrative Discourse, Discourse Analysis, Movie

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INTRODUCTION

Movies not only function as an entertainment medium, but also as a means of representing the way humans think, experience various events, and interpret the world around them. Through a combination of dialogue, visuals, and audio elements, the film builds a narrative that reflects social, cultural, and human experiences. Therefore, film can be seen as a form of discourse because the meaning conveyed is not only shaped by language, but also

through the interaction of various semiotic elements that complement each other. Thus, film becomes a relevant object of study in the field of linguistics, especially discourse analysis, because it allows researchers to examine how meaning is constructed and conveyed to the audience through the use of language in a particular context (Baldry & Thibault, 2006; Paltridge, 2022).

In film, a story is not presented randomly, but rather is built through an organized narrative structure so that the audience can follow a series of events in sequence. Narrative plays an important role in shaping the audience's understanding of the story, starting from the introduction of the characters and setting, the development of the conflict, to the resolution of the conflict. According to Labov & Waletzky (1967), a narrative is composed of six main components, namely abstract, orientation, complicating action, evaluation, resolution, and coda. These six components serve to organize experiences or events into a coherent structure so that the meaning of the story can be understood more easily by the audience. In film, the narrative structure is reflected through the development of the storyline, the interaction between the characters, and the series of events that make up the overall meaning of the narrative (Labov & Waletzky, 1967; Toolan, 2001).

Based on this description, this research focuses on the analysis of narrative structure in film through a linguistic approach. The analysis was carried out by applying the narrative structure theory of Labov & Waletzky (1967) to identify the emergence of each narrative component and explain the function of each component in building the storyline. Through this framework, this research aims to understand how narrative elements are systematically arranged so as to form a complete and coherent meaning in the overall story.

The subject of this study is the film *The Adventures of Tintin* directed by Steven Spielberg. This film was chosen because it has a systematically arranged storyline with clear narrative stages, starting from the introduction of the story, the development of the conflict, to its resolution. The journey of the main character, Tintin, through various events and conflicts makes this film relevant to be analyzed using the framework of narrative structure. In addition, the interaction between the characters and the character development shown provide a clear picture of the function of each narrative stage in building the overall story. The film also raises various psychological challenges faced by the characters implicitly, so it is not only interesting to study from the aspect of narrative structure, but also has relevance to contemporary issues related to the human psychological condition.

Several previous studies have examined narratives and discourses from linguistic perspectives in various contexts. One of them is a study conducted by Saputra et al. (2025), which analyzed narrative structure using the Labov model. The results of the study show that all narrative components function systematically in building the meaning of the story, with *complicating action* and *resolution* being the stages that play the most role in developing the plot and conveying the meaning of the narrative.

Based on previous research, it can be seen that narrative structure analysis using Labov's theory has been widely applied in text-based and discourse-based studies. However, most of the research still focuses on written narratives and oral narratives, while studies of audiovisual media, especially films, are still relatively limited. In addition, research that specifically examines how narrative structures are constructed in film through linguistic approaches has also not been widely done. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by analyzing the narrative structure in the film *The Adventures of Tintin* using Labov & Waletzky (1967) narrative theory.

Based on this description, this study aims to (1) identify the narrative structure contained in *The Adventures of Tintin*, (2) analyze how each stage of the narrative structure is realized in the film's storyline, and (3) explain the contribution of the narrative structure to the formation of the overall meaning of the story. This study uses a qualitative approach by applying the narrative structure theory of Labov (1972) as the main analytical framework. The results of this research are expected to contribute to the development of linguistic studies,

especially in the field of discourse analysis, by showing how film as a form of narrative discourse builds meaning through its narrative structure.

METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach. This approach was chosen because the research aims to describe and analyze the narrative structure contained in the film *The Adventures of Tintin*. According to Creswell & Poth (2025), qualitative research focuses on understanding and interpreting the meaning of a phenomenon based on the data obtained, not on statistical measurements or analysis. In this study, the analysis was carried out using Labov & Waletzky's Narrative Structure Theory (1967), which consists of six elements, namely Abstract, Orientation, Complicating Action, Evaluation, Resolution, and Coda. Through this framework, this study identifies and analyzes how each narrative element functions in building the overall storyline of the film.

The data in this study are in the form of dialogues, conversations, and narrative parts contained in the film *The Adventures of Tintin* which represent the six elements of narrative structure according to Labov & Waletzky (1967). The data were selected based on their relevance to the focus of the research, namely the emergence of the elements of Abstract, Orientation, Complicating Action, Evaluation, Resolution, and Coda. The main source of data for this study is the film *The Adventures of Tintin* directed by Steven Spielberg and released in 2011. To support the analysis process, this study also uses film dialogue transcripts as a source of supporting data to facilitate the identification process and improve the accuracy of the analysis.

In qualitative research, researchers act as the main instruments of research (Creswell & Poth, 2025). Researchers are responsible for collecting, selecting, classifying, interpreting, and analyzing data according to the research objectives. In addition, the researcher uses a data classification sheet compiled based on the six elements of Labov's narrative structure to assist in the systematic process of data identification and analysis.

Data collection is carried out through several stages. First, researchers watched *The Adventures of Tintin* repeatedly to gain a thorough understanding of the storyline. Second, the researcher read and matched the dialogue transcript with the scenes contained in the film. Third, the researcher identifies dialogues and narrative parts that contain elements of narrative structure according to Labov. Finally, all the data that have been identified are documented and classified into six categories, namely Abstract, Orientation, Complicating Action, Evaluation, Resolution, and Coda.

Data analysis was carried out using Labov & Waletzky's Narrative Structure Theory (1967). The first stage is to select dialogues and narrative parts that are relevant to the focus of the research. Furthermore, the data are classified based on the six elements of Labov's narrative structure. After the classification process is completed, each data is analyzed to explain the function of each element in building the development of the story. The final stage is done by interpreting the relationship between narrative elements and drawing conclusions about how narrative structure shapes the overall meaning of *The Adventures of Tintin*.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The analysis in this chapter presents seven data that represent the six elements of narrative structure proposed by Labov & Waletzky (1967), namely *Abstract*, *Orientation*, *Complicating Action*, *Evaluation*, *Resolution*, and *Coda*. Of the six elements, *Complicating Action* is found in two data because this stage includes more than one important event that drives the development of the storyline. All data is arranged in order of their appearance in the film so that the development of the narrative structure can be understood chronologically and the relationship between elements in building the meaning of the story becomes clearer.

Timestamp: 04:05

Scene: Tintin is being painted by a street artist in a market.

Dialogue: "I'm a journalist."

Category: Abstract

This data appears at the beginning of the film when a street artist who is making a portrait of Tintin says that Tintin's face looks familiar because it often appears in newspapers. In response to the statement, Tintin introduced himself by saying, "I'm a journalist." This speech becomes the initial information that introduces the identity of the main character before the storyline develops further.

According to Labov & Waletzky (1967), the Abstract is an opening section that provides a brief overview of the core of the story and attracts the audience's attention before the narrative develops. In this data, the statement "I'm a journalist" not only introduces Tintin's profession, but also hints at the main direction of the story. As a journalist, Tintin has a character synonymous with curiosity, fact-finding, and investigation of an event. This identity became the basis for the entire series of adventures that he experienced throughout the film. Therefore, this utterance serves as an Abstract because it provides an initial clue to the main focus and theme of the narrative.

From the perspective of discourse analysis, the speech serves to build the audience's expectations of the type of story to be witnessed. Tintin's identity as a journalist leads the audience to understand that the story will evolve through the process of investigation, mystery solving, and search for the truth. Thus, the abstract on this data not only introduces the main character, but also forms an interpretive framework that will guide the audience in understanding the overall storyline.

Datum 2

Timestamp: 05:43

Scene: Tintin is at a flea market and finds a model of a Unicorn ship.

Dialogue: "Triple-masted. Double decks. Fifty guns."

Category: Orientation

This data comes to light when Tintin visits a flea market and finds a miniature ship called Unicorn. When observing the object, Tintin mentioned several characteristics of the ship, namely having three masts (triple-masted), two decks (double decks), and fifty guns. This scene became the beginning of Tintin's involvement with the object which then developed into the center of the conflict in the story.

According to Labov & Waletzky (1967), Orientation serves to provide initial information about the characters, setting, situations, and important elements needed for the audience to understand the context of the story before the conflict develops. In this data, Tintin's dialogue introduces the Unicorn as the main object that will move the entire narrative flow. Although the speech only contains a brief description of the physical characteristics of the ship, it is a marker that the Unicorn is not just an ordinary antique, but an object that has an important role in the development of the story. Thus, this dialogue fulfills the function of Orientation because it introduces the initial context on which the conflict arises in the next narrative stage.

From the perspective of discourse analysis, the speech serves to build context and direct the audience's attention to the importance of the Unicorn ship in the story. Descriptions of the characteristics of the ship form the expectation that the object has greater significance than its physical value as an antique collection. Through this introduction, the audience is prepared to understand the relationship between the Unicorns and the series of events that will develop in the later parts of the narrative.

Datum 3

Timestamp: 06:35, 07.25, 07.51

Scene: Sakharine tries to buy a model of the Unicorn ship that Tintin has just bought at a flea market.

Dialog: "It's not for sale."

Category: Complicating Action

This data occurred shortly after Tintin bought a model of a Unicorn ship at a flea market. A man named Ivan Ivanovitch Sakharine approached Tintin and tried to buy the ship by offering some money. Although Sakharine continued to increase his offer, Tintin still refused and insisted that the ship was not for sale, saying, "It's not for sale." This rejection was the beginning of Tintin's involvement in the mystery related to the Unicorn ship.

According to Labov & Waletzky (1967), Complicating Action is a series of events that give rise to conflicts or problems that drive narrative development. In this data, Tintin's rejection of Sakharine's offer becomes the first event that turns the initial situation that was initially calm into a tense one. Sakharine's immense interest in the Unicorn raises questions about the value and secrets hidden behind the object. Therefore, the dialogue "It's not for sale." marks the beginning of the main conflict that then develops into a series of adventures and investigations throughout the film.

From the perspective of discourse analysis, the speech serves as a trigger that directs the development of the story towards the main conflict. Tintin's refusal builds the audience's curiosity about Sakharine's motives while also creating tension that pushes the storyline to the next stage. Thus, the Complicating Action in this data serves as a starting point that connects the introduction stage with the development of the conflict that is at the core of the film's narrative.

Datum 4

Timestamp: 17:40

Scene: Tintin finds an old piece of paper hidden inside a model Unicorn ship and reads it with the help of a magnifying glass.

Dialogue: "Three brothers joined, three Unicorns in company."

Category: Evaluation

This data came about after Tintin found an old piece of paper hidden inside a model Unicorn ship. Using a magnifying glass, he read the contents of the instructions which read, "Three brothers joined, three Unicorns in company." This saying reveals that there is a connection between the three Unicorn ships, thus giving new meaning to the ship model that previously appeared to be an ordinary antique.

According to Labov & Waletzky (1967), Evaluation is a part of the narrative that explains the significance of an event or the reason why it is important to tell. In this data, the content of the clues that Tintin finds changes the understanding of the ongoing conflict. The existence of the three Unicorn ships suggests that the model is part of a larger mystery, so the conflict is no longer simply about the scramble for an object, but with the search for the secrets hidden behind it. Thus, this data fulfills the function of Evaluation because it emphasizes the importance of events and increases the narrative value of previously constructed conflicts.

From the perspective of discourse analysis, the speech serves to reinforce the significance of the story by directing the audience to the deeper meaning of the main conflict. The clues found by Tintin build curiosity while changing the audience's interpretation of previous events. As a result, the audience's attention is no longer focused on the model of the ship as a physical object, but rather on the secrets it contains and how those secrets will affect the development of the story in the later stages.

Datum 5

Timestamp: 46:38

Scene: Tintin and Haddock manage to escape from Karaboudjan's ship and are stranded in the middle of the sea on an overturned lifeboat.

Dialog: "Well, this is a fine mess."

Category: Resolution

This data comes after Tintin and Haddock manage to escape from the Karaboudjan ship which is controlled by criminals. After a series of chases and shootouts, the two survived, although they ended up stranded in the middle of the sea with an overturned lifeboat. Seeing the situation, Tintin said, "Well, this is a fine mess." in response to the situation they had just experienced.

According to Labov & Waletzky (1967), Resolution is a part of the narrative that shows how previous conflicts or problems have been resolved. In this data, Tintin and Haddock's successful escape marks the end of the physical conflict that took place aboard Karaboudjan. Although they are not yet completely safe, the direct threat from the criminals has been successfully overcome so that the narrative enters the resolution stage of the conflict.

From the perspective of discourse analysis, the speech serves as a marker of the transition from conflict to the next stage. The ironic tone in the sentence "Well, this is a fine mess" shows that even though the previous conflict has been resolved, the characters still have to face new challenges. Thus, the resolution in this data not only closes a series of conflicts, but also becomes a bridge to the development of the next story.

Datum 6

Timestamp: 01:22:32

Scene: Tintin and Haddock are on a lifeboat after losing track of Sakharine who is thought to have headed for Bagghar.

Dialogue: "It's over." / "I thought you were an optimist." / "Well, you were wrong, weren't you? I'm a realist."

Category: Complicating Action

This data takes place after Tintin and Haddock manage to escape from Karaboudjan's ship. Although they survived, they realized that Sakharine had managed to escape and had most likely made her way to Bagghar first. Realizing the condition, Tintin expresses his despair by saying, "It's over." Haddock then responded that Tintin is usually optimistic, but Tintin replies that he is now more realistic.

According to Labov & Waletzky (1967), Complicating Action is a series of events that give rise to or develop conflicts so that the storyline continues to move. In this data, conflict is no longer physical, but psychological. Tintin's desperation becomes a new obstacle that threatens the success of his mission. This suggests that Complicating Action can appear more than once in a narrative during which events introduce new challenges that push the story to the next level.

From the perspective of discourse analysis, the dialogue serves to maintain narrative tension after the resolution of previous conflicts. In addition to showing Tintin's changing emotional state, this conversation also deepens the characterization of the relationship between Tintin and Haddock. Thus, this data becomes an emotional turning point that prepares

the audience for the next conflict development while maintaining the continuity of the storyline.

Datum 7

Timestamp: 01:36:10

Scene: Tintin and Captain Haddock talk on board after successfully unraveling the mystery of the Unicorn and finding the Haddock family's treasure.

Dialog: "Four hundred weight of gold, just lying at the bottom of the sea. How's your thirst for adventure, Captain?" – "Unquenchable, Tintin."

Category: Coda

This data appears at the end of the film after the main conflict is successfully resolved. Tintin and Captain Haddock talk about the treasure that is still left on the bottom of the sea. Tintin then asks if Haddock still has a spirit for adventure, to which Haddock replies confidently, "Unquenchable, Tintin." This conversation concludes the story as well as hints at the possibility of their next adventure.

According to Labov & Waletzky (1967), the Coda is the final part of the narrative that marks that the series of events has been completed while returning the audience's attention to the situation after the conflict has ended. In this data, the dialogue between Tintin and Haddock confirms that the mystery of the Unicorn has been solved and the main conflict has reached its conclusion. However, the mention of the treasure that is still at the bottom of the sea shows that their world of adventure is still ongoing. As such, this data fulfills Coda's function because it closes the main storyline while providing a natural transition to the next possible story.

From the perspective of discourse analysis, the dialogue functions as a narrative closing sequence that provides a sense of completion without completely ending the story world. Tintin's questions and Haddock's enthusiastic answers reflect the change in Haddock's character from initially reluctant and lacking confidence to a figure who returns to having an adventurous spirit. In addition to providing an affirmation of character development, Coda also creates an open-ended ending, so that the audience gets the impression that Tintin and Haddock's adventures will continue even though the story in this film has ended.

Based on the analysis of the seven data above, all elements of the narrative structure according to Labov & Waletzky (1967) were successfully identified in the film *The Adventures of Tintin*. Each data shows a different function in building the development of the storyline, from the introduction of the story to the conclusion of the narrative. To provide a more systematic picture of the results of the analysis, the researcher presents a recapitulation of the data in the following table. This table shows the distribution of each element of the narrative structure along with the data that represents it, making it easier for the reader to understand the overall narrative structure of the film in a concise manner.

Table 1. Data recapitulation and analysis results

No	Dialog/Data	Category	Discourse Function in a Brief
1	"I'm a journalist."	Abstract	Summarizing the protagonist's identity as a seeker of truth

No	Dialog/Data	Category	Discourse Function in a Brief
2	"Triple masted. Double decks. Fifty guns."	Orientation	Introducing the main object of the narrative
3	"It's not for sale."	Complicating Action	Triggers the initial conflict of object scrambles
4	"Three brothers joined, three Unicorns in company."	Evaluation	Increasing the significance of conflict
5	"It's over." / "I'm a realist."	Complicating Action	Creating new psychological barriers
6	"Well, this is a fine mess."	Resolution	A temporary resolution to the physical conflict
7	"...thirst for adventure?" / "Unquenchable."	Coda	Bringing the main arc to a close, setting the stage for the next chapter

CONCLUSION

Based on an analysis of the seven data points, it can be concluded that the narrative structure in the film *The Adventures of Tintin* (2011) is organised in accordance with the six narrative elements proposed by Labov & Waletzky (1967), namely Abstract, Orientation, Complicating Action, Evaluation, Resolution, and Coda. Each element has an interrelated function in constructing the chronological development of the plot. The Abstract introduces the protagonist's identity as a journalist, which forms the basis for the entire adventure, whilst the Orientation introduces the ship Unicorn as the main object that triggers the subsequent series of events.

The results of the analysis show that the Complicating Action occurs in two stages. The first stage is marked by the conflict between Tintin and Sakharine over ownership of the ship 'Unicorn', whilst the second stage emerges after the resolution of the physical conflict, when Tintin experiences despair at having lost Sakharine's trail. These findings indicate that the development of the conflict in the film does not proceed linearly, but rather unfolds through several interconnected stages.

Meanwhile, the 'Evaluation' serves to give meaning and significance to the ongoing conflict by revealing clues about the secrets of the Unicorn. The 'Resolution', meanwhile, marks the end of the physical conflict when Tintin and Haddock manage to escape from the Karaboudjan. However, this resolution does not bring the entire conflict to a close, as the narrative immediately moves on to the next challenge. This demonstrates that the resolution in the film is gradual and acts as a bridge to the story's subsequent developments.

In the final section, the Coda concludes the narrative through a conversation between Tintin and Captain Haddock regarding the possibility of their next adventure. Unlike a definitive ending, the Coda in this film provides an open-ended conclusion, ensuring the story leaves room for the characters' adventures to continue.

Overall, the results of this study indicate that Labov & Waletzky (1967) narrative structure framework can be applied to analyse narratives in film. The application of this theory demonstrates that each narrative element plays a role in constructing the plot, whilst also showing that, in adventure films, the development and resolution of conflict can unfold across several stages without detracting from the function of each element within the narrative structure.

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