REVIEWS

Topic: Reviews

EFL CEFR Level: C1

Main objectives:

- Students will be able to describe and comment on books, films, plays, etc.

- Students will become aware of the use of metaphor in reviews of books, films, plays, etc.

Method: Frame-inspired TBLT (pre-task, task cycle, language focus)

Metaphor: EMOTION IS MOTION; EMOTIONS ARE OBJECTS; CONTROL IS MANIPULATION; CONTROL IS VERTICALITY

Materials: PC, Internet, texts, FrameNet, MetaNet

Skills involved: listening, speaking, reading, writing

A) Pre-task

➢ Here is an extract from a review of J.R.R. Tolkien's book The Lord of the Rings. How does the reviewer describe the book?

"A book that will break your heart" by C.S. Lewis

The Fellowship of the Ring is like lightning from a clear sky… To say that in it heroic romance, gorgeous, eloquent, and unashamed, has suddenly returned at a period almost pathological in its anti-romanticism, is inadequate. . . Here are beauties which pierce like swords or burn like cold iron; here is a book that will break your heart. . . .

It is sane and vigilant invention, revealing at point after point the integration of the author's mind. . . Anguish is, for me, almost the prevailing note. But not, as in the literature most typical of our age, the anguish of abnormal or contorted souls; rather that anguish of those who were happy before a certain darkness came up and will be happy if they live to see it gone. . . . But with the anguish comes also a strange exaltation. . . when we have finished, we return to our own life not relaxed but fortified….

https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/504539-the-fellowship-of-the-ring-is-like-lightning-from-a

➢ Here is an extract from a review of *The Lord of the Rings* movies. How does the reviewer describe the movies?

Emotions run high and low and then high again

It doesn't take long for the emotional roller coaster that is "The Lord of the Rings" to start pulling on everyone's heart strings. The emotional beats run throughout the story in many different forms, starting with the warm and fuzzy sentiment of the Shire. From there, we're treated to a cacophony of different emotive cinematic elements. The comforts of the Hobbit homeland are quickly replaced by the thrill of a high-speed chase to Bree, where soggy, gloomy danger continues to lurk. We get a short rest in Rivendell and then spirits are lifted high again when the Ring is whisked away toward Mordor. Then Gandalf falls in battle with a Balrog and everyone's spirits are crushed. Lothlorien rehabilitates those happy feelings again, only for the audience to witness Boromir's death and the breaking of the Fellowship — and that's just the first movie.

Every "Lord of the Rings" movie is riddled with emotions that vacillate between epic highs and devastating lows. It's part of the Tolkien experience, and a major element that has made the films resonate with multiple generations of viewers over the years.

https://www.looper.com/911789/these-things-happen-in-every-lord-of-the-rings-movie

➢ Compare the two reviews. How do they describe the emotions created in readers/viewers?

➢ Have you read *The Lord of the Rings* book series or seen any of the films? What did you think of them? How would you describe them?

B) Task cycle

1. Task

➢ Form groups of four and read your task.
Choose a book, film or play that has left an impression on you and prepare a short review to present in class.

➢ Search information on the Internet about the book/ film/ play you have chosen (e.g. characters, plot, setting, acting/writing, music, special effects, photography).

2. Planning

➢ Organize the information you have collected to describe (e.g. characters, setting, acting/writing, music, special effects), narrate (e.g. the plot), compare (e.g. two characters) and explain (why you think the book/film/play is –not– successful). Prepare the report you will present to the class.

3. Report

➢ Choose a member of your group to present your work.
➢ Decide which one was the most persuasive review. Vote!

C) Language focus

1. Analysis

We often think of and talk about the powerful effect of movies as physical force.

➢ Read the following extract from a review of one of *The Lord of the Rings* movies and answer the following questions.

'The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring': Review

Visually <u>striking</u>, thematically grave, and morally <u>weighty</u>, Peter Jackson's *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*, is a miracle of a movie: a three-hour fantasy-action-adventure that not only faithfully <u>captures</u> the spirit of its respectable source material, the first in J.R.R. Tolkien's trilogy of books, but also stands <u>tall</u> on its own merits as one of most ambitious movies to have come out of Hollywood in a long time. Eagerly awaited by millions of fans around the globe, New Line's large-budget (more than $90m) fantasy is a must-see event movie, whose literary and cinematic qualities guarantee a strong theatrical <u>touch</u> in every territory, easily crossing age and national boundaries, before becoming a cult classic, subject to repeat viewing by the book's most ardent devotees.

Though necessary, the prologue, in which the history of the Ring is recounted in voice-over, is rather weak and overly long. However, as soon as the narrative proper begins, the yarn <u>grabs</u> the viewers with the <u>riveting</u> force of a mythic tale, seldom losing its <u>grip</u> even in its feeble moments.

https://www.screendaily.com/reviews/the-lord-of-the-rings-the-fellowship-of-the-ring-review/407695.article

a) Look up the underlined words in FrameNet (https://framenet.icsi.berkeley.edu/fndrupal/framenet_search). What frame is activated by each word?

b) What do these frames have in common?

c) Read the metaphors for CONTROL in MetaNet (https://metaphor.icsi.berkeley.edu/pub/en/index.php/Category:Metaphor). Which ones best fit the text?

2. Practice

Activity 1

Here are some comments posted by movie critics. Each critic uses a different frame metaphorically to express his/her view. Match each text with a frame and complete it with the missing word. Justify your answer using FrameNet (https://framenet.icsi.berkeley.edu).

Reviews	Frames

a) *Far From The Madding Crowd*
 	
It's a title to be admired, certainly, but for all its visual fireworks, *Far From The Madding Crowd* doesn't truly _____ an emotional spark.
 	
b) *The Discovery*
 	
While the movie overdoes the plot twists and existential musings, *The Discovery* is a diverting head-trip whose reach far exceeds its _____.
 	
c) *Capernaum*
 	
If it doesn't _____ many (or any) of these thematic strands with a neat bow, that's in the nature of a film that chooses raw dramatic power over narrative finesse.
 	
d) *Color Out of Space*
 	
A cheerfully lurid mess that goes goofily off the rails after a slow _____, and will offer few surprises for adepts of lovecraft or of screen schlock.
 	
(Source: https://www.metacritic.com)
	• [Attaching]
	  tie
	
	• [Building]
	  build
	
	• [Manipulation]
	  grasp
	
	• [Setting_fire]
	  ignite

Activity 2

Work in pairs and find instances of metaphoric language in movie reviews on the Internet (e.g. https://www.metacritic.com). Use FrameNet (https://framenet.icsi.berkeley.edu) to identify the frames used metaphorically.

Activity 3

Work in pairs to write an one-sentence movie review to be included in the *Metacritic* website (https://www.metacritic.com). Do you think that your report is based on a metaphor? Can you find it in MetaNet (https://metaphor.icsi.berkeley.edu/pub/en/index.php/Category:Metaphor)?

D) Assignment

Reconsider the report you presented in class. Make a list of suggestions for improving your review.