



And the story goes: the comments of fans on House of the Dragon Instagram account as a form of narrative absorption

E a história continua: os comentários dos fãs na conta do Instagram de House of the Dragon como forma de absorção narrativa


Muhammad Rizal¹ 


SF. Luthfie Arguby Purnomo¹ 


Yustin Sartika¹ 

Wildi Adila¹ 

Arkin Haris¹ 

Shabrina An Adzhani¹ 



SF. Lukfianka Sanjaya Purnama¹ 

Robith Khoiril Umam¹ 

ABSTRACT: *The “team versus team” narrative formula in films prompts fans to extend the rivalry through social media comments, often by referencing the story or role-playing characters. This raises the question of whether such comments constitute narrative absorption. We argue they do. To examine this, we analyzed House of the Dragon’s official Instagram account and its fan comments using narrative absorption theories, transmedia engagement, and peritextual engagement. This qualitative study, employing Spradley’s method, reveals fans’ absorption through character role-play and story references. From these findings, we propose a typology of narrative absorption in “team versus team” contexts: impersonating, mockery, miming, spoofing, and mirroring. This typology offers filmmakers insights into strategies for eliciting audience and fan engagement.*

Keywords: *House of the Dragon; narrative absorption; narrative engagement; Instagram; team versus team.*

¹Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Mas Said Surakarta, Indonesia.

Editors: Gabriela Almeida  and Eliza Casadei .

RESUMO: A fórmula narrativa “time contra time” em filmes leva os fãs a prolongarem a rivalidade por meio de comentários nas redes sociais, frequentemente fazendo referência à história ou interpretando personagens. Isso levanta a questão: tais comentários configuram absorção narrativa? Defendemos que sim. Para investigar, analisamos a conta oficial de House of the Dragon no Instagram e os comentários dos fãs, utilizando as teorias de absorção narrativa, engajamento transmídia e engajamento peritextual. Este estudo qualitativo, conduzido pelo método de Spradley, revela a absorção dos fãs por meio de interpretações de personagens e referências à narrativa. Com base nesses resultados, propomos uma tipologia de absorção narrativa em contextos “time contra time”: personificação, zombaria, mímica, paródia e espelhamento. Essa tipologia oferece aos cineastas subsídios para estratégias que incentivem o engajamento do público e dos fãs.

Palavras-chave: House of the Dragon; absorção narrativa; engajamento narrativo; Instagram; time contra time.

Introduction

Popular movies tend to invite serious debate from fans when the movies introduce the concept that Aimukhambet *et al.* (2017) call as binary-dyadic structure. Through this structure, opposition forces are clear-cut. In modern movies, this concept has been widely used in “team versus team,” e.g., Team Captain America vs Team Iron Man in *Captain America: Civil War*. When the movies have official fan pages on social media like Instagram, the “versus” narratives continue among fans. The “versus” narratives are expressed through various styles of comments. Expressions like “I’m with...,” “Say no to...,” “Down with...” indicate that the stories of the movies are not distributed but circulated. As implied by Jenkins *et al.* (2013), this circulation of stories shapes what they call as transmedia engagement.

As Evans (2020) has studied, social media is a part of transmedia engagement, and it has a type of engagement called peritextual engagement. This engagement highlights how experiences from various social media users are bound up to signify the transmediated narratives. Since the engagement relies on the users’ experiences in response to the narratives circulated on social media, it implies that they have different levels of what Kuijpers *et al.* (2014) and Kuijpers and Hakemulder (2017) call narrative absorption. Through narrative absorption, four experience-based dimensions are investigated: attention, mental imagery, emotional engagement, and transportation (KUIJPERS *et al.*, 2014). Through these dimensions, a scale to reveal the absorption level could be designed. The scale revolves around a preference for the use of popular techniques over literary techniques and a preference for the use of action-oriented stories over character-oriented stories for high scores of absorptions.

We argue that narrative absorption could be employed to address the issues of transmedia engagement of popular movies on Instagram. To address these issues, we attempt to construct a typology of how narrative absorptions are expressed through comments on the official Instagram of *House of Dragon* television series. The series was selected due to the

existence of their dedicated fans and the consistent circulation of postings from which engagements from fans are expected to flourish. That *House of Dragon* also possesses the concept of “binary-dyadic” is also a consideration in the title selection. This is the gap left by previous studies on audience engagement. Previous studies on the issues revolve around the confluence of technological, industrial, and cultural shifts (GRAVES, 2011), relations between engagement and modes (BEDDOWS, 2012), audience value (DAVIS, 2013), relations between engagement and experience (ATKINSON, 2018), and multimodality in transmediality (PERRY, 2020).

To construct the typology, the theories of narrative absorptions by Kuijpers *et al.* (2014) and Kuijpers and Hakemulder (2017), transmedia engagement by Jenkins *et al.* (2013), and peritextual engagement by Evans (2020) were employed. The theory of narrative absorptions was employed to reveal what preferences the fans imply from their comments – whether they tend to imply the use of popular, literary, action, or character-oriented techniques. The theory of transmedia engagement was employed to signify the relation between what is posted as a part of the circulation of the narratives and what is commented. The theory of peritextual engagement was employed to investigate the roles of Instagram’s features in supporting how they contribute to fans’ engagement through their comments.

Literature Review

In new media, the idea of spreadability, introduced by Jenkins *et al.* (2013), represents a significant shift from traditional media consumption. Spreadability focuses on the active role of audiences in sharing content across platforms, unlike older models where content was delivered to passive viewers. This change highlights how media now thrives on user interaction, with people not only consuming but also creating, remixing, and sharing content. Jenkins *et al.* (2013) emphasize this move from passive audiences to a participatory culture, where users actively contribute to content creation and sharing, adding social and cultural value beyond

ARTICLE

just economics. Spreadable media suggests that value is created through audience collaboration in public networks. Films often use social media to engage with audiences, where fans discuss and share their experiences. These interactions are not just reactions; they become part of the film's evolving story. Audience input reshapes and expands the narrative, making it dynamic. This audience engagement is further enhanced by transmedia storytelling, where the story is told across multiple platforms.

Transmedia engagement involves storytelling across different media platforms, each contributing uniquely to the narrative (TORRES *et al.*, 2015). This allows audiences to explore a story through various formats—films, TV, social media, books, and games—each adding extra layers or expanding the plot. In film, transmedia engagement extends the story beyond the screen through social media, offering behind-the-scenes content, character spin-offs, and interactive fan experiences (SCOLARI, 2009). This deepens emotional connections and keeps fans engaged across multiple levels. Through this process, fans actively shape the story, sharing their interpretations and creations, which boosts the film's reach and influence. This blend of spreadable media and transmedia storytelling relies on audience participation to expand the narrative across platforms. For example, *Squid Game* (2021) has generated widespread social media engagement, with fans sharing theories and discussions, pulling even casual viewers into the conversation. This practice of spreadable media enhances engagement and expands the story's reach.

Evans (2020) introduces “peritextual engagement” on social media, focusing on how elements like captions, hashtags, comments, and user interfaces act as modern peritexts that shape the interpretation of content. These elements surrounding the main text of a film influence audience perceptions and boost their engagement with the story. Social media provides a platform for this engagement, allowing real-time interaction with these peritextual elements. Activities such as sharing promotional content, discussing trailers and posters, or creating fan art and memes extend the film's narrative and deepen audience connection. This interaction builds a sense of community among fans, increasing the

film's visibility and impact. By contributing to peritextual content, audiences help sustain the film's narrative and shape its cultural relevance (LIVINGSTONE, 2004). Such engagement leads to deeper narrative absorption, as immersive interactions foster stronger emotional and intellectual connections with the work.

Narrative absorption via social media comments is a dynamic form of audience engagement that illustrates how deeply viewers connect with a film's story. Fans frequently leave comments on official posts, fan pages, or forums to share emotions, interpretations, and theories (KUIJPERS; HAKEMULDER, 2017). These comments reflect their engagement and contribute to broader conversations around the film. Through this interaction, fans analyze plot details, debate character motivations, and share personal connections, enriching collective understanding and building communities of shared interest. This exchange of ideas can even shape future content, demonstrating how narrative absorption fosters participatory interaction and strengthens a film's cultural relevance (WILSON, 2005). A notable example is *Barbie* (2023), which stirred widespread discussion, especially on Instagram, over its feminist themes. The film sparked controversy and praise, leading to diverse forms of narrative absorption and deeper conversations, which offer opportunities to explore how audience responses vary.

Methodology

The data of this qualitative study were in the forms of textual and visual data. Textual data consisted of captions and comments retrieved from the official Instagram account of *House of the Dragon*. The investigation of the comments was about the caption. This connective nature of the investigation suggested that engagement was the core concern of this study. On the other hand, visual data included images, emojis, and videos from Instagram posts taken from clips of the *House of the Dragon* series and from the comments that accompanied the textual elements.

Both the textual and visual data were published on the official Instagram account of *House of the Dragon*. As of this writing, the series

has released two seasons: Season 1 premiered on August 21, 2022, and Season 2 on June 16, 2024. The data analyzed in this study were drawn from posts published during the airing of Season 2. It is assumed that fan debates and discussions had already emerged during Season 1 and continued with greater intensity into Season 2. Each post used as data typically received thousands of likes and approximately 300,000 comments, with some posts reaching as many as 800,000 likes and 14,000 comments.

The data were then analyzed using Spradley's (2016) method, which involves four phases: domain, taxonomy, componential, and cultural theme analyses. The first phase was domain analysis. In this phase, the theory of spreadability, as discussed by Jenkins *et al.* (2013), was applied to reveal intertextual links or connections between the source content and media of *House of the Dragon* with the target content and media. The intertextual links would indicate whether intrinsic or extrinsic elements of *House of the Dragon* were connected.

In the second phase, taxonomy analysis, they revealed intertextual links were investigated using the transmedia engagement theory by Torres *et al.* (2015). The implementation of the theory was an attempt to indicate how different media with the same content as the source might generate different engagements from the target audiences. Whether the engagement tended to revolve around intrinsic or extrinsic elements was investigated in this phase.

Since the engagement took place in a social media context, the theory of peritextual engagement by Evans (2020) and narrative absorptions by Kuijpers *et al.* (2014) and Kuijpers and Hakemulder (2017) were implemented in the third phase—componential analysis. Through the implementation of this theory, it was expected that a wide range of techniques of expressing engagement via comments could be revealed. The focus on the official Instagram of *House of the Dragon* indicates that the expressing techniques would circumnavigate the features of Instagram in delivering a comment.

In the last phase, cultural theme analysis, all findings were connected to construct a typology of narrative absorption-based transmedial

engagement. Through this constructed typology, one could learn how the engagement of the audiences to the same narratives on different media could, to some extent, signify the absorption of the audiences into the narratives.

Results

This section is divided into five subsections, each corresponding to the typologies identified through the research. The typologies presented in this study are emergent categories, inductively constructed from audience comments on the official *House of the Dragon* Instagram account. The terms proposed in this study, *impersonating*, *mockery*, *miming*, *spoofing*, and *mirroring*, were not directly derived from pre-established theoretical frameworks but were instead formulated to describe specific patterns of narrative engagement that organically emerged within the social media sphere. Conceptually, the formulation of these typologies is grounded in the narrative absorption theory (KUIJPERS *et al.*, 2014; KUIJPERS; HAKEMULDER, 2017), which explains how readers or viewers become deeply immersed in a story world, and transmedia engagement theory (JENKINS *et al.*, 2013), which emphasizes how audience participation extends across multiple media and formats. Additionally, Evans's (2020) notion of peritextual engagement is employed to understand how audience interaction occurs not only within the main text but also in its surrounding spaces such as comments, hastags, captions, and other participatory forms. Thus, these typologies are intended as a new conceptual elaboration that enriches the understanding of how audiences negotiate narrative experiences and express forms of transmedial participation through performative practices in social media environments.

As discussed earlier, *House of the Dragon* revolves around the conflict between two factions: Team Green and Team Black. In this context, narrative absorption exhibits unique traits. Audience reactions on the official *House of the Dragon* Instagram account are marked by role-playing and referencing. Role-playing refers to audience members adopting the persona of a character to defend a particular team. Referencing, as defined by Purnomo *et al.*

Figure 2: Daemon scene in episode 5



Source: House of the Dragon (2025d)

Comment:

@Dasaharsh__shrivastava: Daemon stop playing Resident evil, team black needs you 🤖

Impersonating

Impersonating refers to the act of playing the role of the characters in response to the storytelling posted on Instagram. The comments posted by users are interpreted as attempts to embody characters from the *House of the Dragon* series. These responses are manifestations of the narrative absorbed by the audience, articulated through their comments. The key characteristic of impersonating lies in its diegetic consistency, the comments remain within the fictional framework constructed by *House of the Dragon*. This typology signifies a form of narrative embodiment, in which the boundary between the audience and the characters becomes

blurred due to deep emotional and imaginative involvement. Based on the analysis conducted, several data can be categorized as impersonating.

Figure 3 above are screenshots from the trailer posted on the official *House of the Dragon* Instagram account. Compared to other posts, this post garnered substantial engagement, with 800,000 likes and 14,000 comments. Among these comments, several can be associated with the typology of impersonating, where the audience plays the role of specific characters from the *House of the Dragon* series.

Comments:

@togrulraziyev: Team Green 🍀

@noaimi9: Team Black ❤️

@lonewolf___07: I'm queen Rhaenyra now 👑❤️🍀

The audience of *House of the Dragon* series is divided into two factions: Team Black, led by Rhaenyra, and Team Green, led by Alicent. Although they belong to the same house, a power struggle over the throne ultimately splits them into two opposing factions, forming the series' central conflict. The comments referenced above illustrate how the audiences take on the role of characters, aligning themselves with either Team Black or Team

Figure 3: House of The Dragon Season 2 Trailer



Source: House of the Dragon (2025h)

Green. This role-playing behavior is classified as impersonating. By utilizing Instagram's comment feature, where users can respond to one another, this impersonating often sparks intense and seemingly endless debates.

Comment:

@palantemax: *THE REAL QUESTION IS, WHAT TEAM ARE YOU?* ❤️

Replies:

@yasaman2837: *TEAM BLACK* 🔥

@livinglavidaloca.x: *green*

@tw19913: ❤️🌿

@lnchrsty: *ofc* ❤️❤️❤️

@ayllacatarine: ❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️

@ladymorghul: ❤️❤️🔪

The audience's comments on *House of the Dragon* illustrate how viewers engage deeply with the show's characters. Commenting on Instagram allows fans to embody these characters, and these comments often provoke responses from other viewers who represent the rival characters. The types of comments vary widely, including text-based responses and symbolic emojis. For example, green and black heart emojis are used as codes to indicate allegiance to Team Green or Team Black. These debates go beyond simple support, often escalating into direct attacks on the opposing faction.

Figure 4 and 5 show that the audience engages deeply in role-playing as characters from *House of the Dragon*, with their intense feelings toward rival characters being clearly expressed in the comments. This aligns with Kuijpers and Hakemulder's (2017) assertion that comments reveal the audience's investment in the narrative through analysis, debate, and personal connections. This engagement goes beyond simple support or criticism of teams, as it involves viewers forming deeper relational ties with specific characters, thus intensifying their role-playing experience.

Statistically, Figure 6 received 194,800 likes and 894 comments, a noticeably higher level of engagement compared to Figure 7, which garnered 107,400 likes and 675 comments. Based on this difference in engagement levels, we distinguished the data presented in the figures: Figure 6 displays

Figure 4: Team Black Trailer



Source: House of the Dragon (2025n)

Comment on figure 4:

@gameofthrones: Watch the Green Trailer before pledging your loyalty.

Replies on figure 4:

@praiseomoaka: do we really need to? 😊

@aparr6: I'm all set #teamblack

@wisteriasbookshelf: I don't care

Figure 5: Team Green Trailer



Source: House of the Dragon (2025o)

Comment on figure 5:

@getsunfired: It's hilarious that the Greens (a small minority of the fans) makes TB so insecure that they spam our trailer 😂

Figure 6: Daemon and Rhaenyra in a scene (Team Black)



Source: House of the Dragon (2025c)

Comments on figure 6:

@monthly_reads: Mom and Dad in their revenge era

@mxri.aana08: Love my parents

@aegonsflame: Father & mother

Reply on figure 6:

@jonfry3: fuck team green

Figure 7: Alicent and Christian Cole in a scene (Team Green)



Source: House of the Dragon (2025a)

Comment on figure 7:

@aegonsflame: Father & mother

three sample comments, while Figure 7 presents one sample comment.

The power struggle in *House of the Dragon* is centered around two factions, each represented by key couples that are prominently highlighted in the post. Daemon and Rhaenyra represent Team Black, while Alicent and Criston Cole stand for Team Green. This portrayal in the post subtly encourages the audience to engage in role-playing, as seen in the comments. Audiences from both factions, Team Black and Team Green, assume roles that suggest a deep relational connection with these characters. They position themselves as the children of the characters featured in the post. The audience perceives these characters as their parental figures, further intensifying their engagement in the narrative.

Mockery

In the comment sections, audiences often display forms of humor or parody in response to the narratives presented on the series' official Instagram account. Based on the analysis, this humorous tendency is more frequently used to express sarcasm or mock certain characters. Following this pattern, this phenomenon is categorized as mockery, a form of humorous expression that functions to mock, belittle, or deride characters within the narrative context.

The use of the term mockery is conceptually grounded in the idea that not all forms of humor or verbal attacks can be classified as caricature or parody. Unlike caricature, which typically exaggerates physical traits, or parody, which imitates narrative structures to create comedic effects, mockery operates in a more linguistic and evaluative manner. It employs sarcasm, irony, or hyperbole to convey judgment toward a character without the need to imitate or reproduce the original form.

Thus, mockery is understood as a way for audiences to participate creatively in the story world, asserting their interpretive positions through language infused with a comedic tone. Within the framework of this research, mockery is regarded as one form of narrative absorption, as it demonstrates the extent to which audiences engage with the narrative not only through empathy or emotional identification but also through acts

of mocking and distortion, transforming characters into part of a playful negotiation of meaning within digital spaces.

The Figure 8 shows a scene from *House of the Dragon* featuring Lord Larys Strong. Within the *House of the Dragon* universe, he is aligned with Team Green. Larys is often portrayed as both cunning and opportunistic; he demonstrates little loyalty to any particular side, instead supporting whoever he perceives as beneficial to his own interests. Beneath this shrewd disposition lies intelligence and a keen sense of analysis. However, the character is also depicted as having a physical limitation, as he cannot walk properly and is often shown using a walking aid. This physical condition frequently becomes a subject of parody among audiences in the comment section.

Two comments responding to a post about Larys Strong exemplify this tendency. In the *House of the Dragon* narrative, the central conflict revolves around Team Black and Team Green. However, comments such as “Team Feet” and “Foot of the King” reveal how audiences distort the logic of the story into humor that takes the form of mockery. The phrase “Team Feet” sarcastically invents a new faction that does not exist in the series, while “Foot of the King” twists the official title “Hand of the King” to mock Larys’s disability.

Figure 8: Lord Larys Strong



Source: *House of the Dragon* (2025j)

Comments:

@graces.face: Team feet

@h3_bubu: His ultimate goal is not to be named the Hand of the King, but the Foot of the King!

These comments are not merely light-hearted jokes but reflect a deeper dimension of mockery, a form of humor expressed through veiled insult and irony toward a character. In this context, comedy becomes a way for audiences to demonstrate both familiarity with the narrative and an evaluative stance toward certain figures. In other words, they participate in the story world not only by showing support or opposition but also by mocking the characters. This pattern of commentary therefore represents mockery as a mode of narrative absorption, in which engagement with the story is expressed through humor that ridicules rather than empathizes with fictional characters.

The second topic that can be categorized as a form of mockery appears in audience responses to the character Ser Criston Cole as seen in Figure 9. As is widely known, he belongs to Team Green and is one of the most disliked characters among fans. Consequently, most comments on posts featuring Ser Criston Cole's face contain elements of hate speech or ridicule. However, these mockeries are not always direct; they are often framed through humor and wordplay that reflect both the creativity and irony of the audience.

Expressions such as "A very punchable face" exemplify a distinctive form of engagement. This comment does not merely express hatred toward the character but frames it through sarcastic humor that invites laughter from those familiar with the narrative context. Within the framework of mockery, such expressions function as a form of social evaluation toward the character, a way for audiences to articulate disgust through ironic linguistic play. Similarly, the wordplay transforming "Ser Criston Cole" into "Ser Crispy Coal" reveals a similar tendency, as audiences modify the character's name to mock his traits and fate within the story.

Another form of mockery, such as the use of the term "incel," demonstrates a deeper dimension of this phenomenon. The term, associated with an online subculture of heterosexual men who are involuntarily celibate, is used sarcastically to comment on Ser Criston Cole's romantic failures. He fails to win Rhaenyra's affection and ultimately becomes a servant to Alicent without being truly loved. Through this term,

audiences do more than simply mock the character; they reinterpret his identity and gender relations in ways that are both humorous and critical.

These comments thus illustrate that mockery functions as a form of narrative absorption, emphasizing the audience's emotional involvement through humor that ridicules rather than empathizes. The audience not only understands the story's plot but also participates in it by consciously subverting meaning and laughing at the characters.

Prince Jacaerys Velaryon, or Jace as seen in Figure 10, is the son of Queen Rhaenyra and is clearly aligned with Team Black. Within the world of *House*

Figure 9: Ser Criston Cole



Source: House of the Dragon (2025m)

Comments:

- @miamihurrikane: Ser Crispy
- @duisabsent: intel ❌ incel ✅
- @tracebenjamin: A very punchable face
- @jacobalvarez1: Going incel on the enemy
- @rorifmnx: FUCK CRISPY COLE
- @eileenhr: me and my homies hate crispy coal

Figure 10: Prince Jacaerys Velaryon



Source: House of the Dragon (2025l)

Comments:

- @el3nasfine: Prince of serving face
- @azulbey: He pays his vacations with facecard
- @Plittlelordfuckleroy_: rince Jace of serving face 🍷🍷🍷 (and securing the riverlands)

of the *Dragon*, Jace's role has not yet become particularly significant in the political storyline or the central conflict. However, the relative insignificance of his role contrasts sharply with the amount of attention he receives from the audience, particularly regarding his appearance, facial expressions, and demeanor. Comments such as "Prince of serving face" or "He pays his vacations with facecard" illustrate how audiences tend to reduce Jace's character to a mere representation of his facial expressions. Even a comment like "Prince Jace of serving face 🙌🙌🙌 (and securing the Riverlands)" demonstrates how commenters mock him subtly by blending praise with irony.

These comments exemplify a more subtle form of mockery—not an overtly offensive mocking, but rather a playful expression of irony. In this case, mockery does not function as a direct verbal attack but as a way of laughing at the character's tendency to be recognized solely for his "good looks." Thus, although the comments appear light-hearted and humorous, they still operate within the logic of mockery, as they exaggerate one aspect of the character—his appearance—to expose the emptiness of meaning behind it. Consequently, the audience's response to Jace can be interpreted not merely as aesthetic appreciation but as a form of symbolic mockery toward the insignificance of his role within the larger narrative of *House of the Dragon*.

To further examine the form of mockery, we can look at the two examples (Figures 11 and 12). Both occur within the same context—when the dragons each find their respective riders. In the universe of *House of the Dragon*, every dragon can only bond with one rider at a time. When a rider dies, the dragon chooses a new successor. This selection process is not arbitrary; traditionally, only those of Targaryen blood who can speak Valyrian are able to communicate and form a bond with a dragon. However, the two characters shown in the clips—Addam of Hull and Hugh Hammer—violate this convention. Neither possesses Targaryen lineage, yet both are chosen by dragons. This anomaly generates various comedic responses from the audience.

A comment such as "what a beautiful chocolate man ha ha ha ha 🤪" demonstrates how mockery operates. The remark imitates the perspective

of the dragon Seasmoke “chasing” Addam of Hull while embedding humor rooted in the actor’s skin color (an African American). Thus, mockery here functions not merely as laughter but as a form of racialized parody, in which the character is ridiculed through visual association and the reproduction of racial stereotypes within the space of fandom.

Similarly, the comment “Vermithor is bilingual” contains mockery based on linguistic irony. Within the narrative, only Targaryen riders can speak Valyrian to establish a connection with their dragons. By suggesting that Vermithor is “bilingual,” the audience mocks the absurdity of the situation—a dragon that defies the internal logic of its fictional world to bond with an ordinary human. These two comments reveal how mockery

Figure 11: Dragon Seasmoke and Adam of Hull



Source: House of the Dragon (2025c)

Comment on figure 11:

@mattpalmerofficial: SEASMOKE: “what a beautiful chocolate man ha ha ha ha” 🤪

operates through exaggeration, irony, and humor that target both the characters and the internal coherence of the story world itself.

Based on the various data presented, it becomes evident that mockery constitutes one of the dominant forms of audience expression in responding to *House of the Dragon* content on Instagram. These comments demonstrate that humor is employed not merely as a means of role-playing or interacting with the narrative, but also as a vehicle for ridicule, belittlement, and even verbal aggression toward certain characters. In several instances, such mockery exceeds the boundaries of civility, particularly when it involves issues of race or disability, revealing the presence of an aggressive and unethical dimension within fandom culture. This phenomenon is significant because it highlights that narrative absorption is not always positive or empathetic; it can also receive the

Figure 12: Dragon Vermithor and Hugh Hammer



Source: House of the Dragon (2025f).

Comment on figure 12:

@oboy_sammy: So, Vermithor is bilingual now? 🤔 Cuz he clearly listens to Rhayneryra when she speaks valyrian, but Hugh says two words, and Vermithor chills all the sudden

darker aspects of participation, where emotional engagement with a story gives rise to harsh and discriminatory verbal practices. By foregrounding this ambivalence, the analysis of mockery expands our understanding of the interrelation between humor, narrative engagement, and ethics within the participatory digital sphere.

Miming

Miming represents the third typology identified in this study. Miming is understood as playing a role from different stories but intertextually connected. In commenting, the audience also assumes the role of characters from the series and links them to characters from narratives outside *House of the Dragon* series. Miming expands the narrative space by connecting it to other story universes. Through miming, audiences demonstrate their creativity in bridging multiple popular texts, negotiating meaning by constructing cross-narrative relationships that reveal both the breadth of their cultural literacy and their associative capacity. In this way, miming illustrates how audiences actively engage with transmedia storytelling by weaving together elements from diverse fictional worlds. In this case, the study identifies four types of comments associated with characters drawn from *Harry Potter*, *Resident Evil* game series, *Luigi's Mansion* game series, and *Vikings* series.

Figure 13 are posts containing the trailer for *House of the Dragon* Season 2. As discussed in the previous subsection, these posts garner numerous comments and likes. The comments vary widely, and one type of comment will be analyzed according to the definition of miming. In these posts, one highlighted element is the dragons. In the *House of the Dragon* universe, dragons capture more attention compared to their portrayal in the *Game of Thrones* universe. *House of the Dragon* provides a deeper exploration of the history of dragons and their riders. This focus on dragons prompts the audience to respond by connecting them with characters from other stories or by assuming the roles of characters from other intertextually linked narratives. The comments indicate that the commentators wish Draco from the *Harry Potter* universe to have a dragon. Given that

dragons do not exist in Harry Potter, the comment “*Draco should have a dragon*” demonstrates that the audience is drawing connections between *House of the Dragon* universe and *Harry Potter* universe.

Figure 14 depicts Daemon at Harrenhal. Harrenhal is a castle in the Riverlands, built by Harren the Black, who sought to construct the largest

Figure 13: House of Dragon Season 2 Trailer



Source: House of the Dragon (2025h)

Comment:

@harrypotter: these dragons look scary... brilliant, but scary

Replies:

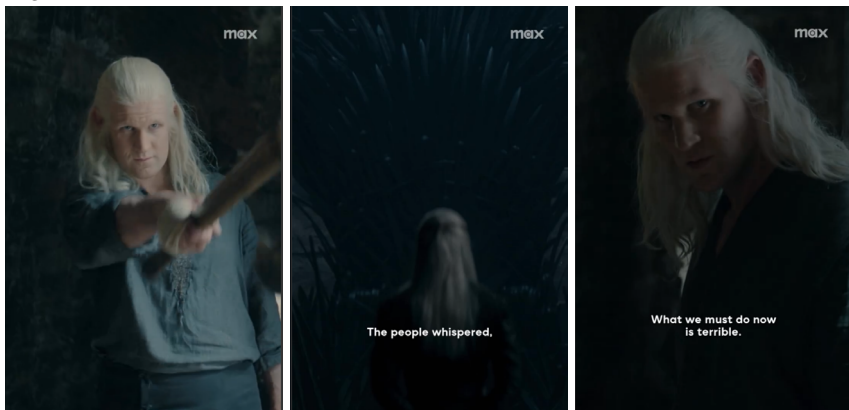
@shilananayati_: draco should have a dragon

@lukaspanelo: Draco dormiens nunquam titillandus!!

fortress in Westeros. However, the castle is believed to be cursed due to its history of death and misfortune. In summary, Daemon is seeking allies there but instead experiences persistent hallucinations. Amidst the conflict between Team Black and Team Green, Daemon's presence is highly anticipated, given that he is the husband of Queen Rhaenyra. Against this narrative backdrop, the post has elicited numerous responses about him. As seen above, one such comment advises Daemon to stop playing *Resident Evil*. *Resident Evil* is a Japanese horror video game series. The audience humorously implies that Daemon is engaged in a *Resident Evil*-like scenario due to his presence in the eerie Harrenhal. This response suggests that the audience is role-playing between two worlds, *Resident Evil* and *House of the Dragon*, and drawing connections between them.

Similar to the previous case, Figure 15 addresses the issue of Daemon at Harrenhal. The comments indicate that the audience is also responding to Daemon's scene in Harrenhal. They perceive the series not as *House of the Dragon* but rather as *Luigi's Mansion*. *Luigi's Mansion* is an action-adventure game developed and published by Nintendo in 2001. The game is set in a mansion divided into several

Figure 14: Daemon scene in episode 5



Source: House of the Dragon (2025g)

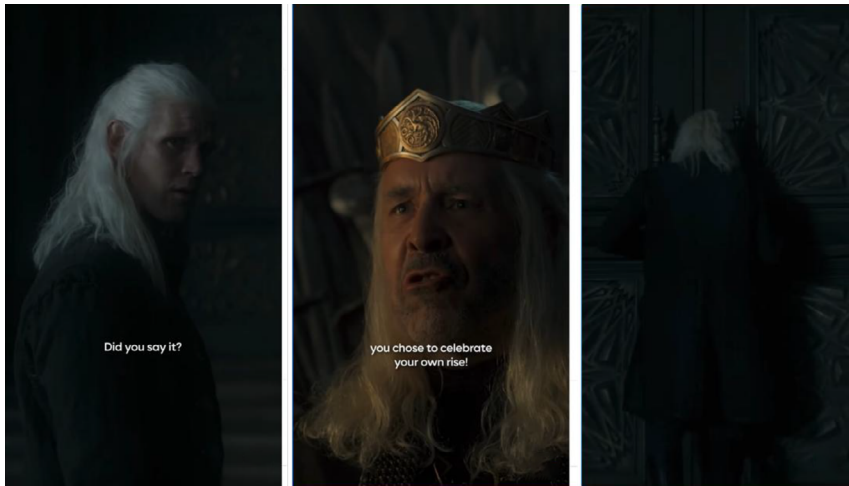
Comment:

@Dasaharsh__shrivastava: Daemon stop playing Resident evil, team black needs you 🤖

areas or rooms that players explore while controlling Luigi to hunt ghosts within the mansion. This context of *Luigi's Mansion* prompts the audience to liken Daemon's situation to being in *Luigi's Mansion* and needing to escape. Furthermore, in the final comment, the audience questions why Daemon is still in the Addams Family's house. The *Addams Family* (1964) is an American Gothic sitcom based on a New Yorker cartoon by Charles Addams. Drawing from the narrative of *The Addams Family*, the audience connects this narrative with the events in *House of the Dragon*.

In addition to Daemon, characters receive audience responses with intertextual connections to narratives outside the story, including Hugh and Ulf. Hugh and Ulf as seen in Figure 16 are bastards who become new dragon riders in Team Black. They are frequently highlighted due to the initial improbability of their becoming dragon riders. From the interview post above, the audience responds by associating them with

Figure 15: Clip of Daemon in Harrenhal



Source: *House of the Dragon* (2025b)

Comments:

@sweetcherry13: The ghost of Christmas past. Are we finished with Luigi's mansion yet?

@_raya_34_: IT'S no longer House of the dragon ... literally it became Luigi's mansion

@cup_s05: Why is daemon still at the Adams family's house??

Figure 16: Hugh Hammer and Ulf interview



Source: House of the Dragon (2025i).

Comment:

@pasaqcale: I thought I was watching Vikings for a second 🤔

Vikings (2013) series characters. The characters in *Vikings*, based on their appearance, do indeed bear similarities. It can be concluded that the audience is role-playing as characters from *Vikings* and seeing themselves within the context of *House of the Dragon*.

Spoofting

Spoofting is defined as a form of narrative engagement that employs real-life figures from social contexts as reference points to interpret or comment on fictional characters. In this practice, audiences perform or imitate public figures, celebrities, or cultural icons to create

comments that are both reflective and contextually grounded. Unlike miming, which connects *House of the Dragon* characters to those from other fictional narratives, spoofing links fictional characters to real-world figures. Through this process, audiences demonstrate their cultural awareness while constructing a broader engagement between the narrative world and the surrounding social reality. From the data collected, this study identifies only one topic that can be categorized as spoofing.

Prince Aemond, as seen in Figure 17 is one of the prominent characters in *House of the Dragon* series. He is a key character in Team Black, and it is no surprise that he has a substantial fan base. One notable aspect is Prince Aemond's role in substituting for the ailing King Aegon. From the comments above, it can be inferred that the audience associates Prince Aemond with the title "*Prince Regent.*" In English, the title

Figure 17: Prince Aemond and Ser Christian Cole scene



Source: House of the Dragon (2025k)

Comments:

@avarosegilbert: need to see aemond in that prince regent crown for research purposes...

@ewan_mitchell_sapphire: PRINCE REGENT 🔥🔥

“Prince Regent” is most commonly linked with George IV, who held the style of His Royal Highness as Prince Regent during the Regency era due to the incapacitation (resulting from mental illness) of his father, George III. The title “Prince Regent” is generally bestowed upon a prince who governs a country during the minority, absence, or disability of the nominal sovereign. This title, while taken from the real-life story of George IV, informs the audience’s responses. Although there is only one data point, the reaction to the post indicates that there will always be an audience with references to real-world characters, enabling them to connect with the narrative.

Mirroring

The final typology identified in this study is mirroring. Mirroring involves reflecting the characters in story by relating them to the commenter’s personal lives. This concept closely resembles self-reflection. The audience responds to posts by connecting them to their own lives. In the process of narrative absorption, it is believed that the audience may imagine themselves within the story or, conversely, perceive characters from the series as reflections of themselves.

Figure 18 pertains to the typology of mirroring. As discussed in the typology of mockery, Lord Larys Strong is indeed a cunning, opportunistic individual with no loyalty to anyone. His father, Lyonel Strong, serves as Hand of the King, and his brother is Harwin Strong, the Queen Alicent’s guard. Despite his physical imperfections, Larys is highly adept at political maneuvering within the realm. To secure a strategic position, he sacrificed his father and brother to become Lord of Harrenhal. Such characteristics understandably make people wary of dealing with him. This is evidenced by the comment above. In this comment, the audience is role-playing as themselves, stating that they would leave if confronted by Larys Strong. The narrative surrounding Larys Strong seems to provoke the audience to absorb the narration that Larys Strong is someone to be avoided, suggesting that one should distance themselves if they encounter him.

Figure 18: Lord Larys Strong



Source: House of the Dragon (2025j)

Comment:

@breecancook: This is the snitch of all snitches! If I ever saw him I would go the other way instantly. 😂

Discussion

This research integrates several theories to develop a typology in its conclusion. First, we apply Jenkins *et al.*'s (2013) concept of spreadability to identify intertextual links between the content of *House of the Dragon* and other media. These links reveal connections between the intrinsic and extrinsic elements of the show. Next, Torres *et al.*'s (2015) concept of transmedia engagement is used to explore how different media platforms, while sharing the same content, create varying levels of engagement among target audiences. Evans' (2020) theory of peritextual engagement is also relevant, as the focus is on social media interactions. Finally, the concept of narrative absorption by Kuijpers *et al.* (2014) and Kuijpers and Hakemulder (2017) helps shape the typology. Based on the analysis, we identify five typologies: impersonating, mockery, miming, spoofing, and mirroring.

From the conducted analysis, these five typologies demonstrate that audiences comment in various ways in response to posts on Instagram. When fans leave comments on posts related to a film—whether on official social media accounts, fan pages, or discussion forums—they often express their emotional responses, interpretations, and theories about the narrative (KUIJPERS; HAKEMULDER, 2017). These audience comments are subsequently examined and categorized into forms of narrative absorption typology. The analysis also reveals that the narrative of *House of the Dragon* absorbed by the audience is highly diverse. The five typologies discussed are not entirely exhaustive; potential typologies may emerge over time. Social media is perpetually active, as is the Instagram account for *House of the Dragon*. This account will continue to attract visitors, and comments will increase, especially considering that *House of the Dragon* will continue into its third season.

Analyzing narrative absorption based on comment data does have its drawbacks. On Instagram, the comment feature cannot upload videos. Audiences can only respond to posts through text, emoticons, stickers, and GIFs. Text-based comments do not fully capture the narrative conveyed by the commenter. The process of interpreting text may also lead to inaccuracies. Interviewing commenters could be an option to mitigate interpretative errors, although this approach may be challenging to implement. A more effective method might be to analyze social media platforms with more varied commenting features. One platform that could be utilized is Twitter/X.

Twitter/X, despite being older than Instagram, has been surpassed in popularity and user base by Instagram over time. Nonetheless, a study by Ayora *et al.* (2021) indicates that both platforms offer near real-time latency, making them suitable for real-time processing. However, when comparing the platforms, Twitter/X excels in all evaluated metrics. Twitter/X offers more response features than Instagram, including reply, like, and retweet options. Additionally, Twitter/X allows users to upload videos within comments. Furthermore, users can retweet comments from others, which can be seen by other users who may not

be aware of the original tweet. This complexity in features enables a broader dissemination of narratives within audience comments. Utilizing the Twitter/X social media platform may allow for a more in-depth exploration of narrative absorption. In light of the evolving dynamics of social media, future researchers might consider analyzing similar topics on Twitter/X.

Conclusion

We argue that comments in an official Instagram account of a “team versus team” movie are a form of narrative absorption due to the nature of role-playing and references of the comments. Departing from these claims and findings, we further constructed a typology of narrative absorption that consisted of impersonating, miming, mockery, spoofing, and mirroring.

The typology was constructed based on how the commenters role-played themselves and referenced the movies. In this study, the movie is *House of the Dragon*. Impersonating refers to playing a role as one of the characters as a response to the storytelling posted on Instagram, mockery to playing a role but twisting it to evoke parodic or comedic. This humorous tendency is more frequently used to express sarcasm or mock certain characters, miming to playing a role from different stories but intertextually connected, spoofing to playing a role with references to real-life characters, and mirroring to reflecting the characters by relating to the commenters’ personal lives.

Future studies could employ the typology as a basis to prove whether the typology is applicable to comments on other social media like Twitter/X that has different features. Through this study, the findings could complete the typology that we proposed. Movie-making practitioners who attempt to design movies with a “team versus team” narrative formula could employ the typology to construct a narrative absorption level rubric. With the rubric, they could predict the fans’ engagement level through social media.

Conflict of interest: nothing to declare.

Source of financing: none.

Authors' contributions: Rizal, M.: conceptualization, formal analysis, writing – original draft, writing – review and editing. Purnomo, S. L. A.: conceptualization, methodology, validation. Sartika, Y.: data curation, investigation. Adila, W.: methodology, formal analysis, investigation. Haris, A.: validation, formal analysis, visualization. Adzhani, S. A.: investigation, resources, writing – review and editing. Purnama, S. L. P.: writing – review and editing, project administration. Robith Khoiril Umam: supervision, project administration, writing – review and editing.

Data availability statement: All data analyzed in this study consist of publicly accessible user comments from the official Instagram account of House of the Dragon. The data are openly available on the platform and can be accessed directly through the corresponding public posts.

References

- AIMUKHAMBET, Z. A.; ABDILMANATKYZY, A.; BAITANASOVA, K.; SEIPUTANOVA, A.; KURMAMBAYEVA, K. The poetic interpretation of binary opposition in the structure of myth. *Rupkatha Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities*, v. 9, n. 1, p. 11-20, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.21659/rupkatha.v9n1.03>
- ATKINSON, S. A. Transmedia film: from embedded engagement to embodied experience. In: FREEMAN, M.; GAMBARATO, R. R. (org.). *The Routledge companion to transmedia studies*. New York: Routledge, 2018. p. 447-454.
- AYORA, V.; HORITA, F.; KAMIENSKI, C. Profiling online social network platforms: Twitter vs. Instagram. In: HAWAII INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SYSTEM SCIENCES, 54., 2021. *Proceedings [...]*. 2021. Available at: <https://hdl.handle.net/10125/70955>. Accessed on: Nov. 25, 2025.
- BARBIE. Director: G. Gerwig. United States; United Kingdom: Heyday Films; LuckyChap Entertainment; Mattel Films; Warner Bros. Pictures, 2023. Film.
- BEDDOWS, E. *Consuming transmedia: how audiences engage with narrative across multiple story modes*. Doctoral (Dissertation) – Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne, 2012.
- DAVIS, C. H. Audience value and transmedia products. In: STORSUL, T.; KRUMSVIK, A. (org.). *Media innovations: a multidisciplinary study of change*. Gothenburg: Nordicom, 2013. p. 175-190.
- EVANS, E. *Understanding engagement in transmedia culture*. New York; London: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 2020.
- GRAVES, M. *Lost in a transmedia storytelling franchise: rethinking transmedia engagement item*. Dissertation – University of Kansas, Kansas, 2011. Available at: <https://hdl.handle.net/1808/9780>. Accessed on: Nov. 25, 2025.
- HOUSE OF THE DRAGON. Alicent and Christian Cole in a scene (Team Green). *Instagram*. Available at: <https://www.instagram.com/p/C3DrDZPBCR-/#>. Accessed on: Dec. 1, 2025a.

- HOUSE OF THE DRAGON. Clip of Daemon in Harrenhal. *Instagram*. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/C9uni0_NOKp/. Accessed on: Dec. 1, 2025b.
- HOUSE OF THE DRAGON. Daemon and Rhaenyra in a scene (Team Black). *Instagram*. Available at: <https://www.instagram.com/p/C0hsicoPp9p>. Accessed on: Dec. 1, 2025c.
- HOUSE OF THE DRAGON. Daemon scene in episode 5. *Instagram*. Available at: <https://www.instagram.com/p/C9VH0bwvvcY/>. Accessed on: Dec. 1, 2025d.
- HOUSE OF THE DRAGON. Dragon Seasmoke and Adam of Hull. *Instagram*. Available at: <https://www.instagram.com/p/C9x0oHQob2D/>. Accessed on: Dec. 1, 2025e.
- HOUSE OF THE DRAGON. Dragon Vermithor and Hugh Hammer. *Instagram*. Available at: <https://www.instagram.com/p/C-Df1DXgBIU>. Accessed on: Dec. 1, 2025f.
- HOUSE OF THE DRAGON. House of The Dragon Season 2 Poster. *Instagram*. Available at: <https://www.instagram.com/p/C7RtO00sUBs/>. Accessed on: Dec. 1, 2025g.
- HOUSE OF THE DRAGON. House of The Dragon Season 2 Trailer. *Instagram*. Available at: <https://www.instagram.com/p/C0XBaJJLqFe/>. Accessed on: Dec. 1, 2025h.
- HOUSE OF THE DRAGON. Hugh Hammer and Ulf interview. *Instagram*. Available at: <https://www.instagram.com/p/C-Df1DXgBIU/>. Accessed on: Dec. 1, 2025i.
- HOUSE OF THE DRAGON. Lord Larys Strong. *Instagram*. Available at: <https://www.instagram.com/p/C8iW-a8RoGS/>. Accessed on: Dec. 1, 2025j.
- HOUSE OF THE DRAGON. Prince Aemond and Ser Christian Cole scene. *Instagram*. Available at: <https://www.instagram.com/p/C5EfP6XvzIZ/>. Accessed on: Dec. 1, 2025k.
- HOUSE OF THE DRAGON. Prince Jacaerys Velaryon. *Instagram*. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/C9frRehMG_O/. Accessed on: Dec. 1, 2025l.
- HOUSE OF THE DRAGON. Ser Criston Cole. *Instagram*. Available at: <https://www.instagram.com/p/C8-LQn Cv0cA/>. Accessed on: Dec. 1, 2025m.
- HOUSE OF THE DRAGON. Team Black Trailer. *Instagram*. Available at: <https://www.instagram.com/p/C4x9GApMD8/#>. Accessed on: Dec. 1, 2025n.
- HOUSE OF THE DRAGON. Team Green Trailer. *Instagram*. Available at: <https://www.instagram.com/p/C4x9UcksBZ/#>. Accessed on: Dec. 1, 2025o.
- JENKINS, H.; FORD, S.; GREEN, J. *Spreadable media: creating value and meaning in a networked culture*. New York: New York University Press, 2013.
- KUIJPERS, M. M.; HAKEMULDER, F. *Narrative absorption*. Amsterdam; Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2017.
- KUIJPERS, M. M.; HAKEMULDER, F.; TAN, E. S.; DOICARU, M. M. Exploring absorbing reading experiences. *Scientific Study of Literature*, v. 4, n. 1, p. 89-122, 2014. <https://doi.org/10.1075/ssol.4.1.05kui>
- LIVINGSTONE, S. Media literacy and the challenge of new information and communication technologies. *Communication Review*, v. 7, n. 1, p. 3-14, 2004. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10714420490280152>
- MARTIN, G. R. R.; CONDAL, R.; HESS, S.; DEGRATÉ, C.; LAU, K. *House of the Dragon*. 2022. [Video recording].
- PERRY, M. S. Multimodal engagement through a transmedia storytelling project for undergraduate students. *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies*, v. 20, n. 3, p. 19-40, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.17576/GEMA-2020-2003-02>

- PURNOMO, SF. L. A.; PURNAMA, SF. L. S.; UNTARI, L.; AZZAHRA, A.; PRAMANA PUTRI, N. O. Proposing a typology of ludification as a translation technique for PC, console, mobile and online games. *Langkawi: Journal of The Association for Arabic and English*, v. 7, n. 1, p. 25-39, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.31332/lkw.v7i1.2338>
- SCOLARI, C. A. Transmedia storytelling: implicit consumers, narrative worlds, and branding in contemporary media production. *International Journal of Communication*, v. 3, p. 586-606, 2009. <https://doi.org/1932-8036/20090586>
- SQUID GAME. Director: D.-H. Hwang. *Seoul: Siren Pictures Inc.*; Netflix, 2021. TV series.
- SPRADLEY, J. P. *Participant observation*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 2016.
- THE ADDAMS FAMILY. Creators: C. Addams and D. L. Rubin. United States: Filmways Television; ABC, 1964. TV series.
- TORRES, T. Z.; SOUZA, M. I. F.; CARVALHO, J. R. P.; EVANGELISTA, S. R. M. Multimedia design and transmedia storytelling: content production for microtrainings. *Creative Education*, v. 6, n. 23, p. 2466-2480, 2015. <https://doi.org/10.4236/ce.2015.623254>
- VIKINGS. Creator: M. Hirst. Canada; Ireland: World 2000 Entertainment; Take 5 Productions; Shaw Media; MGM Television; History, 2013. TV series.
- WILSON, M. J. Book review: Fan Cultures by Matt Hills. *Spectator: Get A Life?: Fan Cultures and Contemporary Television*, v. 25, n. 2, p. 95-97, 2005.

About the authors

Muhammad Rizal is a senior lecturer at the Faculty of Cultures and Languages, Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Mas Said Surakarta. His research interests include media and cultural studies, film studies, and English literature, with a focus on cyber literature and pop culture. E-mail: muhammad.rizal@staff.uinsaid.ac.id

SF. Luthfie Arguby Purnomo is a professor at the Faculty of Cultures and Languages, Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Mas Said Surakarta. He specializes in new media studies with concerns over video games studies. E-mail: luthfiearguby@staff.uinsaid.ac.id

Yustin Sartika is an assistant professor at the Faculty of Cultures and Languages, Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Mas Said Surakarta. Her research interests include pop culture, travel literature, and time travel literature. E-mail: yustin.sartika@staff.uinsaid.ac.id

Wildi Adila is an assistant professor at the Faculty of Cultures and Languages, Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Mas Said Surakarta. He is determined to explore

how colloquial languages and cultural norms are adapted in today's modern digital advertising – brand and product naming, tagline, copywriting, and gender representation. E-mail: wildi.adila@staff.uinsaid.ac.id

Arkin Haris is an assistant professor at the Faculty of Cultures and Languages, Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Mas Said Surakarta. His expertise lies in ecolinguistics, with a distinct focus on the dynamic interplay between ecological narratives and digital media. E-mail: arkin.haris@staff.uinsaid.ac.id

Shabrina An Adzhani is a senior lecturer at the Faculty of Cultures and Languages, Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Mas Said Surakarta. She has published some articles about postcolonialism, feminism, and literary adaptations. E-mail: shabrina.aa@staff.uinsaid.ac.id

SF. Lukfianka Sanjaya Purnama is an assistant professor at the Faculty of Cultures and Languages, Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Mas Said Surakarta. His research interests include Translation Studies, Linguistics, American Studies, and Popular Culture. E-mail: lukfiankasanjaya@staff.uinsaid.ac.id

Robith Khoiril Umam is an assistant professor at the Faculty of Cultures and Languages, Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Mas Said Surakarta. He obtained his degrees in English literature and linguistics. His research areas include media studies, translation, and linguistics. E-mail: robith.khoirilumam@staff.uinsaid.ac.id

Received on: 08/13/2025

Approved on: 10/27/2025