

Research Project

Pragmatics of telecinematic writing: English subtitles and viewer comments as situated language use

Project funded by own resources

Project title Pragmatics of telecinematic writing: English subtitles and viewer comments as situated language use

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Organisation / Research unit

Departement Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaften / Kognitive Linguistik und Spracherwerbsforschung (Behrens, engl. Sprachw.)

Departement Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaften / English Linguistics (Locher)

Project start 01.01.2018

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Status Active

This project explores pragmatic aspects of communicative practices that can be described as screen-writing, i.e. written communication that supports and/or co-constructs meaning previously or contemporaneously communicated multimodally – through the audiovisual channels of film and television. A set of studies address language use in interlingual and intralingual English subtitles; the way in which subtitled films and television series communicate with their viewers; the communication of subtitled data by researchers for researchers; fansubtitles and viewer comments as community products. The individual publications are as follows.

(1) – Subtitles and cinematic meaning-making: Interlingual subtitles as textual agents

This theoretical paper adopts the point of view of the audience of subtitled films and outlines a theory of subtitles as communicative agents within the participation structures of film reception. Based on examples from three Swiss fiction films – *Heidi* (2015), *Heimatland* (2015) and *Der Goalie bin ig* (2014) – the following communicative effects are found and illustrated: uniformity, authorisation, foregrounding, aestheticisation, foreignisation. These effects are conceptualised in terms of Constitutive Communication theory and textual agency, which describe that by communicating with audiences, subtitles animate into being other participants in film discourse and contribute to what viewers take away in terms of characters, stories, the cultural aspects they represent and the source culture(s) from which the text is perceived to communicate.

(2) – Subtitled artefacts as communication – the case of *Ocean's Eleven Scene 12*

This article examines how *Ocean's Eleven's* Scene 12 and its English DVD subtitles can be analysed and understood from the perspective of the pragmatics of fiction and more generally pragmatics and communication studies. Examples from the scene are used to describe the film's participation structures. Communication with film viewers is approached from a cognitive-pragmatic perspective and in terms of Grice's Cooperative Principle. Agency in this communicative setting is discussed from the perspective of Constitutive Communication Theory.

(3) – *Ocean's Eleven Scene 12 – Lost in Transcription*

Since analysts view film scenes in different reception situations and since even the same reception situation will lead to differing textual representations of data, the basis for researchers' analyses may nonetheless be underspecified. This article identifies aspects of data selection and transcription that are

all too often neglected, but are critical for analysis and should not only be reflected on more thoroughly but also explicated to readers.ă

(4)ăTranslating the other: Communal TV watching of Korean TV drama (second author; first author: Miriam Locher)

(5)ăHumour support and emotive stance in comments on K-Drama (First author, Second author: Miriam Locher)

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Keywords Pragmatics of fiction, pragmatics, audiovisual translation, subtitling, participation structures

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Add publication

Published results

4515905, Messerli, Thomas C., Subtitles and cinematic meaning-making: Interlingual subtitles as textual agents, 0167-8507 ; 1613-3684, *Multilingua*, Publication: JournalArticle (Originalarbeit in einer wissenschaftlichen Zeitschrift)

4599726, Locher, Miriam A.; Messerli, Thomas C., Translating the other: Communal TV watching of Korean TV drama, 0378-2166 ; 1879-1387, *Journal of Pragmatics*, Publication: JournalArticle (Originalarbeit in einer wissenschaftlichen Zeitschrift)

4600274, Messerli, Thomas C., Subtitled artefacts as communication - the case of Ocean's Eleven's Scene 12, *Perspectives*, Publication: JournalArticle (Originalarbeit in einer wissenschaftlichen Zeitschrift)

4600275, Messerli, Thomas C., Ocean's Eleven's Scene 12 - Lost in Transcription, *Perspectives*, Publication: JournalArticle (Originalarbeit in einer wissenschaftlichen Zeitschrift)

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