

Discourse, dialogue and characterisation in TV series



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(eds.)**

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Chapter 6

Nosedive: A corpus pragmatics analysis of compliments and laughter

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ABSTRACT

The last two decades have witnessed an increase in studies aimed to unveil the insights of the complex communicative process between the collective sender and the audiences in fictional TV series. This study explores the portrayal of complimenting acts and laughter in the dystopian fictional world represented in the episode *Nosedive* from the TV series *Black Mirror*. The main objective is to identify and discuss how these resources shape the interactional routines presented to the audience and serve the needs of the collective sender's communicative intention. The research is grounded on the pragmatics of fiction and applies corpus pragmatics methodologies that allow the quantitative and qualitative study of data. Results revealed that compliments were paid in character's dialogue and by means of computer mediated communication. Laughter was identified as multimodally presented and intended to enhance positive responses and agreement. The presence and interrelatedness of compliments and laughter as found in fictional dialogue could be interpreted as the interactional pattern that may serve to meaning-creation and meaning-interpretation purposes.

Keywords: TV series, corpus pragmatics, telecinematic discourse, complimenting acts, laughter.

1. INTRODUCTION

The analysis of fictional TV series discourse has gained attention from linguists and researchers due to its popularity among media consumers, which are, in turn, exposed to and provided with social, cultural, and ideological information (Bednarek 2018). Previous studies on the intricacies that the study of telecinematic discourse entails have identified different levels of communication between screenwriters and audiences (Jucker & Locher 2017; Messerli 2017) in addition to the role of characters' dialogues and their function in the communication of primary and secondary messages to the audience (Bednarek 2017, 2018; Kozloff 2000).

The award-winning TV series *Black Mirror* (Channel 4 2011-2014) (Netflix 2016-present), whose common thread is technology consumption and its possible side effects (Conley & Burroughs 2020), has been widely studied in the last decade.

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