Pre-conference workshop:

To boldly go: Corpus approaches to the language of Science Fiction

Convenors:

Claudia Lange (TU Dresden)
Sofia Rüdiger (University of Bayreuth)

Engaging with possible futures is an essential human endeavor and the popularity of the Science Fiction (SF) genre in general, but also particularly among linguists, thus does not come as a surprise. SF has the power to continually shape, stimulate, and challenge contemporary thought and societal norms, and serves much deeper undertakings than being mere speculative fiction.

While being notoriously difficult to define, most writers on Science Fiction (SF) take Darko Suvin's by now classic definition of the genre as a reference point (e.g. Shippey 2007: 15, Adams 2017: 331):

SF is, then, a literary genre whose necessary and sufficient conditions are the presence and interaction of estrangement and cognition, and whose main formal device is an imaginative framework alternative to the author's empirical environment. (Suvin 2016[1979]: 20)

Science Fiction texts – which we take to include stories, novels, fan fiction, video games, TV series, and movies – rely on linguistic "means of estrangement" listed by Adams (2017: 333ff.) to different degrees. Science Fiction's alternative 'imaginative framework' comes to life via the creative use of language and may range from occasional 'alien' referring expressions to the development of fullyfledged artificial languages, with Klingon being the most iconic and enduring example (Adams 2011, Okrent 2009).

Whereas previous research on SF has rested mainly on literary and qualitative approaches, we propose corpus linguistics as a fruitful method to investigate the language of Science Fiction from new perspectives. Recently published resources, such as the BYU TV Corpus (2019) and the BYU Movie Corpus (2019), include ample SF material, offer easy access to telecinematic discourse, and have yet to be employed for large-scale corpus linguistic research of SF.

ICAME42

icame42@tu-dortmund.de
icame42.englisch.tu-dortmund.de
twitter.com/icame42

Page 1/2

Appendix

Adams, Michael (2017), The pragmatics of estrangement in fantasy and science fiction. In Locher, Miriam A. & Andreas H. Jucker (eds.), *Pragmatics of Fiction*. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, 329-63.

Adams, Michael (ed.) (2011*), From Elvish to Klingon: Exploring Invented Languages*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bould, Mark (2009), Language and Linguistics. In Bould, Mark, Butler, Andrew M., Roberts, Adam & Vint, Sherryl (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Science Fiction*. London: Routledge, 225-235.

Epstein, Robert, Roberts, Gary, & Beber, Grace (eds.) (2008); *Parsing the Turing Test: Philosophical and Methodological Issues in the Quest for the Thinking Computer*. Dordrecht: Springer.

Okrent, Arika (2009), *In the Land of Invented Languages: Esperanto Rock Stars, Klingon Poets, Loglan Lovers, and the Mad Dreamers Who Tried to Build a Perfect Language*. New York: Spiegel & Grau.

Peterson, David J. (2015), *The Art of Language Invention: From Horse-Lords to Dark Elves, the Words behind World-Building*. New York: Penguin.

Shippey, Tom (2007), Hard Reading: The Challenges of Science Fiction. In Seed, David (ed.), *A Companion to Science Fiction*. Malden, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 9-26.

Suvin, Darko (2016 [1979]), *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction: On the Poetics and History of a Literary Genre*. Oxford: Peter Lang.

The Movie Corpus (2019), https://www.english-corpora.org/movies/

The TV Corpus (2019), https://www.english-corpora.org/tv/

ICAME42

icame42@tu-dortmund.de
icame42.englisch.tu-dortmund.de
twitter.com/icame42

Page 2/2