



POSUDEK VEDOUcíHO BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

Studijní obor: **Anglický jazyk a literatura (dvouoborové studium)**

Název práce: **Understanding the character of Sherlock Holmes as it emerges through his communicative interactions in the British TV series Sherlock (2010-2017)**

Autorka práce: **Karolína Češková**

Vedoucí bakalářské práce: **Mgr. Helena Lohrová, Ph.D.**

Oponent bakalářské práce: **Mgr. Petr Kos, Ph.D.**

Short characteristics of the thesis:

This bachelor thesis employs Conversation Analysis to the examination of selected interactions between Sherlock Holmes and other key characters featured in the British TV series *Sherlock* (2010-2017). The thesis takes a novel yet deliberate approach of applying CA, a methodology traditionally used for the analysis of authentic talk-in-interaction, to uncover the literary construction of the character of Sherlock Holmes as it emerges from his conversational interactions in the TV series *Sherlock*. In the analysis and the subsequent interpretation, the author draws on the original works of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, specifically his first Sherlock novel *A Study in Scarlet*, published in 1887. This comparative parallel provides the scope to determine three key aspects that form the fictional character of Sherlock Holmes in the respective TV series and which attain prominence in comparison to the literary iteration of Sherlock Holmes. These have been identified as The Loner detective, Sherlock's superior behaviour, Emotional Sherlock Holmes and are developed in subsections 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 respectively.

The thesis is structured into seven core chapters and is supplemented with Appendices including a list of transcription conventions used to refine the original transcripts and an overview of data samples included in the analysis. The original *Sherlock* BBC complete transcripts are provided on the enclosed CD-ROM.

Overall assessment:

The thesis structure is clear, the overall length and depth of the material are appropriate to an undergraduate dissertation.

It was certainly appropriate for the analysis to include a chapter delineating the differences between authentic and fictional conversation.

From the 13 episodes the author selected four - *A Study in Pink* (2010), *A Scandal in Belgravia* (2012), *The Sign of Three* (2014), *The Final Problem* (2017) - from which 14 samples were extracted and transcribed in more detail. The process of close re-viewing and enriching the transcripts with CA transcription symbols is set out in the Data section. The actual effort of the series producers to emulate natural interaction as much as possible is notable and very interesting as is the occurrence of features (i.e., overlapping) that are highly frequent in authentic interaction yet are typically absent from dialogues that are constructed fictionally or for stage. It is therefore perhaps a shame that the author has not made more of this theme in her description of the data.



The identification of the 3 salient features of the character of Sherlock Holmes may be described as slightly impressionistic as the author provides limited rationale as to on what basis these have been determined. Analytically this breaches the core principle of CA – that of unmotivated looking – which should have formed the bedrock of the entire analysis. To be fair, however, the character of Sherlock Holmes is well established in both literature and TV and the three features identified may be legitimately considered as three of Sherlock's key characteristics. The manifestation of these features through the analysis of the selected data extracts supports the case. The analysis therefore examined the discourse to identify how these were portrayed in the TV series through interaction of the key characters.

Furthermore, it has to be acknowledged that the script writers had the advantage of planning every communication to elicit a particular reaction. This, however, was done with due regard to realism and to create talk which to the viewer would be perceived as natural talk in action. The characteristics thus also reflect and possibly drawn on the wealth of the published novels where they emerge as part of the narrative and have survived to be replicated in the BBC TV series as the analysis identified. Hence it seems self-evident to pursue and interpret the realisation of these typified features in the analysis of the selected scripts.

A further opportunity to the thesis which was not fully exploited is that the author does not always draw sufficiently on the conversational features of the interaction and instead bases her interpretation of the data on her understanding and knowledge of the plot. This again at times violates the principles of a CA analysis.

Despite my few reservations, Karolína's submission offers a solid piece of work in which she has managed to marry her passion for the character of Sherlock Holmes as stylised by a popular English actor Benedict Cumberbatch with a linguistic analysis underpinned by a synoptic review of relevant literature. This is appropriate and fully in line with the objectives posed for bachelor theses.

Overall, the discussion provides a highly engaging evidence of how the film producers draw on the rules of spontaneous conversation in order to construct and stylise fictional characters in such a way that they will come across as authentic and natural. The fact that this is constructed through the scripts of verbal interactions is nothing surprising, yet it is most interesting to understand how this is achieved. This, I believe is the novel insight generated by Karolína's approach, which may by implication enrich the construction and realism of talk in fictional characters.

In conclusion, I would like to appreciate Karolína's motivation for the topic, her initiative to formulate and defend her own, novel insights and, finally, also her diligence in refining and completing the analysis.

Práci **doporučuji** k obhajobě.

Navrhovaná klasifikace: **velmi dobře**

23. srpna 2020

Datum

Podpis