

Guest Lecture

Friday, 07 December 2018, 10:15 am

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Repetition in Telecinematic Humour:

How US American sitcoms employ formal and semantic repetition in the construction of multimodal humour

Television sitcoms, and especially those that broadcast studio audience laughter, are full of recurring elements, which range from settings and characters to actions and utterances. In the repetitive audiovisual text of the sitcom lies the basis for the humorous effects that it aims to trigger in its viewers, and the question is thus: What role does repetition play in the construction of humour?

In order to address that question, I offer a linguistic exploration of the particular realisations and functions of repetition in American sitcom humour. Based on my empirical analyses of formal and semantic repetition in the AMSIL (AMerican Sitcoms with a Laugh track) corpus, a collection of US American sitcoms that were produced 2010–2016, I examine the ways in which repetition of words and structures, of forms and meaning, of linguistic and non-linguistic signs contribute to sitcom humour. Repetition, as I will show, is instrumental microscopically, in the construction of individual humorous incongruities, as well as macroscopically, in the structuring of the sitcom narrative.

Dpt. of English, Nadelberg 6, Great Lecture Hall