Narrative Process Annotation of Comic Strips for Corpus Analysis

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FB 10 – Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaften
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Outline

• Comics and Multimodality
• Where I started
• Where I am now
• Analysis & Results
Comics and Multimodality

• Bridging the gap between:
  • visual & verbal representations
  • structure & meaning
  • single & sequential representations

Cham (1997-2014) PHD Comics.
Where I started: Humor construction in comic strips

• Research Question:
  • What resources are employed to create humor in comic strips?

• Hypotheses:
  • There is a general pattern across different comic strips to create humor.
  • The last panel in a comic strip activates the script opposition.

• Theoretical Frameworks:
  • Script-Based Semantic Theory of Humor (Raskin, 1985)
  • General Theory of Verbal Humor (Attardo, 2001)
  • Adoption of the GTVH for multi-modal analysis (Tsakona, 2009)
  • Narrative Processes (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006)
  • Speech functions and responses; Logico-semantic relations (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014)
Where I started: Humor construction in comic strips

• Analysis:
  • panel-for-panel analysis
  • restricted vocabulary

• Data:
  • 6 comic strips from PHD Comics (Cham, 1997-2014)
  • similar topic
  • same protagonists
  • published in 2013
Where I started: Humor construction in comic strips

• Results:
  • no general pattern across comic strips to construct humor
  • three different patterns of speech function pairs constellations
  • in 5 out 6 comic strips the last panel activated the script opposition
Where I started: Humor construction in comic strips

• Problems:
  • too many frameworks
  • results did not explain humor construction
  • very broad process types (action, reaction, verbal)
  • very little data

• Solutions:
  • no humor
  • 2 frameworks
  • refined process type analysis
  • more data
Where I am now: Process Annotation

• Why processes?
  • experiential metafunction: clause as representation (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014)
  • figures: quantum of change in the flow of events
Where I am now: Process Types

- Material
  - intransitive
  - transitive
  - unidirectional
  - bidirectional
  + Actor
  + Goal

- Mental
  - intransitive
  - transitive
  - unidirectional
  - bidirectional
  + Actor
  + Goal
  + Senser
  + Phenomenon

- Verbal
  - intransitive
  - transitive
  - unidirectional
  - bidirectional
  + Actor
  + Goal
  + Sayer
  + Message
  + Reactor
  + Phenomenon

- Behavioural
  - intransitive
  - transitive
  + Actor
  + Goal
  + Behaver
  + Phenomenon
  + Receiver

Kress & van Leeuwen (2006)
Halliday & Matthiessen (2014)

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Where I am now: Process Types

The Visible

• Material
  • material intransitive (hasActor)
  • material transitive unidirectional (hasActor, hasGoal)
  • material transitive bidirectional (hasInteractors)

• Mental
  • mental cognition (hasSenser, hasPhenomenon)
  • mental perception intransitive (hasReactor)
  • mental perception transitive unidirectional (hasReactor, hasPhenomenon)
  • mental perception transitive bidirectional (hasInterreactors)

• Verbal
  • verbal intransitive (hasSayer, hasMessage)
  • verbal transitive (hasSayer, hasMessage, hasReceiver)

• Behavioural (hasBehavior)

The Inferred

• Inferred Material
  • hasInferredActor
  • hasInferredGoal
  • hasInferredInteractors

• Inferred Mental
  • hasInferredSenser
  • hasInferredPhenomenon
  • hasInferredInterreactors

• Inferred Verbal
  • hasInferredSayer
  • hasInferredReceiver
Analysis & Results: Visible Processes

[Image of comic strips showing a conversation between two individuals, accompanied by speech bubbles and mental reaction lines.]

Cham (1997-2014) PHD Comics.
Analysis & Results: Inferred Processes

Cham (1997-2014) PHD Comics.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strip_ID</th>
<th>Panel_ID</th>
<th>Process Type</th>
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<th>Category2</th>
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<td>Hmm, this person sort of knew what to do, but used the formula incorrectly.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hmm, this person sort of knew what to do, but used the formula incorrectly.</td>
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</table>
Analysis & Results: Data

- 3 – 6 panels
- max. 2 protagonists
- 156 processes (28 inferred)
  - material > relational > mental > verbal > behavioural > existential

![Occurrence of Process Types]

- **Material** 15%
- **Mental perception** 32%
- **Verbal** 50%
- **Behavioural** 3%
Analysis & Results: Findings

Processes per Panel

Panel 1
- Material_intransitive
- Perception_intransitive
- Verbal_intransitive

Panel 2
- Material_unidirectional
- Perceptive_unidirectional
- Verbal_transitive

Panel 3
- Material_bidirectional
- Perceptive_bidirectional
- Behavioural

Panel 4
- Material_bidirectional
- Perceptive_bidirectional
- Behavioural
Analysis & Results: Issues

• How to deal with text boxes? (Existential process?)
• How many processes can there be?
• How to interpret processes with the „correct“ value?
• How to deal with inferred processes?

Outlook

- Relation between message of verbal processes with other processes
- Relation of panel processes to the strip as a whole
- Relation of inferred processes to visible processes
- Applicability to other comic strips
Thank you very much for your attention

Questions? Comments? Remarks?
Bibliography


