

# 1. Introducing *Pragmatics of Fiction*: Approaches, trends and developments

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**Abstract:** In this introduction to the handbook on the *Pragmatics of Fiction* we introduce the aims of the collection and position it within the field of pragmatics. Considering fiction as texts that deserve to be studied in their own right, we argue that a pragmatic perspective opens interesting avenues of investigating both the techniques of fiction and how they pattern as well as the unique communication situation into which readers/viewers enter when engaging with fictional texts. We review the changing attitudes towards fictional data in the linguists' community and then outline the themes of the collection.

## 1. Setting the stage: Why the 'pragmatics' of fiction?

Fictional language exists in a multitude of different forms, ranging from novels and theatre plays to cinematic movies and radio or television dramas. And pragmatics offers a multitude of different perspectives to analyze all these forms and their effects on the readers/viewers. The research field of the pragmatics of fiction is correspondingly large and diverse.

In accordance with the definition adopted for the entire series of handbooks in which this volume appears, pragmatics is understood here in a wide sense as the study of the use of language in its social and historical context (see Preface to this volume by the series editors). The definition follows the conceptualization of pragmatics that has been called Continental European in contrast to the more specific Anglo-American conceptualization (Huang 2007: 4) or social pragmatics in contrast to theoretical pragmatics (Chapman 2011: 5; see also Jucker and Taavitsainen 2013: 2–5 for an overview of the two traditions). Our conceptualization of pragmatics crucially includes the social context in which communication takes place, both at the level of the extradiegetic communication between the creator of a fictional text and its recipients, and at the level of the intradiegetic communication between the characters depicted within fictional texts. Social pragmatics relies on rich contextual data about the conversationalists, their relationships and the context in which the communication takes place. It subsumes the interests of theoretical pragmatics, which focuses more narrowly on the technical, philosophical and cognitive aspects of interactional processes.

But even in this wide sense our conceptualization of pragmatics provides a clear focus for the contributions in this volume in that they are all concerned with

the communicative aspects of the language of fiction. They are concerned with communication that is depicted in written fiction, communication that is enacted in drama and in telecinematic discourse, and with the communicative aspects of fiction itself, that is to say with the communication between authors, scriptwriters, producers and so on and their audiences.

On the intradiegetic level of depicted and enacted communication, the contributions deal with all those aspects of language use that pragmaticists generally investigate on the basis of natural spoken language and with the specificities provided by the fictional nature of the data. On the extradiegetic level of the communication between an author or scripwriter and his or her audience, the fictional text or discourse is seen as a complex communicative act connecting the originator and the addressee. From this point of view, a literary piece of work has a performative dimension and may be analyzed as “a way of doing things with words” (Miller 2001: 1, with reference to Austin 1962), i.e. as an extended kind of speech act and as such an act of communication (see also Bredella 1992; Giltrow Ch. 3, this volume; Messerli Ch. 2, this volume; Ohmann 1971; Pratt 1977; van Dijk 1976a, 1976b, [1980] 1981, 1985).

In several of his publications, Mey (2000, 2001, 2011) explores the complexities of the communicative process between the author and the reader of a literary text. The literary text has to be re-created by the reader. It is the result of the collaborative work of author and reader (Mey 2001: 789). As defined by Mey (2011: 511) “[l]iterary pragmatics is about how language is used in the production and consumption of literary texts”, which puts the focus squarely on the extradiegetic level, on the communication taking place between the author and the reader. He disentangles the multiple complexities of this communicative event which arise from the intervention of various narrative voices, as he calls them (see Mey 2000). Sell (2000), too, focuses on the extradiegetic level of literature in his study of literary communication. He is concerned with the very special situation of a communication between writers and readers belonging to different historical periods and he establishes literary criticism as a mediating force between writers and readers.

Despite the richness of this literature, we are still left with the important question of the type of pragmatics needed for an analysis of fictional language. Do we need a special set of tools to analyze fiction? Do we need a pragmatics of fiction? Or can we apply the same tools that have been developed for non-fictional language? In fact, there is an extensive discussion in the context of Relevance Theory that we need a field of literary pragmatics in order to provide a satisfactory account of the process of reading literary texts, but there is also a wide consensus that the standard tools of utterance interpretation can be used for this purpose (see in particular Blakemore 1992: 155–179; Pilkington 1991, 2000; Sperber and Wilson 1995: 231–237; Uchida 1998; Wilson 2011).

Relevance Theory argues that utterance interpretation depends crucially on both a process of decoding linguistic stimuli and on an inferential process. The

inferential process is necessary to complete the result of the decoding process. Addressees need to resolve the numerous ambiguities in virtually any linguistic stimulus; they need to identify the referents of referring expressions; and they need to identify the communicative intention that the speaker is trying to get across. It is the inferential processes of disambiguation, reference assignment and enrichment that solve these tasks (Sperber and Wilson 1995: 185). And it is exactly these inferential processes that are at work in the interpretation of literature or poetic language more generally (see also Giltrow, Ch. 3, this volume). Uchida (1998: 164), for instance, shows that literary texts often create suspense through sentences whose referring expressions cannot be immediately resolved or which cannot immediately be sufficiently enriched. Pilkington (1991) argues that the indeterminate nature of poetry is the result of a large range of weakly communicated implicatures or poetic effects. This accounts for the possibility of alternative interpretations of a poem. Two readings of a poem cannot be absolutely identical because of the different cognitive environments of different readers. But the literary interpretation, like any process of utterance interpretation, is constrained by the available evidence, i.e. the linguistic stimulus.

Relevance Theory, so the argument, provides a consistent and comprehensive cognitive account of utterance interpretation, and, therefore, also of the interpretation of literary texts and their poetic effects. However, Relevance Theory does not provide a better understanding of literary texts. This is the realm of literary critics. But it does provide a better understanding of how literary critics, and readers in general, work out their interpretations (Wilson 2011: 72).

Literary criticism, literary theory and many explorations in stylistics go beyond pragmatics and consider a different and possibly much broader range of aspects of fiction including evaluation and interpretation, aesthetic principles and values, plot structure and much more. Much of this work has direct or indirect relevance for the contributions in this volume, but in the context of this volume, such aspects are only relevant in relation to their communicative function. Narrative developments or stylistic choices, for instance, are discussed in detail in several contributions in this volume but always with a clear perspective on their pragmatic effects.

Apart from the focus on a pragmatic perspective, the contributions in this volume do not pose any restrictions on the repertoire of analytical methods that are applied to the study of the language of fiction. They include quantitative and qualitative work, empirical and more heuristic approaches. But they always probe their suitability for the very special context of the language of fiction. The chapters provide as comprehensive an overview of the relevant work in this field as possible. Each of them provides a state-of-the-art account of a particular subfield, and in their entirety they give an overview of the wealth of literature in this particular field of pragmatic research. In the following section, we will reflect on the nature of fictional data and on the slippery nature of the boundary between the fictional and non-fictional. In Section 3 we will briefly survey some of the justifications

that have been given for using fictional data for pragmatic analyses. Section 4, finally, will give an overview of the contributions in this handbook.

## 2. What is fictional data?

Sentences that appear in fictional texts do not appear to differ in their linguistic form from sentences that appear in other types of texts. There are some phrases, such as “once upon a time”, or referring expressions, such as “unicorn”, “fawn” or “magic wand”, which immediately suggest the context of a fictional text, but otherwise there is nothing in the syntax or morphology of a sentence or in the choice of vocabulary which systematically differentiates between fictional texts and other texts. Nevertheless, fictional texts enjoy a special status. They are often considered to be artistic and they achieve many functions, among them aesthetic, didactic, cultural and emotional. Different expectations apply to the claims made in such texts and to the worlds depicted in them.

Linguists have always had ambivalent feelings about fictional texts. In the very early days of linguistics and dictionary writing, fictional texts, and in particular fictional texts by celebrated authors, enjoyed a special status as examples of language use particularly worthy of linguistic description and integration into dictionaries (see for example the authors used as examples for the English grammar books and dictionaries of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but also in the *Oxford English Dictionary*). Linguists interested in present-day languages shunned fictional texts more or less completely for a considerably period of time. They were considered to be not so much artistic as artificial, and, therefore, unsuitable for linguistic scrutiny. But things have changed again. Corpus linguists in particular have started to investigate language in a more comprehensive way, compiling corpora of language that include many different types of genres – including fictional ones as one important variety of language. In addition to the theoretical justification that fictional texts are important in a balanced mix of natural language, there has always been the advantage that fictional texts are more easily available in large quantities and in computer-readable form than, for instance, transcribed spoken interaction. For historical corpora, fictional texts have been even more important because of their higher chances of preservation in contrast to incidental everyday texts.

Pragmaticists took somewhat longer to reconcile themselves with fictional texts. In the early days of pragmatics, in the middle of the last century, pragmaticists were either language philosophers, who relied on intuited data, or they were conversation analysts, who insisted on tape-recorded “real” language. Written language was considered a derived form of language and therefore unsuitable as data for analysis. It lacked the essential features of being unadulterated, spontaneous and dialogic. However, some pragmaticists, in particular those working in historical pragmatics and in stylistics, have always resorted to fictional data because, as

they apologetically acknowledged, there was nothing else. We will come back to these arguments in Section 3.

In recent years, however, more and more pragmaticists have started to use fictional data for their investigations, and they have started to do so without apologetic justifications. Fictional language is no longer seen as artificial, deficient or contrived. On the contrary, it has come to be seen as a rich source of data, albeit one that needs to be investigated on its own terms. Fictional language is not seen as representative of language in general but as a variety of language that is sufficiently interesting in itself to deserve closer scrutiny. Fictional language, like any other form of language, can be described with respect to its participation structure. For example, we can distinguish senders and recipients within a described communicative event and the act of the fictional text interacting with its reader/viewer. All these levels can be analysed from a pragmatic perspective. Giving justice to the complex participation structure of fictional texts has in fact emerged as a theoretical challenge in itself.

For the purpose of this handbook we adopt a rather broad notion of fictional language with a clear-cut focus and broad and fuzzy edges. At the core of our notion of fiction, we find such written genres as novels, short stories, poetry and comics, or more generally narratives produced through the imagination of an author in which worlds are created that are populated by fictitious characters. We also include narratives produced by playwrights or screenwriters who invent plot-lines and dialogues to be performed by actors. This incorporates theatre plays as well as telecinematic discourse into our notion of fictional language.

The boundaries between fictional and non-fictional language are, by any account, fuzzy and slippery.<sup>1</sup> Historical novels, for instance, may include a large range of dialogues, which may range from the entirely invented to ‘verbatim’ reproductions of actual historical dialogues. The author may invent characters and dialogues between them with only a vague claim that such characters and such dialogues would have been possible or plausible at the time in which the historical novel is set. The author may use known historical figures in his or her plot but invent dialogues between them. The author may depict a historically attested dialogue but invent the actual wording for this dialogue. Or the author may even use some of the phrases and wordings of an attested original interaction if they have come down to us in a reliable historical document. Television documentaries may include staged dialogues invented by a scriptwriter and performed by actors, reality television shows may include a mixture of scripted and improvised dialogues,

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<sup>1</sup> According to Roman Jakobson (1960) one of the functions of language is the poetic function. It is the predominating function in literary works of art but it is also important in advertising discourse, and it is present in all other uses of language in which the linguistic form of a message has communicative importance (see Waugh 1980).

and there are shows that work with entirely invented languages. Thus, the basic distinction between fact and fiction is much fuzzier than it might appear at first sight, but for practical purposes the distinction is useful.

Our broad and relatively eclectic notion of what fiction is allows us to cover the field of pragmatics of fiction as comprehensively as possible. As the surveys in this volume will reveal, pragmaticists who use fictional data for their investigations differ in their conceptualization of what fictional data is and how it relates to non-fictional data. This diversity enriches the overview given in this handbook. In the next section, we will survey a number of different attitudes taken by pragmaticists towards fictional data, but generally we can already state that pragmaticists do not have a unified theory about the nature of fictional language.

For literary theorists, the true nature of fictionality is a hotly debated topic. The papers in the handbook on fictionality edited by Klauk and Köppe (2014a), for instance, testify to the extensive discussions in this field. In their introduction, Klauk and Köppe (2014b) provide an overview of literary approaches to the distinction between fictional and non-fictional, and they make careful and useful terminological distinctions. They distinguish between the terms “fictional” and “fictionality” (“fiktional”, “Fiktionalität” in the German original), which describe utterances, texts or other media, such as pictures, movies and comics, and the terms “fictitious” and “fictivity” (“fiktiv”, “Fiktivität”), which describe characters, entities and events that have no existence in our real world. Thus, fictional texts deal with fictitious characters, entities and events. And the term “fiction” (or “fictitious world”) describes the sum of fictitious events in a fictional text (Klauk and Köppe 2014b: 5–6). Fictional texts are distinguished from non-fictional or factual texts but factual texts do not necessarily have to be true in order to be factual. Even texts that assert falsehoods can be factual in this sense.

Klauk and Köppe (2014b: 15–19) distinguish several different groups of theories of fictionality on the basis of how these theories distinguish between text types that are fictional and text types that are non-fictional even though the distinction is fuzzy and many individual texts contain both fictional and non-fictional passages. First, they discuss syntactic theories of fictionality, i.e. theories that propose certain grammatical and lexical elements (e.g. “once upon a time”) that signal the fictional status of a text. According to them such theories are hardly ever proposed on their own, since syntactic elements are not compulsory and can be creatively manipulated. Second, they discuss semantic theories of fictionality. According to such theories a text is fictional if it makes assertions that are not true or if it uses non-referential expressions (e.g. names for people who do not exist), or at least a certain number of assertions are not true, etc. The third group of theories discussed by Klauk and Köppe focuses on the production of fictional texts. Its main proponent is John Searle and his 1975 paper “The logical status of fictional discourse”. According to this theory fictional texts cancel the normal felicity conditions of assertions. The speaker or writer does not have to commit himself or herself to

the truth of the expressed proposition; he or she does not need to have evidence for its truth, etc. (Searle 1975: 322). The fourth group of theories focuses on the reception of fictional texts. There is a receptive pattern of “make-believe” that is typical of fictional texts but that, according to its main proponent, Walton (1990), is not restricted to fictional texts. Coleridge’s (1817) famous soundbite, that readers of fictional texts demonstrate a “willing suspension of disbelief” also fits into this category, but Klauk and Köppe (2014b: 17) argue that a careful reading of Coleridge reveals his position to be untenable. According to them, readers do not continuously and actively suppress an automatic interpretation of everything as untrue (see also Bredella 1992: 326–327 for a similar argument).<sup>2</sup> And finally the fifth group of theories focuses on the context of fictional texts and the conventions and rules that appertain to certain types of texts. This theory overlaps with aspects of some of the other theories. Klaus and Köppe (2014b) conclude that

most modern theories of fictionality distinguishing between fictional and non-fictional text types can – in a wider sense – be described as pragmatic because in one way or another they try to focus on the conventionalized interaction between authors, texts and readers. (Klaus and Köppe 2014b: 18, our translation)

Thus, a text is fictional because of a silent agreement between the author and the recipient (reader, theatre goer, television viewer etc.) that the characters and events in this particular text, or more generally in this type of text, are to be treated as fictitious. However, such a conceptualization does not explain the paradox of fiction, i.e. the emotional reactions of recipients of fictional texts in spite of their awareness of the fictitious nature of the events in the fictional text. Why do we fear Dracula, Klauk and Köppe (2014b: 23) ask, even if we know that Dracula is a fictitious figure from which we do not have to fear any real danger for ourselves? Such emotional reactions, according to them, can be described as irrational. However, it might also be argued that we only experience fear if we identify sufficiently with one of the characters for whom Dracula represents a threat in the fictitious world of the fictional text. The real issue, from this perspective, would be the empathy we feel for fictitious characters and our willingness to share their feelings (on emotions, see Langlotz, Ch. 17, this volume).

The commonalities among all of the theories reviewed by Klauk and Köppe (2014b) is that they try to systematically distinguish between fictional and non-fictional texts while at the same time allowing for fuzzy boundaries. They thus reject the notion of panfictionality, i.e. the idea that there is no useful distinction between

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<sup>2</sup> However, see Giltrow (Ch. 3, this volume), who shows how readers are “keyed” (Goffman 1974: 130) into understanding that they are dealing with fiction, so that once this is established they need not actively and continuously suppress an automatic interpretation as untrue.

fictional and non-fictional texts at all. All texts, according to panfictionality, are fictional. Konrad (2014: 237–238) discusses the epistemological foundations of such theories, which maintain that a distinction between references to different types of worlds is not tenable. Factual texts no more refer to real worlds than fictional texts, and, therefore, the distinction between factual and fictional disappears. Such a position seems particularly attractive in our modern world with its ever increasing stream of information whose epistemological status is more and more difficult to assess. However, Konrad (2014: 245) argues that the essential distinction between non-fictional and fictional texts is not so much the different references to real or imagined worlds but the conventions of assuming such a difference. Put simply, readers generally have different expectations when they read a newspaper article or a scholarly paper and when they read a poem or watch a play. Such differences are pragmatically relevant and they form the basis of this handbook.

### 3. Why fictional data?

In the following we are going to review some of the different attitudes that linguists have taken towards fictional language as data for their investigations and how such attitudes have changed over time. Historical linguists, for instance, have no access to native speaker intuitions about the language they are investigating and they have to rely on the data that has survived the vagaries of time. And literary language has often had a better chance of being preserved for posterity. As a result, historical linguists have a long tradition of using literary language as data for their explorations of language use in historical periods and into the processes of language change. In fact, for a long time, the canon of good literature was considered to be the most reliable source for investigations into the historical stages of a language. It was only with the emergent availability of a broad range of non-literary genres in the last quarter of the last century that historical linguists moved away from literary sources and started to focus almost exclusively on non-literary language.

Traditionally, theoretical linguists dealing with present-day languages have generally tended to rely on their own intuitions as the only acceptable source of data in their search for the innate language competence of a native speaker of a language. Sociolinguists and pragmaticists (following the European definition of pragmatics, see above), on the other hand, have relied on empirical investigations of what was considered “real” language, i.e. spontaneous spoken language. Written language was seen as derivational and as a secondary level of language use, and, therefore, not sufficiently interesting for pragmatic analyses or not reliable enough for sociolinguistic queries. Fictional language, in addition to being written language, was considered to be invented, contrived and artificial, and, thus, even less amenable for pragmatic analysis.

It was against this, admittedly somewhat simplified, picture of total rejection of fictional language as legitimate data for linguistic investigations that several paradigm shifts started to change the situation (see Traugott 2008; and in particular Taavitsainen and Jucker 2015). First of all, there was the pragmatic turn in the 1970s and 1980s, in which linguistics turned from a focus on the competence of an idealized native speaker to a focus on actual language use, and, as a result, linguistics became more interested in empirical investigations of actual, everyday language use rather than native-speaker introspections. At the same time, there was a paradigm shift that Taavitsainen and Jucker (2015: 7) call the dispersive turn. Linguistics began to extend its interest to elements that up to then were considered marginal and unworthy of systematic study, such as discourse markers, repair structures, hesitation phenomena and the like. And it started to be more interested in the heterogeneity and variability of language. Language was no longer seen as a more or less homogeneous system but as a heterogenous system of patterned variability. The search for patterns within the observed heterogeneity and variability was guided by insights from anthropology and sociology so that variables such as education, class, gender, age, ethnic background, but also the purpose and context of an interaction became the focus of investigation.

The shift can be exemplified with two monumental grammars of the English language published in 1985 and 1999. While Quirk et al. (1985) set out to provide a comprehensive grammar of the English language (as the title boldly claims), Biber et al.'s (1999) grammar highlights the variability of the English language, and even the title refers to the distinction between spoken and written language. Quirk et al. acknowledge the variability of the English language, but they explicitly focus on what they call the common core of English (Quirk et al. 1985: 16) and often relegate differences between, for instance, British English and American English to footnotes. In contrast, Biber et al. provide a systematic account not only of the differences between American English and British English and between spoken English and written English but also between the four genres conversation, fiction, news and academic writing.

Against this shift in research interests and underlying assumptions about the nature of language, attitudes towards fictional language as a legitimate source of data for linguistic investigations changed as well. Fictional language came to be seen no longer as a deviation from “real” language and as a poor approximation to actual spoken language but as an interesting variety in its own right and accordingly was included as one of the four major genres accounted for in the grammar by Biber et al.

This shift in attitude is also reflected in the way in which historical pragmaticists, who more than others had to rely on fictional language for their investigations, justified their use of fiction. For a long time, historical linguists felt a need to apologetically justify their choice of data. Salmon ([1965] 1987), for instance, uses Shakespeare's work in her pioneering study of colloquial Elizabethan English and justifies her choice of data as follows:

It is, of course, a selective and inadequate representation of speech; but the more skilful the dramatist, the more skilful he will be, if presenting the normal life of his time, in authenticating the action by an acceptable version of contemporary speech. (Salmon 1987: 265)

The choice of data, in her eyes, is not ideal but justified because no other data is available for the purpose and because Shakespeare as a great author must have been able to capture something of the flavor of the spoken language of the day. Dramatic texts provide “the only possible source – the language written to be uttered as though spontaneously arising from a given situation” (Salmon 1987: 265).

In their study of Early Modern English politeness, Brown and Gilman (1989: 170) justified their use of Elizabethan and Jacobean drama “because there is nothing else”. They argue that dramatic texts provide the best information on colloquial speech of the period. They also claim that the psychological soliloquies in the tragedies provide access to inner life that is necessary for a proper test of politeness theory and add as a further justification of their use of fiction for their investigation the fact that Shakespearean tragedies represent the full range of society in a period of high relevance to politeness theory (Brown and Gilman 1989: 159).

More recently, and in the wake of the paradigm shifts in linguistics mentioned above, the argumentation has become less apologetic. Fictional data is of sufficient interest in itself. It is one very rich type of data and needs to be considered on its own terms. Claims about the particular skills of authors to write dialogues that are sufficiently real to serve as approximations or substitutes for the real thing are no longer needed, as shown in Busse’s (2003) words on Shakespeare and Jucker’s (2015) thoughts on fictional language as a fertile data source for pragmaticists in general:

Obviously, Shakespeare must have been well aware of the social conventions of the day, and he surely exploited them skilfully for dramatic purposes. Nonetheless, on the basis of this investigation we can only construct a “social grammar” of Shakespeare, but we should not conclude that the language of drama with its carefully constructed speeches bore any close resemblance to real people talking, because it is not always possible to take such renditions at their face value. (Busse 2003: 216)

Fictional language provides a fertile data source for pragmaticists if it is not seen as a deviation from more basic forms of language but as a specific form of communication with its own characteristic features that warrant an analysis in and of itself. (Jucker 2015: 67)

Fictional language provides a wealth of material for research questions about how historical authors communicated with their audiences and – in particular – how they created characters and dialogues between them. Patterns of language use in fictional texts can then be compared to similar patterns in other contexts. For historical material such comparisons are more limited than for modern material. Speech patterns in Shakespeare can be compared to courtroom proceedings,

for instance, or to private correspondence. For present-day material, on the other hand, there is a much wider range of material available for potential comparisons because of the availability of speech recordings and the advanced (digital) storage systems for text.

The fictional sources have also expanded to include telecinematic discourse or even youtube narratives (e.g. Androutsopoulos 2012a, 2012b; Bednarek 2010; Hodson 2014; Kuhn 2014; Piazza, Bednarek and Rossi 2011; Planchenault 2015). We fully endorse Alvarez-Pereyre (2011: 62) and Androutsopoulos (2012a: 142, 2012b), among others, who argue that telecinematic data should be discussed as cultural artifacts in their own right. The argument is that “[t]he very fact that the lexicogrammatical structures have been, *carefully and non-spontaneously*, chosen to fulfill the particular functions assigned, makes them extremely good specimens for the study of the relationships between forms, meanings and functions” (Alvarez-Pereyre 2011: 62, emphasis in original).

Language, whether fictional or “real”, is always contextualized, and the context in which it occurs must always be an important part of the analysis. This means that conversations between characters of a soap opera must be analyzed within the complex communicative context of a soap opera, and a dinner table conversation must likewise be analyzed within its communicative context. It might be interesting to compare the two situations but both situations are sufficiently interesting in themselves and neither of them should be seen as either derivative of or more real than the other.

Stylistics, the field in linguistics that has probably the longest tradition in exploring fictional data next to historical linguistics, also serves as an inspiration for this handbook. While we share the notions that fictional data deserves being studied in its own right and we also do not prescribe a particular methodology, our aim is not to produce a handbook on stylistics (see, e.g., the recent Burke 2014; Chapman and Clark 2014; Sotirova 2016; Stockwell and Whiteley 2014) nor to demonstrate the functioning and usefulness of pragmatic concepts for the analysis of literary and other texts (see, e.g., Black 2006; Culpeper 2001; Jeffries and McIntyre 2010; Leech and Short 2007; McIntyre and Busse 2010; Nørgaard, Montoro and Busse 2010), of which there are excellent specimens. Instead, we want to give the notion of pragmatics center stage, as explained in the next section, so that our handbook will draw on insights from many different linguistics disciplines, including stylistics, that deal with language use and communication.

#### 4. Overview of the handbook

This handbook consists of three parts devoted to (I) the foundations of the pragmatics of fiction, (II) features of orality and variation, and (III) specific themes pertinent to the combination of pragmatics with fiction research. Each chapter

provides a thorough introduction to the topic in question by giving both an overview of theories and concepts as well as applying these to examples from fiction.

Part I on the foundations of pragmatics of fiction turns our attention to the unique nature the communicative situation of fictional texts with their readers/viewers and also introduces a number of core concepts without which a pragmatic approach to fiction would not be complete. The contributions in Part II and III are to be read with this knowledge in mind.

In Chapter 2, Thomas Messerli sets the scene by elaborating on the complex participation structure of fictional texts. He illustrates the involved participant roles in different models with the help of examples from telecinematic discourse and links this to work of literary fiction. He shows how Goffman's (1976, 1979) seminal work finds entry into contemporary thinking on fiction and is developed to take into account the complex mediated communicative situations that readers and viewers find themselves in.

Chapter 3 by Janet Giltrow is on the pragmatics of fiction genres. She first discusses how the concept of genre is understood in a number of different linguistic and literary traditions. In doing so, she makes the links between "genre", "activity type" and "frame" apparent, but also looks for insights from Rhetorical Genre Theory and Moretti's distant reading of literary types. In the second part of her chapter, she discusses in depth how literary genres work with respect to the invitation of weak implicatures and processes of meaning making. Since engaging with fiction is an act of communication, Giltrow explores the sociality of language users' experience. She highlights that reading/viewing fiction is a social action and that the processes of meaning making that are involved are not separate from other such processes but situated on a continuum between fictional and non-fictional language use. Importantly, fiction genres are theorized as adding to, and updating the readers'/viewers' knowledge of the social order.

The next three chapters focus on linguistic strategies employed for creating fictional characters and worlds. In Chapter 4, Culpeper and Fernandez-Quintanilla introduce the concept of 'characterisation' in fictional texts. In the creation of fictional worlds, characters play a crucial role. In the case of written genres, the characters are purely evoked through language (e.g. in the description of a character's appearance and action and in the reported speech assigned to the characters dialogues, thought processes, etc.; see Culpeper 2001 on implicit, explicit and authorial cues); in the case of telecinematic data, we also get visual information on appearance (age, gender, clothes, etc.) and we see actions (or inaction) that further shape the perception of the characters. This chapter draws on insights from a number of different disciplines and fields, such as stylistics and narratology. Culpeper and Fernandez-Quintanilla describe "how characters are constructed in the interaction between top-down knowledge from the reader/perceiver's head and bottom-up information from the text" and they argue that "three dimensions are key in characterisation: narratorial control, the presentation of self or other, and

the explicitness or implicitness of the textual cue” (p. 93). Narratorial filters, character indexing and inter-character dynamics are discussed and illustrated as key elements of characterization in fiction.

Monika Bednarek concentrates on the role of dialogue in (televised) fiction in Chapter 5. Kozloff (2000: 33–34) identifies two groups of functions of dialogue in narrative film. The first set refers to communicating the narrative and contains six categories (“1. anchorage of the diegesis and characters; 2. character revelation; 3. communication of narrative causality; 4. enactment of narrative events; 5. adherence to the code of realism; and 6. control of viewer evaluation and emotions”). The second set of functions refers to “aesthetic effect, ideological persuasion, commercial appeal” and comprises three further categories (“7. exploitation of the resources of language [poetic/humor/irony]; 8. thematic messages/authorial commentary/allegory”; and “9. opportunities for ‘star runs’”). Drawing on this knowledge from film studies (Kozloff 2000; Jaeckle 2013), which has a long tradition in working on the functions of dialogue in fiction, Bednarek complements this work with insights from linguistics and her own work. With respect to fictional dialogues, she identifies three research trends in the study of characterization, realism/naturalism, and humour. The first constitutes an overlap with the issues discussed in Chapter 4 on fictional characterization. Illustrating her insights with examples from telecinematic discourse, her chapter also offers insights on the function of dialogue in fiction in general.

Opening the scope once more beyond the role of dialogue in fiction, Christian Hoffmann elaborates on narrative perspectives on voice in fiction more generally in Chapter 6. Fiction allows us to perceive thought processes and witness different points of view that are not usually accessible to the analyst in face-to-face interaction. Literary texts have long exploited different points of view techniques from stream of consciousness to omniscient narrator and telecinematic text also makes use of voice-over, sub-titling or written indicators of place and location to frame the narrative, or voice-over and subtitles to make thoughts accessible to the audience, etc. (see, e.g., Jahn 2003). Hoffmann reviews the literature from stylistics, narratology and film theory which is relevant for a pragmatics of fiction that wants to tackle the concept of “voice” and the related concepts of “perspective” and “mind style”.

Finally, Part I is concluded with an overview of the contribution of the field of stylistics research to the pragmatics of fiction by Beatrix Busse in Chapter 7. Busse particularly highlights the study of voices in fiction, the complex interplay between fictional and non-fictional discourse and the importance of adopting a multimodal approach for the study of fiction. Furthermore, she offers an insightful discussion of the history and overlap of stylistics and pragmatics.

Part II of the handbook turns our attention to features of orality and variation that are well studied in data from face-to-face encounters. In the case of fictional texts, the creators of characters (and the actors who potentially animate text) have

to decide *how* to let them speak. What variety of a particular language? A dialect? A sociolect? An ethnolect? Will hesitations and false starts be included or excluded? In the case of multilingualism and code-switching: How do the creators deal with the challenge that the readers/audience might not have access to the different codes? What effects are potentially created? The chapters in this part explore how and to what extent the typical oral features identified in face-to-face communication make it on screen or into a book (turn-taking, overlaps, interruptions, false starts, hesitation markers, repetition, silence, discourse markers, intensifiers, etc.). There is of course no claim for authenticity by writers/movie makers, but we should not lose sight of the fact that it is a choice to include typical oral features. With respect to his corpus of telecinematic data, Rossi (2011) argues that:

In contrast to what happens in spontaneous speech, the analysed films exhibit a low frequency of dialogue ‘drawbacks’, such as hanging or shifting topics, selfrepair, redundancy, overlapping and interrupted utterances. In a similar vein to written language, film dialogues present a high degree of coherence, cohesion and conciseness, bearing traces of the (written) screenplay. It follows that film dialogues appear more akin to literary language than to orality and spontaneous speech [...]. (Rossi 2011: 21)

He continues, “[t]he reproduction of reality is always a compromise: authors pretend to offer the audience a piece of reality, with an ‘illusion of spontaneity’, which the audience feigns to believe, thanks to the ‘suspension of disbelief’, necessary ‘to collaborate in this fiction’ (Kozloff 2000: 16, 47). Yet ‘film dialogue [...] is never realistic; it is always designed for us’ (Kozloff 2000: 121)” (Rossi 2011: 45). The complexity of authentic face-to-face interaction is rarely transported into fiction so that processes of reduction are at work. This reduction, however, is interesting in its own right. As quoted above, Alvarez-Pereyre (2011: 62) points out that “[t]he very fact that the lexicogrammatical structures have been, *carefully and non-spontaneously*, chosen to fulfill the particular functions assigned, makes them extremely good specimens for the study of the relationships between forms, meanings and functions” (emphasis in original). In the same vein, Androutsopoulos (2012a: 139) points to the underlying linguistic ideologies and indexicalities: “We think that cinematic discourse ought to figure large at this intersection due to its popularity as a site of sociolinguistic representation and its complexity as a multimodal semiotic artefact”.

Because of the complexity of this field of studies, four chapters deal with aspects of orality and variation. Chapter 8 by Wolfram Bublitz explores “(1) features of metacommunication, (2) features of turn management, (3) features of topic management (whose predominant functions are planning, repairing and organizing), (4) features of involvement and the micro-level category (5) features of formal reduction” (p. 235, emphasis removed). In Chapter 9, Gaëlle Planchenault expands on the multi-modal treatment of character-positioning of Chapter 4 by focusing in particular on dialectal language variation. She demonstrates how lin-

guistic features are used to index regional, social or ethnic traits, which are then associated with values. In Chapter 10, Miriam Locher complements the overview on dialectal variation in fictional texts in the previous chapter with an overview of studies on fictional texts that use different languages and thus create multilingual situations. The main focus lies on the potential pragmatic effects that the texts can achieve (e.g. scene creation/enrichment, character creation, the creation of humor, the display of social criticism, realism and ideological debates of difference and belonging). Finally, Michael Adams addresses the pragmatics of estrangement in fantasy and science fiction in Chapter 11. The fiction genres fantasy, science fiction and also historical fiction have a vibrant tradition of drawing on linguistic means to create estrangement. Adams discusses this phenomenon, which occurs on onomastic, lexical and stylistic levels, from a pragmatic perspective by treating estrangement as a literary illocutionary act.

Part III, finally, is devoted to a range of additional themes that are currently under debate within the study of the pragmatics of fiction, which, however, can all be linked to the insights offered in the previous parts. Chapters 12 and 13 continue the discussion on linguistic variation started in Part II and represent entire fields of research in their own right. In Chapter 12, Robert A. Valdeón offers a survey of research on the challenges of translating pragmatic aspects of language in fiction. Having established in the previous handbook chapters how complex the linguistic effects of authorial linguistic choices can be, it comes as no surprise that translating pragmatic effects poses a challenge. This theme is continued in Chapter 13, in which Marie-Noëlle Guillot reports on research on subtitling and dubbing in telecinematic text. According to her, the field of audiovisual translation has neglected the aspect of pragmatics for subtitling and dubbing in telecinematic text. She reports on two main areas “narrative aspects and characterization” and “communicative practices in their interlingual representations” (p. 397) and draws on the concepts of audience design, stance, voice, and verisimilitude for her illustrations.

Chapters 14 and 15 turn to the well-established topic of norms of conduct, i.e. politeness and impoliteness, in pragmatics. Urszula Kizelbach reviews the extensive literature in (im)politeness in literary fiction (with a special focus on aspects of the English canon), while Marta Dynel offers a synthesis of the work on (im)politeness within telecinematic discourse. Especially in the latter contribution, the fuzzy boundary of fictional texts mentioned in Section 2 is further developed and the concept of verisimilitude is discussed as well in light of (im)politeness evaluations.

In Chapter 16, Daniela Landert sheds light on the concept of stance and explores the usefulness of this concept for the study of the pragmatics of fiction. She shows that stance can express evaluative, epistemic and affective attitudes. Realized in character speech, narratorial voice as well as expressed through non-verbal action, Landert demonstrates how this concept can be linked to the discussion of characterization in Chapter 4 and voice in Chapter 6.

Andreas Langlotz, in Chapter 17, picks up an issue introduced by Giltrow in Chapter 3. Giltrow mentions that the emotional involvement of the readers/viewers, who are well aware that what they read/see is fictional, is one of the key issues that bears further exploration. Langlotz tackles this desideratum by outlining “the repertoire of verbal and non-verbal cues along which emotional utterances are patterned in literary and telecinematic fictional discourse” (p. 515). He then argues that “fictional discourse must be attributed a special status for human emotional experience” (p. 515).

Finally, the handbook concludes with a chapter by Derek Denis and Sali Tagliamonte on language change and fiction. This chapter returns to the question of the distinction between ‘fictional language as data’ and ‘fictional language as communication’ (outlined in Section 3 of this introduction) by first reviewing literature on the usefulness of fictional data for general linguistic questions and then turning to a discussion of whether fiction also triggers language change (rather than reflecting it).

## 5. Concluding remarks

The chapters in this handbook continue the dialogue on the pragmatic component of fiction, which started in the second half of the last century. We hope that the critical reviews will give interested readers an entry point into the state of the art of current thinking and the concepts, themes and challenges raised in the three parts of the collection. It goes without saying that this handbook does not present an endpoint to our scholarly endeavours in this field. This is not only so because new theoretical and methodological insights sharpen our understanding of the pragmatic phenomena of fiction but also because many new and exciting forms of fictional practices are emerging in a vast range of different contexts. For example, there are interactive fictional worlds in online environments (such as World of Warcraft or Second Life), practices of sharing narratives in the form of youtube clips and vlogs/video diaries, or practices by fans who write spin-offs of their favorite works or dub telecinematic material into their own language, etc. Since telling and sharing narratives is such a fundamental human discourse practice, we will not be short of new data to analyze.

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