

A semantic approach to 'Friends' TV series

Abstract:

The aim of this article is to revisit Leech's meaning typology as applied to the widely popular TV series 'Friends'. The seven types of meaning postulated by Geoffrey Leech (1981): conceptual, connotative, social, affective, reflected, collocative and thematic will be exemplified with dialogues from the sitcom. The analysis will be made mainly from a semantic perspective, and less focus will be attached to the pragmatic side of conversations under scrutiny, as Leech himself considers that meaning is impartial between 'speaker's meaning' and 'hearer's meaning'. The analysed corpus consisted of approximately 880,000 words, resulting from the script of all 232 episodes, through 10 seasons. In particular, the social and affective meaning are the one most closely related to pragmatic speech acts. The dialogues, as was stated by other researchers (Qualio 2009), are less prone to deploying strategic vagueness, being more context-based than concentrating on the narration of imaginary or past events, with actually a minimal plot.

Keywords: *Types of meaning, Leech's typology, 'Friends' TV series.*