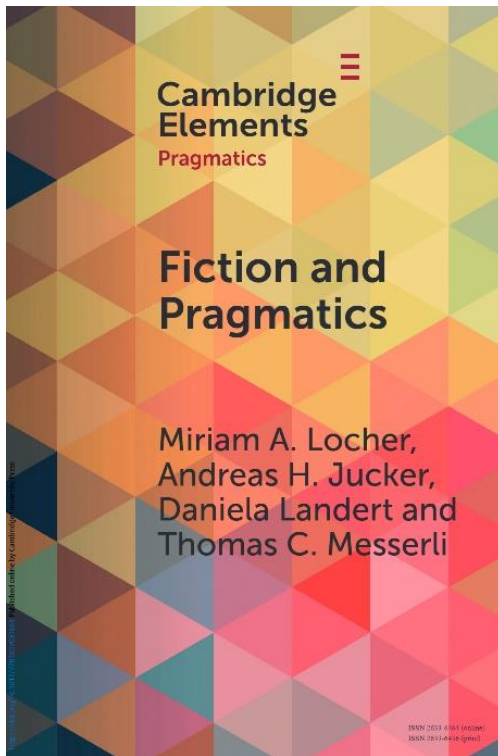




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Book review



Fiction and Pragmatics

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Fiction and Pragmatics, a recent addition to the Cambridge Elements series, delves into the intriguing intersection between the performing arts and pragmatics. Offering an accessible introduction for those venturing into pragmatic studies, the book presents an opportunity to observe its real-life applications, specifically for enthusiasts of drama, cinema, and any other audiovisual manifestation of art. Its manageable length makes it an appealing read for those seeking to enrich their knowledge without a significant time commitment.

The authors Miriam Locher, Andreas Jucker, Daniela Landert, and Thomas Messerli are established scholars in the field of linguistics, especially when it comes to historical pragmatics and discourse analysis. This book is not their first exploration into the nexus of fiction and pragmatics, which underpins their in-depth knowledge and diverse insights embedded within the book.

Central Theme and Purpose

The book is structured into six distinct but interrelated sections: "Introducing Fiction and Pragmatics", "Participation Structure", "Performance", "Interaction", "Discourse and Ideologies through Character Creation", and "Conclusions and Outlook", where the authors endeavor to make a compelling argument for the utilization of fictional data as a rich and invaluable resource for pragmatic theorizing. In a similar manner, the book advocates for adopting a pragmatic lens to garner novel insights into fictional artifacts. The authors propose that employing a pragmatic perspective enables a more profound understanding of the intrinsic nature of fictional data. A pivotal aspect in examining fiction is comprehending the 'fictional contract,' which entails a tacit agreement between the creators of fiction (such as authors, scriptwriters, and actors) and their audience. The authors also delve into the concept of the 'fictional contract', which establishes an unspoken consensus between the creators and the audience that the narratives and characters within a fictional piece are to be perceived as fictional. This understanding, while generally accepted, can at times be ambiguous, such as when the narrative is rooted in or inspired by real events. Therefore, this requires an appreciation of the intricate participation structure of fiction, which is linked to the interpersonal aspects of language use. The authors elaborate on the multi-layered communication involved in fictional artifacts: the communication occurring between the characters, and the communication taking place between the author and the audience (often mediated by actors and directors in plays or movies). The exploration of these themes reveals the significance of pragmatics in understanding the complexities and nuances of fictional works.

The authors bring each concept to life by examining practical questions within the telecinematic section, such as the role of various contributors to the filmmaking process, the meaning added during post-production, and the role of viewers in engaging with the end result.

Effectiveness, Critique, and Recommendations

Fiction and Pragmatics stands as an accessible yet analytical contribution to the Cambridge Elements series, effectively demonstrating a way to correlate pragmatics with the realm of fiction. While the insights provided are invaluable, one limitation could be that the content assumes a certain level of prior knowledge in pragmatics, which, although not extremely

demanding, could discourage some newcomers to the field to put the book down. Moreover, while the book does an excellent job in providing analytical tools, incorporating case studies could have added a richer dimension to the it.

Prospective readers should have a foundational understanding of linguistics to fully appreciate the depth of analysis offered by this text. *Fiction and Pragmatics* is highly recommended for scholars and students in linguistics. It can also be valuable for practitioners in the field of literature and performing arts who wish to gain insights into the linguistic aspects of fictional works.

Fiction and Pragmatics is an enlightening, open-access piece of work that uncovers the often overlooked, yet deeply intertwined relationship between art and pragmatics. Its thorough exploration of the communicative elements of fictional texts establishes it as an invaluable resource, and the authors' commitment to making this content accessible to a wide audience, including those not specialized in the field of pragmatics, adds to its overall appeal.

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