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UNDERSTANDING THE CHARACTER OF SHERLOCK HOLMES AS IT  
EMERGES THROUGH HIS COMMUNICATIVE INTERACTIONS IN THE  
BRITISH TV SERIES *SHERLOCK BBC* (2010)

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## **Anotace**

Tato práce si klade za cíl uvést postavu Sherlocka Holmese skrze jeho verbální interakci v britském televizním seriálu *Sherlock BBC* (2010). Zaměřuje se na mluvenou interakci jako na jeden z hlavních prostředků utváření charakterového pojetí postav, jehož zkoumání poskytuje náhled na postavu Sherlocka Holmese a její vývoj v televizním žánru. Protože práce analyzuje verbální interakci fiktivní postavy, je uveden fenomén fiktivní konverzace. Tyto teoretické předpoklady jsou pak spolu s postupy konverzační analýzy využity pro zkoumání charakteristických znaků a porozumění postavě Sherlocka Holmese ve vybraných epizodách televizního seriálu *Sherlock BBC* (2010). Při vyhodnocování verbálních interakcí jsem identifikovala a vymezila klasické rysy salientních neřestí postavy Sherlocka Holmese, určených komparativní analýzou původní prózy a rané televizní adaptace, kterou doplňuji nově vypořizovanými tendencemi moderního zpracování, ve kterém se postava Sherlocka Holmese ocitá v centru Londýna 21. století. Analýzou daných epizod seriálu byly zjištěny tři klíčové aspekty utvářející fiktivní postavu Sherlocka Holmese, které vycházely z původních Doyleových příběhů.

**Klíčová slova:** Postava Sherlocka Holmese, *Sherlock BBC*, konverzační analýza, porozumění postavě, verbální interakce.

## **Abstract**

This thesis aims to introduce the character of Sherlock Holmes through his communicative interaction in the British series *Sherlock BBC* (2010). It centres spoken discourse as the main means of illustrating interpersonal communication, the examination of which provides an insight into how the character of Sherlock Holmes emerges and evolves in the genre of TV. Focusing on observing a fictional character on the basis of his communicative interactions, the thesis then introduces the medium of fictional conversation. This knowledge is subsequently applied to the analysis of understanding the character of Sherlock Holmes in chosen episodes of *Sherlock BBC* (2010). In evaluating the discursive interactions, I identified and confirmed the classic features of Sherlock's salient vices deduced from the comparative analysis of the original prose and the early TV adaptation, which I supplement with the teleportation to 21<sup>st</sup> century London. Three key aspects forming the fictional character of Sherlock Holmes were found prevalent through the analysis of particular episodes, drawing on the original Doyle's stories.

**Key words:** The character of Sherlock Holmes, Sherlock BBC, conversation analysis, understanding the character, verbal interaction.

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## 1. Introduction

The character of Sherlock Holmes is famous all over the world predominantly due to the wonderful descriptive skills of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in his books. For his popularity and uniqueness, many film and TV iterations have been defined and caricatured. The following Sherlock Holmes iterations then diverged in approaching the transformation of the real essence of Sherlock to a modern audience. Therefore, this thesis aims to portrait a new iteration of the character of Sherlock Holmes in the British series *Sherlock BBC* (2010), created by Steven Moffat and Mark Gatiss, by undertaking an analysis of Sherlock's communicative interactions throughout the series.

In order to determine the key characteristics of the detective, this thesis aims to undertake a comparative analysis of the character of Sherlock Holmes inspired by a new adaption of the iconic consulting detective by the British Broadcasting Company (BBC) for TV in 2010. The analysis will draw on the original works of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle specifically his first Sherlock novel *A Study in Scarlet*, first published in 1887, the BBC TV production of the book in 1968 starring Peter Cushing and the 2010 production *Sherlock BBC*.

In attempt to approach the manifests of Sherlock's key characteristics occurring through his verbal interactions, Conversational Analysis (CA) was selected as the prescribed methodology to examine the transcripts. The application of CA may fly in the face of its core principles in interpreting real-life discursive interactions. Books, TV, and Films strive to be original, successful iterations apply the rules of real-life conversations to their creations. In doing so I accept that this is a fictional construct, I do however believe that CA as a tool has much to offer through the analysis of the spoken word (though scripted) in elucidating the character of Sherlock Holmes. The research, therefore, applies the discipline of Conversation Analysis (CA), set the transcripts

of the selected samples of dialogues under review, and by examining the talk in interaction attempts to explore how through the medium of modern TV has the character of Sherlock Holmes been maintained.



## 2. Sherlock Holmes

In 1887 Sherlock Holmes made his first appearance in *A Study in Scarlet*, the first book out of a canon of 56 detective stories, written by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Having been created almost two centuries ago, and having served as an inspiration for the emerging genre of detective fiction, Sherlock Holmes has managed to maintain the reputation of an iconic detective to the present day.

For his popularity and uniqueness, Sherlock has inspired many producers to come up with TV iterations depicting various faces of the famous detective. A British actor Adam Wheatley had played Sherlock Holmes in the 1950' and 1960' TV adaptations (Blažková 21). *“This actor wanted to stay as close to the original texts as possible. Wheatley even ‘took a great deal of dialogue straight from Doyle’s texts (McCaw 20)’”* (Blažková 21). To be faithful to the original character was however aim of many succeeding actors, e.g Basil Rathbone (1939-46) or Peter Cushing (1968). One of the pioneers, who attempted to depart from the original character was Jeremy Brett *“who replaced the then-popular Basil Rathbone's Sherlock Holmes and added new elements into the role”* (21). Brett played the fictional character of Sherlock Holmes in all 41 episodes in four *Granada TV series* (1984-1994) (Sparks 2019). His portrait of Sherlock is generally praised to be *“‘the most faithful accurate adaptation of Sherlock Holmes ever brought to screen (Doyle, S 278)’”* (Bačík 21). The success of the famous detective was then followed by many other Sherlock adaptations attempting to capture Holmes in rather original ways. When Guy Ritchie came up with his *Sherlock Holmes*, starring Robert Downey Jr, Steven Moffat declared *“‘I think Robert Downey Jr. done a great job of being Sherlock Holmes, but I’m never, ever going to look at him and believe he actually is Sherlock Holmes. He’s too little, and he doesn’t look like him (Leader*

2010) ” (Lapointe 1-2). The different styles in approaching the original character then divided fans into two sections: “*old Holmesians and new Sherlockians*” (Bačík 22).

In 2010 Steven Moffat and Mark Gatiss aired their modern recreation of the timeless and universal detective. Handling the transfer of the famous detective stories into other than the Victorian era, they devised *Sherlock BBC* (2010) casting Benedict Cumberbatch as Sherlock Holmes. Setting the story to the 21<sup>st</sup> century enabled them to diverge from the pursuit of the Victorian era and pursue attention to the characters, whilst remaining faithful to Doyle’s vision of Sherlock.

The following chapter provides a comparative analysis of three elaborations of the legendary detective. The analysis will draw on the original work of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle specifically his first Sherlock novel *A Study in Scarlet*, first published in 1887, the BBC TV production of the book in 1968 starring Peter Cushing and the 2010 production, starring Benedict Cumberbatch.

### **2.1. *A Study in Scarlet vs A Study in Pink***

As for the form Mark Gatiss and Steven Moffat in their Sherlock iteration derived from the original title, switching the colour *Scarlet* to *Pink*. Bačík in his *Sherlock Holmes: A Comparative Analysis*, however, suggests the resemblance of the ambiguous relationship between John and Sherlock, for “Pink”, is considered a symbol of homosexuality (30). Such subject matter is not completely misguided, as the theme of Sherlock’s sexual orientation is discussed many times throughout the series. Regarding this matter, there has been plenty of speculation about Sherlock Holmes’ sexual orientation as a consequence of which, Steven Moffat made an explicit statement, for the *Vulture* interview 2015, claiming “He’s not gay. He’s not straight”, talking about Sherlock Holmes. Also supported by Cumberbatch’s statement for an interview with New York’s Jada Yuan 2014 “He’s asexual”. The creator

subsequently pronounced Sherlock is willfully staying away from romantic relationships to keep his brain pure, which however also corresponds to the Victorian belief (Fitz- Gerald). Overall, there is nothing in Conan Doyle's stories to suggest that either Holmes or Watson were gay. In fact, both titles are to do with the crimes committed. As for the first one, the scarlet colour is to be traced to the exact quote of Holmes talking to Watson (Bačík 24). "*There's the scarlet thread of murder running through the colourless skein of life, and our duty is to unravel it, and isolate it, and expose every inch of it*" (Doyle 20). The colour of pink then, because the victim investigated was dressed in a pink outfit and had a matching pink suitcase.

The 1968 Sherlock Holmes starring Peter Cushing, as already stated, did not decline and rather stayed as accurate to the original Sherlock's traits as possible. The authors Steven Moffat and Mark Gatiss then updated the stories of Sherlock Holmes in an entertaining manner, moreover, they modified Sherlock's original personality traits by accentuating, however, remaining the original vices. As a consequence of setting Sherlock Holmes to the digital era of the twenty-first century, it is to expect that the character will undergo certain changes in personality.

*A Study in Scarlet*, the story, which we nowadays perceive to be the classic, introduced the prototype of the modern mastermind detective, for the very first time. In the book, Sherlock Holmes is presented to the reader through the eyes of Dr. Watson and our impression of his character is controlled by his judgement, whereas the BBC TV series let the audience observe their interactions (both verbal and non-verbal) and particularly the playback scenes, which then shape our opinions on Sherlock's behaviour and utterance. Shifting the focus to this phenomenon leaves us with a conclusion about the form in which the detective cases are served to the spectator. The 1887 detective story *A Study in Scarlet* was provided to the reader

as a novel, in which the character of John Watson maintains a record of Sherlock's adventures, the 2010 BBC TV series omitting the narrator, however, kept the motive of John Watson, a war veteran, writing a blog about his daily life as a means to cope with his stress symptoms and trust issues (later mainly focusing on reports of solving cases). Nevertheless, the 1968 episode *A Study in Scarlet*, completely lacked the motive of Watson keeping a track of the cases in the solving process.

Not only the non-existing narrator but even the storyline or the title is the climacteric in which these iterations diverge. The 1887 detective story *A Study in Scarlet* and the 2010 Sherlock Holmes adaptation capture Watson's and Sherlock's relationship from scratch. The 1968 BBC TV adaptation to the contrary, presents an already set up household and cohabitation of these two companions. If we are to focus on the resemblance between the original and the iterations, there are a few points to be made. As far as the storyline of the original detective story is concerned, there the 1968 BBC adaptation held on to it without further fluctuations. However, the 2010 *A Study in Pink* is then loosely based on *A Study in Scarlet* and takes Doyle's story to over more than a hundred years further.

The resemblance which appears, at first sight, is Sherlock's visage. The book serves the reader an elaborate description of his look, whilst the TV iterations present a character whose visage is up to the observer's eye to catch when watching the series. As far as Sherlock's appearance is concerned, there it is to claim that the original and iconic appearance has been preserved, hence both Peter Cushing (*A Study in Scarlet*: 1968) as well as Benedict Cumberbatch (*A Study in Pink*: 2011) indeed fulfill Doyle's concept of Sherlock, described through the words of John Watson (1887):

*In height, he was rather over six feet, and so excessively lean that he seemed to be considerably taller. His eyes were sharp and piercing, save during those intervals of torpor to which I have alluded; and his thin, hawk-like nose gave his whole expression an air of alertness and decision. His chin, too, had the prominence and squareness which mark the man of determination.* (Doyle 8)

The physical appearance of the famous detective may be the pivotal point, most of the producers, later on, wanted to hold on to. However, this was not always the case concerning Sherlock's personality and behaviour. The very first appearance of Sherlock Holmes in *A Study in Scarlet* is described through the words of Young Stanford, Watson's old war fellow when having a dialogue in which Dr. Watson is lamenting about his experiences of searching for a place to stay to a chance acquaintance "Young Stanford": "*That's a strange thing,' remarked my companion; 'you are the second man to-day that has used that expression to me.'* *'And who was the first? ' I asked'*" appears in *A Study in Scarlet* as Stanford's response to Watson's present flat-search failure (5). A very similar scene then appears in *A Study in Pink*, however with a noticeable change in the language used. The dialogue with Mike, Watson's old acquaintance, deals with the same problem and thus Watson's flatshare-search failure when Mike suggests *'I dunno – get a flatshare or something?'; Come on – who'd want me for a flatmate? ... (seeing Mike chuckling) 'What?'; 'Well, you're the second person to say that to me today'* says Mike in *A Study in Pink* (Sherlock BBC 0:08:11).

After such an introductory scene, Stanford in *A Study in Scarlet* then goes on in whether Sherlock may be considered a constant companion, however, declining there would be anything against him in particular, except for his sometimes a little queer ideas and enthusiasm in science (Doyle 6). Sherlock 2010 as well as 1968 does not lose

on his enthusiasm. On the contrary to the older version, *A Study in Pink* accentuates Sherlock's favour in science and murder investigations. An example of this trait of his is to be found when Lestrade contacts him about another murder case. This time, however, murder's pattern differs from the previous cases occurring, for this time the victim left a note. His reaction seemed inappropriate, moreover, the whole scene bears a certain air of theatricality. "*Impossible suicides? Four of them? There's no point sitting home when there's finally something fun going on!*" (ASIP 0:17:22) Such enthusiasm is considered inappropriate and beyond the means of social acceptance for which Sherlock often is referred to as a psychopath or a freak (ASIP 0:21:37). The 1968 *A Study in Scarlet* on contrary presents a widely respectable detective, with common sense, bearing ability of self-constraint.

Sherlock (2010) is not a modest man, whenever there is a possible chance to draw on his intellectual abilities at the expense of people present, he does not hesitate to praise himself, simultaneously lowering everyone else around him, often making use of sarcasm. "*Dear God. What's it like inside your funny little brains? It must be so boring*" (ASIP 0:28:00). "*The original Holmes may be eccentric and weird for others in his time, but the modern Holmes is more arrogant and self-centered than the character from the original*" (Blažková 37).

The uniqueness of Sherlock Holmes lies in his scientific and purely rational approach to the investigation, which appears in both TV series adaptations as well as the original text. Sherlock has frankly always been a great detective because he was a master of identifying human nature in the first place. The ability to make a logical deduction from the scantest evidence and thus make it impossible for the villain to get away with murder is another most significant characteristic of his. In contrast to Doyle's text and the 1968 adaptation, the producers of *Sherlock BBC* (2010) Steven Moffat

and Mark Gatiss took advantage of the 21<sup>st</sup> century setting, which is full of modern technology and thus provided the spectator a unique portrayal of a modern detective as a proficient user of mobile phones and laptops making use of such equipment as a means of communication when solving cases.

What serves him to good effect in the field of investigation and science, however, does not always do good in his personal life. Personal involvement and the ability to be sympathetic and to make bonds with people is an ideal he lacks. Sherlock's asocial behaviour appear right at the beginning of *A Study in Pink*, when making an apartment tour for Watson and coincidentally referring to a skull placed on his mantelpiece at 221B Baker Street as a friend (ASIP 0:14:15), what is more, the concept of Sherlock as asocial is deepened later on in *A Study in Pink* as Watson implies he met a friend of his, which meets with Sherlock's confusion. Watson, later on, clears out this statement claiming it was rather an enemy, which then seems to Sherlock's better comprehension (ASIP: 43:50). The concept of Sherlock as an asocial individual overall correlates Doyle's vision of Sherlock as a lone wolf. This comes across, for example through Doyle's description of Sherlock provided by Watson in *A Study in Scarlet* (1887) "*Sometimes he spent his day at chemical laboratory, sometimes in the dissecting-rooms, and occasionally in long walks, which appeared to take him into the lowest portions of the City*" (8).

The reference to Sherlock's wandering through the low portions of the city London refers to another trait of his. Despite the fact of being a master of deduction, a great detective, or as described in *Sherlock BBC* as well as Doyle's *A Study in Scarlet* "*the world's only consulting detective*" (Doyle 11), there is another important characteristic of his. The trait, which is essential for the character of Sherlock and is closely connected to his ability to solve crimes is his favour in narcotics. Sherlock

Holmes has frankly always been a man with a weakness for stimulant substances, however, the fact of Sherlock being a narcotic addict occurs throughout the book as well “*I might have suspected him of being addicted to the use of some narcotic, had not the temperance and cleanliness of his whole life forbidden such a notion*” says Watson about Sherlock in *A Study in Scarlet* (Doyle 8). *Sherlock BBC* (2010) on the contrary presents a famous detective as a drug-recover, well-acknowledged, and experienced in the field of chemistry. Thus, when Watson asks “*‘What are you doing?’; ‘Nicotine patch. Helps me think. Impossible to sustain a smoking habit in London these days. Bad news for brain work’*” arises in *A Study in Pink* (Sherlock BBC: 0:42:19). According to Bačík, such a statement was meant to refer to a smoking ban in England that came into force in 2007. Such a unique transformation of a famous detective makes him a role model for the audience, however, at the expense of lacking the original vice of smoking a pipe (31).

The lack of such iconic vice seems to reflect on his character change as far as his proceeding and handling situations are concerned. Unlike the 1968 series, *Sherlock BBC* (2010) provides a portrayal of the classic detective as a more mentally unstable and easily disturbed man. His mood would swing from optimism to irritability and back to a state of extreme excitement within a moment. It triggers him not to know the truth as he seizes getting to the information immediately. For his complex stream of thoughts, when solving cases, he often seems to resort to certain behaviour such as being reckless and unempathetic, to sustain the ability to concentrate on what is important to him. “*Shut up, everybody, shut up! Don’t move, don’t speak, don’t breathe I’m trying to think*” (ASIP 0:59:19). His curiosity and longing for the truth, however improbable it may be, has no boundaries. For the sake of proving his superiority over authorities, Sherlock is willing to put his life at risk. Such a notion occurs at the very end of *A Study in Pink* as the cabbie



dares Sherlock to choose one of two pills out of which one is quite harmless but the other is a deadly poison, knowing Sherlock will accept the dare to prove that he indeed has the superior wits to deduce the safe one.

As a consequence of Conan Doyle's tragic life experiences through the loss of his brother and eldest son during World War I, in the stories between 1923 and 1927 he made a radical decision about the original traits of Sherlock Holmes (Robertson 2020). "*It was no longer enough that the Holmes character was the most brilliant rational and analytical mind. Holmes needed to be human. The character needed to develop human connection and empathy*" (ibid.). Therefore, Sherlock Holmes, "*known around the world as a brain without a heart – develop into a character with a heart. Holmes became warmer. He became capable of friendship. He could express emotion. He began to respect women*" (ibid.). Steven Moffat and Mark Gatiss strived to elucidate the character of Sherlock Holmes drawing on Doyle's original vision, however, they also took liberty in illustrating Sherlock's character narrative and human depiction. To emphasize Sherlock's newly adapted human qualities, the producers of *Sherlock BBC* (2010) included the character of Molly Hooper, which does not correlate with any of the characters from the original canon (Hrčková 16). Furthermore, from the beginning, the producers were building up towards the strong relationship between John and Sherlock. This remark is the point in which *Sherlock BBC* iteration originated from the 1968 *A Study in Scarlet* as well as the 1887 Doyle's first story. It is apparent that unlike in the original *A Study in Scarlet*, the producers of *Sherlock BBC* (2010) were building up towards Sherlock's human nature from the very first episode *A Study in Pink*.

In summary, this chapter has drawn on the iconic traits of Sherlock Holmes presented in the *Sherlock BBC* (2010), making him a unique and timeless character, be it

the traits in which it holds on to the original or the new adaptation changes due to the 21<sup>st</sup>-century setting.

### **3. Sherlock BBC**

Sherlock BBC is a detective procedural, based on Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's original stories of Sherlock Holmes. Producers of the show, Steven Moffat and Mark Gatiss, nevertheless, adapted the original stories to the contemporary 21<sup>st</sup> century. The iconic details from Conan Doyle's original books however remain. Likewise, the original, the series invariably set the story at 221B Baker Street and follows the ordinary life of two extraordinary men, this time however in modern-day London.

The very first episode of the first series *A Study in Pink* was broadcasted in 2010 and since then another 3 series have been released, each containing 3 episodes (with a length of about 90 min.) except for the one special separate episode *The Abominable Bride*. This episode was set to the Victorian period as a remark of the original novels set to this era and was broadcasted on 1. January 2016.

#### **3.1. Plot**

From the very beginning, we are introduced to the character of Dr. John Watson (Martin Freeman), a wounded Afghanistan veteran, looking for a flatmate and coincidentally happening to meet a consulting detective Sherlock Holmes (Benedict Cumberbatch) with whom he subsequently moves into 221B Baker Street. Together they start solving baffling and often bizarre murder mysteries. John being a doctor serves Sherlock as a right-hand man when investigating the crime scene.

Each episode is dedicated to one main detective case, however, with many other plot twists and side characters appearing and intertwining throughout the story. It is the diametric opposite of the two main characters (Sherlock an asocial codger and John Watson a servant suffering from post-war trauma), owing to which the show represents a unique adaptation of a brilliant detective story.

### 3.2. Characters

This subchapter provides a brief description of the characters and their relation to Sherlock, which is important for further analysis.

*Greg Lestrade* is an inspector working for Scotland Yard. Though he cannot always stand Sherlock as a person, he nonetheless recognizes him as a consulting detective and often seeks out his help, when solving a case.

*Irene Adler*, though appearing directly only in one episode of the series (*A Scandal in Belgravia*) she is one of the most important female characters throughout the story of Sherlock Holmes. For her charm and intelligence, she is presented as a highly dangerous woman. Her occupation is Dominatrix, and she is brilliant at it, which eventually provides her high clientele and connections in the right places. Her attraction to Sherlock turns out to be her only weakness after all.

*James Moriarty*, in the series, appears as the main enemy of Sherlock Holmes. In some attributes, Sherlock and Moriarty seem very alike. He is an extremely intelligent and self-confident criminal. However, he is also arrogant, sarcastic, and a sadistic psychopath. Unlike Sherlock, who likes to claim to be the only consulting detective in the world, Moriarty uses his potential quite differently, he indicates himself as the only consulting criminal. His interest and fascination in Sherlock become almost an obsession.

*John Watson* is an experienced medical doctor and an Afghanistan war veteran. He is a very good friend of Sherlock Holmes and also assists Sherlock when solving cases. Unlike in the books, the TV series character of John Watson does not guide us through the story, meaning, he is not the narrator, however, he provides an overview of him and Sherlock solving cases in the form of a blog. As for his character, he had undergone a serious injury in Afghanistan and is left with a post-war trauma, which makes him distancing from people for a while. He is an intelligent man, loyal friend, and a true

gentleman to women, however at times he is a bit naive. Later on, he marries Mary, who he believes is the right one, nonetheless finds out about her history of being a professional assassin, which is a thing, not even Sherlock Holmes had thought of.

*Mary Morstan* is a figure, which embodies the wife of John Watson. Mary works as a nurse at the same hospital as John, however, she has a dark history. Together with John, later on, they have a daughter named Rosamund Mary. In the last season, Mary is unfortunately killed, when trying to save Sherlock from being shot.

*Molly Hooper* is a specialist register working in a morgue. She is an intelligent, good-hearted woman, however, appearing rather shy. Molly has a crush on Sherlock, she often tries flirting with him. Only, for this reason, she even leaves him to make his experiments with dead bodies (for the sake of science purposes) in the morgue. Unlike all of the other characters introduced Molly has been created by the TV series producers and not by the author sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

*Mycroft Holmes* is Sherlock's elder brother, with whom he is competing his whole life, for he considers himself smarter than Sherlock. Working for the British Government, he is a man of connections and thus a very respectable person in England. He and his brother have a good relationship, though some sibling rivalry occurs throughout their conversations.

*Mrs. Hudson* is the landlady of a flat at 221B Baker Street. Even though she is often perceived by Sherlock and Watson, of being their housekeeper, she strongly denies such assumptions. She is an elderly, sympathetic lady who is always trying to keep the house tidy. Mrs. Hudson and Sherlock have their ups and downs, despite any quarrels, these two have a good relationship also Sherlock is always gentle and considerate towards her.

This part concentrates only on the main characters, which were found important for the analysis of Sherlock's communication interaction in the series. The character description is useful for the comprehension of content dependent dialogues. Moreover, it serves to the identification characterizing the relation of the characters to Sherlock Holmes. Description of other minor characters appearing in *Sherlock BBC* (2010) when needed is further provided.

#### **4. The Art of Conversation**

In the previous chapters, the main concepts pivotal for further analysis, the research of this paper focuses on, were presented. The character of Sherlock Holmes is famous all over the world due to the wonderful descriptive skills of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in his books. The transfer of his work to the TV screen enables the investigation of his characters through the observation of their actions and the dialogue they engage in. The main concern of this paper is to draw on Sherlock's key features by the means of his communicative interactions. Therefore, this chapter and its subchapters provide a theoretical background to the research method applied to this thesis.

Language is a feature quintessential for all the species, due to which, every living creature can communicate. Human language, unlike other, is significant for its complexity as its fundamental function is to convey meaning. According to a definition by Finegan and Besnier (1989) provided in *An introduction to language and linguistics*, we might define language as a “*finite system of elements and principles that make it possible for speakers to construct sentences to do particular communicative jobs*” (1). Therefore, the ability to use language as the main means of our communication enables us to not only express our feelings, thoughts, or to create relationships (either personal or professional) but also shape our thoughts in various ways through writing, speaking, listening, and reading.

##### **4.1. Authentic conversation**

An authentic conversation is a type of act, where two real-life people are discussing the matter of the current situation, being all authentic with their reaction to what is being said by each of the participants, making use of linguistic devices be it the instances such as overlaps, interruptions or incomplete utterances, which cause

the conversation to appear natural and interactive (Quaglio 3). Therefore, the transcripts of real conversations are messy, full of activities, interruptions, and supportive gestures.

To exemplify the authentic human interaction, linguists usually set the transcribed data of conversations under a review of CA. The main question, when dealing with conversation analysis according to Hutchby and Wooffitt is: “*What do we do when we talk?*” (1) There an American language philosopher J.R. Searle would suggest that whenever we talk, we perform “so-called” *Speech Acts* (Grewendorf and Meggle 2002). Thus, we can say that *Speech Acts* are actions that are performed through utterance, as has also been stated by J. L. Austin (Zsiga, Lardiere, Kramer 174).

Austin and Searle are two of the most important linguists concerning the phenomenon of *Speech Acts*. Austin believed that there is a lot more to a language than the meaning of its words and phrases. He was convinced that we do not just use language to say things (to make statements) but to do things (perform actions). It was this conviction that eventually led him to a theory of what he called *illocutionary acts* (Thomas 31).

According to Austin, there are three types of *Speech Act*: Locutionary, Illocutionary, and Prelocutionary (Zsiga, Lardiere, Kramer 175). Each of which is performing a different level of communication:

A *Locutionary act* is the type of action performed solely on the base of its grammar structure (phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics), suggesting, its aim is not searching for the meaning of a particular utterance (ibid.).

*Illocutionary acts* on the other side are actions through which a speaker is taking a certain stand to a situation and is also implying a certain intention. As we recognize three main clause types: Declarative, Interrogative, and imperative, this act goes deeper to the sentence structure such as performing actions of communication like “*asserting*



*a fact, asking a question, requesting an action, making a promise, or giving a warning”*  
(175).

The last type, which Austin called *Prelocutionary act*, goes far beyond means of communication, making it impossible for a speaker to understand without having a particular context. Such type of act involves performing certain actions, be it frightening, annoying, or tricking someone. All those actions, however, are an inseparable part of what we are doing when we talk even though we are not necessarily aware of it.

Speech Act theory is neither a theory of interpretation nor a global theory of action, it is a theory of meaning (Moeschler 2), therefore it cannot provide an insight into the interpretation of problems. The methodology of CA, on the other hand, helps to approach the interpretation of social action through talk in interaction. Therefore, the engagement of Speech Act theory to the analysis of conversation offers a useful contribution to the study of meaning and intentions, beneficial for analysis and organization of data of participants approaching social action through talk.

#### **4.2. Fictional Conversation**

The 21<sup>st</sup> century, full of technology provides offers unlimited resources to language data (Ahmadi 2), be it the online articles, e-books, or TV series, through which access to language in various forms may be obtained. Therefore, there is not only the authentic conversation to be found, but as Urbanová (2005) suggests a feature of fictional conversation finds its place in the world (Hrňová 13).

According to Ludmila Urbanová “*certain types of utterances, although they are grammatically correct, can be dispreferred because they are not in harmony with the principles of human communication*” (Urbanová 2001: 49). This may be the case for much of scripted dialogue. Smith (1999) says that “*dialogue should be written in a conversational style*” (p. 148), as a consequence of which, the screenwriters, often

simply rely on native-speaker intuition when scripting scenarios. Smith also draws on language appropriates, he suggests, that “*the age, education and cultural background of the characters*” shall be considered when scripting a dialogue (Quaglio 11). Furthermore, regarding the features that characterize ‘conversational style’, Cooper (1997) draws on the issue of audience identification, implying the character shall “*address four basic audience needs (i.e., universal emotions, new information, conflict resolution, and completion)*” (Quaglio 11). The aim of addressing the viewer’s needs is to bring up the recognition of the audience towards the characters, however, it is not stated how these features are realized by characters using particular linguistic appropriates in their communication (ibid.). Therefore, although applying CA to the analysis of a fictional character is perhaps not a conventional approach, there the application of CA to fictional discursive interactions may be appropriate to gain insights into character development and help to illuminate the characteristics which the screenwriters wished to emphasise. Moreover, whilst scripted interactions usually lack the element of naturalness, the perlocutionary force of the meaning communicated through the individual interactions may be intensified through the performance of the actors and their deliberate choices to enact and stylise the character a particular way.

Understanding of both notions “authentic conversation” as well as “fictional conversation” is important when applying CA to the analysis of a fictional character. Quaglio in his *Television dialogue* makes a distinction between authentic conversation, which he calls “natural conversation” and fictional conversation giving it the label “TV dialogue” (Quaglio 1). In terms of fictional conversation, there arise questions of “*What is it that makes scripted dialogue sound natural or contrived?*” and “*Is television dialogue expected or meant to sound like a naturally-occurring conversation?*” (ibid.) To analyse, this remark, we must be aware of certain rules governing the art of conversation.

This research hypothesizes that the conversation in TV series, although not authentic, ought to sound “natural”, as the audience needs to identify with the characters (Quaglio 2010). Hrňová in her thesis accentuates the difference between the authentic and constructed conversation recalling the message conveyed in a fictional conversation very important, as its style is adjusted to its purpose (Hrňová 2015:13). “*The participants are fictional, and their speech is, therefore, a work of the writer, who through the dialogues shows certain characteristics of the participants (Urbanová 2005)*“ (Hrňová 13). The interactive attribute of conversation results in the eagerness of participants to evolve the communicative event. According to Quaglio, this cooperation often follows in the occurrence of certain linguistic features without interfering much with the flow of the exchanges (Quaglio18). “*The virtual absence of these features in television dialogue is probably one of the most salient differences between the two registers*” (18). Therefore, Hrňová (2015) in her thesis sets two salient features, pivotal to be aware of, as to achieve authentically accurate fictional conversation.

(1) *A lack of shared knowledge between TV characters and TV viewers, which results in the elaboration of meaning.* Unlike authentic conversation, which is characteristic by the virtue of taking place in a shared context, requiring awareness of the background knowledge of the interlocutors, the instances typifying naturally-occurring conversation need not only the general knowledge of what is being talked about between characters of the series but that the viewer to be up to date in following the series and understand the background as well (Hrňová 15). This remark is accomplished by setting the scenes to follow each other orderly and logically, for the viewer to comprehend.

(2) *The TV characters’ way of thinking is adapted to TV viewers’ way of thinking.*

The fictional conversation ought to sound “natural” for the viewers to identify themselves with the TV characters. Thus, the producers adapt the speech of the characters in a way that is understood by TV viewers (Hrňová 16). In the interest of sharing the same general knowledge, is “the character of a certain profession” (ibid.) be it in this instance Sherlock’s occupy in forensic or chemistry, appear the language subsequently in an adjusted form appropriate to the general knowledge of the viewer.

To explain this endeavor of screenwriters striving to write the scripts in a conversational style, drawing on Quaglio (2009), Lenka Hrňová introduced the five most important features of an authentic conversation:

1. *Conversation takes place in a shared context (Quaglio, 2009, p. 6).*
2. *Conversation avoids elaboration of meaning (Quaglio, 2009, p. 7).*
3. *Conversation takes place in real-time (Quaglio, 2009, p. 7).*
4. *Conversation is interactive (Quaglio, 2009, p. 3).*
5. *Conversation expresses stance (Quaglio, 2009, p. 9).*

(Hrňová 2015: 14).

In order to illustrate the intentions of the producers of the TV iteration presented in this thesis to script the dialogue to resemble the authentic conversation, each point presents an instance of a dialogue retrieved from *Sherlock BBC* (2010) as a showcase of the particular occurrence.

The first point implies, that during a conversation, the participants ought to be acquainted with what is being talked about. The acquaintance of the participants should not only be with the physical context but the background knowledge as well, otherwise, the lack of knowledge can lead to misinterpretation (ibid.). According to Urbanová, it is

useful to distinguish between three types of contexts: “*the broad context (the context of general experience and the situational context), the narrow context which is represented by linguistic means (the verbal context), as well as the cognitive context (communicative intentions of the speaker)*” (Urbanová 2001: 52). Stated by Quaglio, the usage of some “*personal pronouns, ellipsis, substitute pro-forms, and deictic expressions (e.g., this, that) helps reflect shared context*” (Quaglio 6). The example of this usage in *Sherlock BBC* is provided in the excerpt (1), where the speakers are talking about another murder, which appeared at Brixton, this time the murder pattern however differs, for the victim left a note.

- (1) Sherlock:     Where?  
 Lestrade:        Brixton, Lauriston Gardens.  
 Sherlock:        What’s new about this one? You wouldn’t  
 come to get me if there wasn’t something different  
 Lestrade:        You know how they never leave notes?  
 Sherlock:        Yeah.  
 Lestrade:        This one did. Will you come?  
 (S01E01 0:15:27)

This excerpt provides several instances of the personal pronouns *you* and *they*. Furthermore, Sherlock’s utterances repeatedly provide a deictic item in *this one*. Therefore, there, the access to the background knowledge (the fact that Lestrade already asked Sherlock for help in the series of investigation) is shared by both speakers, which makes the omitted item retrievable.

The second point is connected to the first Hrňová’s point. As a consequence of being aware of the context, the participants often do not say certain things as they know what is being talked about (14). “*If a vague expression is used and not understood, the other participant usually asks for an explanation*” (ibid). According to Quaglio, the “*lack of elaboration is reflected in the high frequency of conversational hedges (e.g., sort of, kind of), nouns of vague reference (e.g., thing, stuff), and vague*

*coordination tags (e.g., or something, stuff like that)*” (Quaglio 7). The following example illustrates, that the screenwriters of *Sherlock BBC* (2010), strived to script the exchanges in a conversational style, using these instances.

Example (2), there John is grieving about his living in London and flat-search failure.

- (2) Mike: Couldn't Harry help?  
John: Yeah, like that's gonna happen!  
Mike: I dunno – get a flatshare or something?  
(S01E01 0:08:06)

This example contains vague devices *like that* and *or something*. John's utterance was meant rather sarcastically, suggesting the helplessness of his situation, seeing no way how could Mike help him. Mike in his second utterance, however, tried to be more precise providing a possibility, moreover implying the flexibility of his offer by adding *or something*.

The third point states that “*in natural conversation, participants do not have enough time to think much about what they say*” (Hrňová 14), as a consequence of which they “*try to achieve several goals sometimes all at the same time*” (Zsiga, Lardiere, Kramer 190). According to Quaglio “*the most salient result of real-time production is the presence of hesitations, repeats, and incomplete sentences*” (Quaglio 2009). In example (3), Mycroft attempts to approach John by a public telephone box instead of setting a meeting with him by calling John on his phone. This excerpt provides the discourse markers such as *you know* and *I mean*, used during a speech to gain some “*time for speakers to organize their thoughts before verbalizing them*” (Quaglio 8).

- (3) Mycroft: Have a seat, John.  
John: You know, I've got a phone.  
John: I mean, very clever and all that, but, er... you could just phone me. On my phone.

(S01E01 0:35:38)

The fourth point is certainly important to draw on the relations between authentic and fictional conversations. “*The language of conversation is predominantly characterized by its interactional (expressive, emotive, interpersonal, social expressive) function*” (Urbanová 2001: 50). For instance, back channels are an important part of an authentic conversation, if there are no backchannels, it can be a mark of staged interactions as backchannels might have a disruptive effect in terms of perception. “*Nonclausal units are a typical result of the pressures of online production but also reveal the interactive nature of conversation*” (Quaglio 8). The nonclausal unit in form of a single-word responses such as *Wow* or *Okay*, however, appear to be valid there, as its occurrence is to be found in *Sherlock BBC* (2010).

- (4) Sherlock: What happened to the lipstick?  
Molly: It wasn't working for me.  
Sherlock: Really? I thought it was a big improvement. Your mouth's too small now.  
Molly: ...Okay.  
(S01E01 0:10:09)

In addition to the last example, the fifth point suggested by Hřnová is also presented there, as this point “*refers to the fact that people tend to evaluate things, saying their opinions or/and to be emotional*” (Hřnová 14). In (4) Sherlock's utterance provides an evaluation of Molly's appearance, which according to her response seems to hurt her feelings.

Regarding the endeavour of TV producers to make the fictional conversation appear as close to the authentic conversation, it was showed that scripted conversations in the *Sherlock BBC* (2010) share the linguistic features that were found (and described above) to characterize interactive registers that appear within an authentic conversation.

## **5. Methodology**

The character of Sherlock Holmes is famous all over the world, particularly of note is his iconic appearance, intelligence, arrogance, superiority, and superhuman detective reputation. The creators of *Sherlock BBC* (2010) Steven Moffat and Mark Gatiss did not take inspiration scarcely from Doyle's stories but also drew on the following Sherlock Holmes franchise as a whole (Hrčková 8). In the extended amount of Sherlock iterations, each treated the character of the famous detective variously. In order to undertake research, the methodology was to examine four transcripts from the *Sherlock BBC* TV series, obtained from the BBC archives.

The aim was to through the analysis of Sherlock's interactive conversations in these transcripts to begin to both define his core characteristics as they have been translated to a 21<sup>st</sup>-century audience and reflect on how they did or did not retain the original essence of Sherlock as enunciated in the original prose.

Conversational Analysis was selected as the prescribed methodology to examine the texts. The application of CA may fly in the face of its core principles in interpreting real-life discursive interactions. Books, TV, and Films strive to be original, successful iterations apply the rules of real-life conversations to their creations. In doing so I accept that this is a fictional construct, I do however believe that CA as a tool has much to offer through the analysis of the spoken word (though scripted) in elucidating the character of Sherlock Holmes.

### **5.1. Conversation Analysis**

Conversation Analysis is an established research method used in applied linguistics, emerging in the 1960s established by Harvey Sacks, Emanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson, drawing on the previous intentions of two important sociologists Erwin Goffman and Harold Garfinkel (Sidnell 6). This approach emerged through



a collaboration of different perspectives including “*sociology, anthropology, linguistics, philosophy, and other disciplines*” (Sidnell 11). Stated by Jack Sidnell, CA is “*an approach within the social sciences that aims to describe, analyze, and understand talk as a basic and constitutive feature of human social life*” (1). Talk is therefore not to be perceived solely as the result of two participants in the process of exchanging information, “*rather, participants in a conversation are seen as mutually orienting to and, collaborating in order to achieve, orderly and meaningful communication*” (Hutchby and Wooffitt 1).

The central foundation of CA is the nature of turn-taking in talk-in-interaction (Hutchby and Wooffitt 41). The organization of the talk, accomplishments of individual utterances of the participants, and the systematic resources used for these accomplishments, overall referred to as the *sequential order* of talk, are the main concerns of analysts when using the CA methodology (ibid.). The face-to-face communication follows particular *interaction order*, thus “*each participant must dutifully do her part by attending to the right things at the right moments and conveying just the right degree of involvement*” (Sidnell 7). The methodology of CA, therefore, works to detail with transcripts of talk and aims to interpret the social action provided by the participants. This thesis applies the conventions of CA to a constructed conversation to approach Sherlock’s behaviour, through his verbal interaction, which manifests his fictional character, examples of which are provided in the section *The Analysis*.

It is important to acknowledge that CA is conventionally applied to the examination of real talk transcripts, which is not the case in this thesis. “*Conversation has been analyzed from several different yet complementary perspectives*” (Quaglio 5). Of note is the survey of LGSWE (*Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English*), “*which presents descriptions and analyses of grammatical features based*

*on a comprehensive corpus-based study involving four registers” (ibid.)* out of which beside academic writing, news reportage or conversation the fiction writing is discussed. Therefore, although the application of CA methodology to the scripted conversation, may not be a conventional approach, the exemplifying particular linguistic features occurring in verbal exchange has merit in helping to explore how the character of a fictional construct can be communicated through the spoken word even if this is scripted for TV.

## **5.2. Data**

The source for my research were the transcripts of *Sherlock BBC (2010)*. There are 13 episodes of *Sherlock BBC (2010)* in four seasons that have been filmed. Data analysis was accomplished based on the transcripts proceeded and downloaded from the website [www.arianedevere.livejournal.com](http://www.arianedevere.livejournal.com). The website provides access to transcripts of all episodes of *Sherlock BBC (2010)*, which together with re-watching of the episodes served to select the samples.

After I collected the transcripts, I then went through all seasons of the series to locate a potentially interesting phenomenon in the data. Having subjected the screenplays to a review a number of features were prevalent in Sherlock’s discursive interactions. Therefore, the next step was to collect instances of these features as they emerged throughout the communication.

The selection of data was done by the reason of personal interest and by the aim to verify the presence of Sherlock’s original traits in the modern iteration. Those were identified and presented as samples of overall four episodes, further exemplified drawing on the intentions of screenwriters to particularly through these features build up towards Sherlock’s character. The research then approached the data with the methodology of CA.

*“Doing conversation analysis involves making transcripts of recorded talk”* (Sidnell 23). There are many ways to acquire data. Although, the methodology of CA

emphasizes the use of real-talk transcriptions occurring naturally, the approach of this thesis was to process the data of fictional conversations in TV series. Video-tapes provide a very rich source of data as it allows “*to examine not just talk but also the use of the body and especially gaze and gesture in the organization of interaction*” (Sidnell 22).

According to Jane A. Edwards (2007), there are three format-based decisions to lay out the arrangement of speakers turns vertical, column-based, and partiture (Edwards 5). For this analysis, I chose the vertical format, as Edwards claims this format “*implies symmetry and equal dominance of speakers*” (ibid.), which I found relevant for my research. Furthermore, “*the form is build up gradually from smaller units contributed one at a time*” (ibid.). The vertical format preserves time vertically from the top to the bottom of the transcript, in the degree from left to right. Moreover, it also signals the onset and the end of an overlapped utterance using indentation and brackets to indicate this instance (ibid.). Therefore, I decided to apply this format to the data of my analysis, as it makes it easier for the reader to follow the conversation.

Having the transcript is crucial for the application of CA, but the actual process of analysis requires much more than that. “*To do conversation analysis you have to train yourself to listen to talk in a different way. One has to learn to hear the sometimes very subtle nuances*” (ibid.). These nuances or details of conversation-analytic work used particularly in this research were the pauses, prosody in the sense of rising and falling intonation, the onset and end of the overlapping, the occurrences of “latching” talk, backchanneling and speeded up or slowed down utterances. Therefore, the sampled excerpts of linguistic nuances within the conversation in the transcripts alone were insufficient, for they contained only the text of dialogues and descriptions of actions (character behaviour, setting, and the storyline). As a consequence of which, to approach the analysis the selected samples were subjected to *close viewing*, during which

I systematically enriched the original transcripts with the help of CA transcription conventions and added information about the interactive behaviour of individual characters.

For the transcription of scripted dialogue in conversation-analytic research, I conventionally used transcription symbols developed by Gail Jefferson (2004). Drawing on Jefferson, transcription symbols that were used there were adopted from Sidnell's *Conversation Analysis* (2010) and *Conversation Analysis 2nd ed* (Hutchby and Wooffitt 2008). As the conversation marks provided for CA by conversation analysts "*are not used grammatically, but to indicate intonation*" (Sidnell ix), to mark the transcripts used in this analysis, I stuck to this template, using the transcription symbols, which were relevant for the analysis presented in this thesis (section *The Analysis*).

In addition, each of the four episodes was examined to identify non-verbal communication that builds and reinforces the scripts. These processed transcripts were subsequently coded to make further references in the research appear orderly. The data amounted to about 184 pages, therefore, the complete overview of the exemplified transcripts is attached in Appendix 2.

### **5.3. The Episodes Examined**

The research is based on an analysis of transcripts of particular episodes of the series, which are available on the internet. Selected episodes are:

**A Study in Pink** (S01E01) – This episode is the pilot, therefore introducing the characters for the very first time. John agrees to share a flat with Sherlock when he gets called in by Detective Inspector Lestrade to help on a case of the suspicious death of Jennifer Wilson. The episode continues with Sherlock and John trying to find out who the killer is. At the end of the episode, John shoots the murderer, who dares Sherlock

under a threat to choose one of two pills out of which one is quite harmless but the other stands for certain death.

**A Scandal in Belgravia** (S02E01) – As the previous episode ended with Moriarty threatening Sherlock by the swimming pool pointing a gun at him, this scene is interrupted by Moriarty receiving a phone call withdrawing this mission. Later on, in the episode, Sherlock's investigation is interrupted when summoned to the Buckingham Palace being hired to deal with the matter of national importance. Dominatrix Irene Adler has incriminating photos of a royal family member, encrypted in her camera phone and the Palace wants Sherlock to secure the phone. The episode results in Sherlock deciphering Irene's phone whilst discovering her feelings for him.

**The Sign of Three** (S03E02) – This episode is about John and Mary's wedding. Sherlock was given the task to make a speech as John's best man. Throughout the episode he also recounts two cases, he has not solved yet. It is at the wedding whilst giving the speech when he realizes the cases are intertwined and also linked to John and Mary's wedding, where one of the guests is to get murdered.

**The Final Problem** (S04E04) – This episode starts with Sherlock forcing Mycroft to admit the existence of their sister Eurus. Mycroft confesses keeping Eurus at Sherrinford, the maximum-security island prison where she has been held all these years for she proved to be extremely dangerous (killing Sherlock's childhood's best friend). Eurus nevertheless endeavors to set up a series of mind games, which Sherlock must solve and as a consequence of which he, later on, realizes he erased his memories of Eurus for she killed his childhood's best friend and is about to do the same with his now best friend John.

The first and last episodes *A Study in Pink* and *The Final Problem* were chosen as I wanted to approach Sherlock's communication interaction throughout

the series, to catch its aspects from the beginning to the very end of the procedural. I chose the episode *A Scandal in Belgravia* as it is the only episode presenting the character of Irene Adler, which I found important for the communication interaction between these two characters draws on particular features of Sherlock's character provided in the further analysis. *The Sign of Three* subsequently was chosen since this episode appeal to Sherlock's emotional state and draws on his human character the most.

## **6. The Analysis**

Having subjected the screenplays to a review a number of features were prevalent in Sherlock's discursive interactions with the other major characters. These were noted and used as a template to identify specific examples across the data. Therefore, based on the review of the series and its findings specific labels were created to describe these characteristics and these will be presented in the following sub-sections.

### **The traits analysed:**

The Loner detective

Sherlock's superior behaviour

Emotional Sherlock Holmes

### **List of participants (abbreviations):**

D: David

H: Mrs. Hudson

I: Irene Adler

J: John Watson

L: Detective Inspector Lestrade

M: Molly

Mo: Moriarty

My: Mycroft

S: Sherlock Holmes

### **6.1. The Loner detective**

Example (6.1.1.1) is an opening scene, found in a morgue setting, where Sherlock Holmes is firstly introduced to the audience. Sherlock and Molly are both in the morgue, where Molly allows Sherlock to make his experiments (this time, Sherlock beating a dead

body with a whip in order to find out what bruises form in a short period of time).  
After Sherlock is finished, Molly comes to him to ask him out.

#### **6.1.1.1. Implication**

- 01 M (*gazing at Sherlock intently*): .hhh I was wondering if you'd like  
to have coffee  
(*Sherlock puts away his notebook*)  
02 S: Black. two sugars, please (.) I'll be upstairs. (*He walks away*)  
(2s)  
03 M: ↑Okay  
(S01E01 0:09:10)

Line 01, presents an offer, however, is formulated indirectly not as “Would you like a cup of coffee?” The offer is not just for a cup of coffee but here it implies the act of sitting down with somebody and having a bit of private, personal perhaps more intimate time together. This more personal, relationship-oriented meaning is also what the scriptwriters were building up towards in setting the scene. Line 02, provides a very direct, functional, and exclusively transactional response to what was articulated as a shy, indirect, and relationship-building invitation. This remark serves to a humorous effect for the exchange puts in contrast what is traditionally associated with British etiquette (politeness enacted through being indirect) with the social incapacity of Sherlock. Such a remark also underpins a particular image of Sherlock Holmes who on the one hand is endowed with superior intelligence and on the other, cannot comprehend an offer.

As apparent from the comparative analysis in 2.1. *A Study in Scarlet vs. A Study in Pink*, Sherlock is highly intelligent. He has the wits to arouse Molly's affection and gain her trust to provide him free access to the morgue, owing to which his statement then indicates Sherlock's intention in misinterpreting obvious hints of the implication provided. Nevertheless, through the context of the scene provided when introducing



the excerpt and observed interaction of the characters captured in the brackets, it appears that Sherlock is busy carrying out and making conclusions of his observation, therefore, being so wrapped up in his thoughts, which consequently could also be the reason of taking the offer at face value. Therefore, according to Sherlock's previously endowed description, it can be stated, that by the means of his ability of rational thinking, the screenwriters intentionally made his reply to appear as a misinterpretation of Molly's offer, as a manifest of his rational approach and subsequently to draw on Sherlock's other trait, of his loner behaviour (further exemplified in this thesis).

Excerpt 6.1.1.2, John and Sherlock are now in the apartment at 221B Baker Street, which is owned by Mrs. Hudson. After introducing John to Mrs. Hudson, Sherlock then goes on and provides the room tour under the supervision of Mrs. Hudson, as he has already moved in.

#### **6.1.1.2. Allusion on Sherlock's sexual orientation**

- 01 H: What do you think then Doctor Watson? (1s) There's another bedroom upstairs (.) if you'll be needing two bedrooms?
- 02 J: Of course, we'll be needing two↓  
*(John looks across to Sherlock, expecting him to confirm that he and John are not involved in that way but Sherlock appears oblivious to what's being insinuated. Mrs. Hudson walks across to the kitchen, then turns back and frowns at Sherlock.)*
- 03 H: Oh, don't worry (.) there's all sorts round here  
<Mrs. Turner next door's (*Confidentially, dropping her voice to a whisper by the end of the sentence*) °got married ones°  
(S01E01 0:14:18)

In line 01, Mrs. Hudson constructs an *open-question* when asking John about his opinion. Through the emphasis given to particular words in this utterance and by ending the speech with a raised intonation, such a statement creates an implication, suggesting Sherlock and John are a couple. Nonetheless, Mrs. Hudson seeing John for the first time, cannot know for sure, whether he is homosexually oriented. Therefore, implying

these two being a couple, she must do so apparently drawing on her previous persuasion of Sherlock being homosexually oriented and considering John Sherlock's partner, as she has known Sherlock for some time. Sherlock, although present in this scene, he is not objecting, as apparent from the non-verbal interaction. The lack of backchannel from Sherlock's side might also be a mark of staged interactions as backchannels could have a disruptive effect in terms of perception. The lack of Sherlock's reaction, however, leads to John's wonder. The line 02, then provides a direct response of John, ended with a peculiar intonation, implying the obscurity of such suggestion, indicating and pointing out the trouble to what was meant as a polite question, objecting that he and Sherlock would be involved in such way.

Line 03 provided by Mrs. Hudson, subsequently, serves as a reassuring element towards John, suggesting it would be considered normal in the 21<sup>st</sup> century for two men living together. At the same time, the second part of 03 serves as a complement of the first statement, this time in the form of a polite, unobtrusive opinion, expressing the attitude of Mrs. Hudson towards homosexuality or divorce. As already stated in chapter 2.1 *A Study in Scarlet vs a Study in Pink*, the question of Sherlock's sexuality throughout the series remains rather unanswered.

The following excerpt of dialogue (6.1.1.3.) is now set in a restaurant into which Sherlock leads John to wait for the murderer to appear. The manager of the restaurant comes over, obviously pleased to see Sherlock, making it clear he supposes John Sherlock's date, which John denies straightaway. Sherlock on the other side as in the proceeding instance (6.1.1.2) neither objects nor confirms such a statement. The arisen situation then leads to the following conversation during which John endeavours to find out Sherlock's area of romantic interest.

### 6.1.1.3. Sherlock's sexuality

- 01 J: You don't have a girlfriend, then↓  
(1s)
- 02 S: Girlfriend, no: not really my area.
- 03 J: Oh, right (2s) Do you have a boyfriend?  
(1s)  
(*Sherlock just looks at him, curious - what's he on about?*)  
Which is (.) fine, by the w[ay]
- 04 SH: [I] know it's fine.  
(3s)  
(*John smiles to indicate that he was not signifying anything negative by what he said.*)
- 05 J: So you've got a boyfriend [then]
- 06 S: [No.]
- 07 J: Right (.) £Ok- so you're unattached < like me .hhh (.)fine (.) good.  
(10s)  
(*Sherlock looks at him a moment*)
- 08 S: John u(h)m (1,5s) I think you should know I consider myself married to my work (.) and while I'm flattered by [your interest=
- 09 J: [No
- 10 S: = I'm really not looking for any=
- 11 J: =No. No, I'm not (.) askin- no: (.) I'm just saying- (.) it's a:ll fine.  
(*Sherlock looks at him for a moment, then nods*)  
(3s)
- 12 S: Good (1,5s) thank you.  
(S01E01 0:50:34)

The excerpt 6.1.1.4 features a discussion between John and Sherlock in terms of John wondering about the romantic interest of Sherlock. Line 01, presents a statement which, however, is formulated not directly “Do you have a girlfriend?” but rather as an indirect question, serving as reassurance, since from the previous context John already suggested Sherlock not being in a relationship.

Line 02, provides an indirect and ambiguous response to what was articulated as an indirect and curious question. Emphasizing the first syllable of the word *girlfriend*, Sherlock's remark together with his claim of *girlfriends* not being his area of interest creates an ambiguous statement. In response to that, 03 John is subsequently

indicating the trouble source of his previous question as to the gender he used, therefore, after an initial realization, this time he provides a direct question, asking the same thing yet changing the gender to *boyfriend*. At this moment, the audience can observe Sherlock getting suspicious as to what John's intentions are. John subsequently supplies his question, suggesting it would be completely fine for Sherlock to be homosexually oriented, implying he is not homophobic. There, the occurrence of overlap features for the first time in this conversation, as Sherlock instantly expresses his stance that he by no means thought this would be anything else but fine. 04 What was meant as a reassurance of Sherlock's awareness, was however by John misinterpreted as an implication of Sherlock being romantically interested in men 05, this suggestion however is denied straightaway (06).

Line 07 was provided as an anxious reaction to the series of misunderstanding apparent throughout the conversation, to which ten seconds long pause follows. This remark creates a moment of tension, proceeding to which audience can observe Sherlock's endeavour of a polite rejection, as a result of which, John indicates Sherlock's utterance 08 as a polite rejection, therefore the second stance of overlap occurs in this dialogue when John starts objecting 09 to Sherlock's implication of him being interested in Sherlock. For overlapping is an element, which can be considered as a result of incoming speaker's failure in noticing the current speaker's finishing or not finishing his utterance (Hutchby and Wooffitt 54), in this case, however, the manifest of overlap was evaluated as a transition-relevant place, for making an objection to the incoming claim. As a consequence of this remark, John goes on one more time, reassuring Sherlock, there was no such intention from his side. This reflect serves to a humorous effect for the exchange presents various stances of Sherlock's misinterpreting John's hints.

While watching the selected episodes, it is to observe a regular inclination of Mark Gatiss and Steven Moffat of incorporating a numerous reference to the ambiguous relationship between Sherlock and John, as shown in the previous two examples. Although Doyle in his later work focussed on building up towards Sherlock's development of human connection (Robertson 2020), he did not intend to draw on Sherlock's and John's friendship as a romantic relationship.

Moffat as well as Gatiss knows that the stories flourish around Sherlock's possible asexuality. Although Sherlock said girlfriends were not his area, he never said boyfriends were. Later on, also politely refusing that what he considers Watson's potential interest in him, claiming he is not interested in any romantic relationship, for he considers himself "married to his work". This leads us back to Cumberbatch's statement declaring "He's asexual", subsequently supported by Moffat's statement for an interview "He's not gay. He's not straight" talking about Sherlock Holmes.

By incorporating numerous references to homosexuality the scriptwriters were building up towards spreading the recognition of the LGBT community to the audience. *"The naturalization of Sherlock's sexuality presses the boundaries of contemporary identity politics and the representation of characters with a nonnormative "queer" gender identity"* (Lamerichs 90). This perhaps more modern, daring interpretation of the creators, drawing on Sherlock's character through modern iteration, could align with the expectations and interpretations of the 21<sup>st</sup> century audience.

## **6.2. Sherlock's superior behaviour**

In the following excerpt (6.2.1.1), John already agreed to share the flat at 221B Baker Street with Sherlock, when he gets called in by Detective Inspector Lestrade to help on a case. Sherlock, Watson, and Lestrade now appear at a crime scene. After a quick observation of the place, as all evidence starts slotting together, made visible to the viewer

by notes appearing over the screen as the means for the audience to imagine the complexity of thoughts running through his head. Sherlock begins explaining his findings, claiming the victim is coming from Cardiff, however, meets with no comprehension from his colleagues.

#### 6.2.1.1. Mockery

- 01 L: ↑Cardiff?  
02 S: Obvious, isn't it↑  
(.)  
03 J: It's not obvious to me:  
(*Sherlock pausing as he looks at the other two*)  
(*Is*)  
04 S: °Dear God°(.)what is it like in your funny  
little brains <It must be so boring↓  
(S01E01 0:27:55)

In the beginning, line 01 provides an open-question as a consequence of the previous content of Sherlock's utterance. It is apparent from the stress put at the first syllable of the word *Cardiff*, accompanied by question marks, that the previous utterance was indicated unclear and the interlocutor, be it Lestrade in this case, therefore, requests for further explanation. Line 02, provides a rather indirect, brusque, and transactional response to an allegedly astonished, incomprehensible, and bewildering request. Moreover, line 02 appear in form of a rhetorical question implying the clarity of the previous statement to which then John, to this moment spectator, takes Lestrade's side claiming in line 03 that the obviousness of Sherlock's claim also does not meet his comprehension.

The exclamation at the beginning of Line 04, *Dear God* then provides a statement that is usually used to express astonishment or consternation. There the phrase indeed is used as an amusement, for he drops his voice, subsequently proceeding a mocking and sarcastic commentary lowering the intelligence of the other two. This remark serves

to a humorous effect to the audience, enhanced by Sherlock's preceding non-verbal interaction, however, is rather theatrical and bears the effect of mockery. Moreover, the presented situation and Sherlock's approach also highlights further trait of his, thus, it could be interpreted as an act of rudeness to help the screenwriters create the impression that Sherlock is an unlikable character.

The scene in example (6.2.1.2.) appears as a result of Watson's previous room-tour at 221B Baker Street, during which Lestrade contacts Sherlock about new murder happening in Brixton. As John decides to join Sherlock, they both get in the taxi and head for Brixton. The boys sit in silence for a long time, as they remain quite strangers to each other when Sherlock consequently dares John to ask him questions, which according to him he surely has.

#### **6.2.1.2. Consulting detective**

01 J: ↑Who are you? (.) What do you do:  
02 S: <What do you think.  
03 J: <I'd say (.) private de-tective .hh>  
04 S: But?  
05 J: <but the police don't go to private detectives  
(1s)  
06 S: .hhh I'm a consulting detective↓ (.) only one in the world  
<I invented the [job.]  
07 J: [What] does that mean?  
08 S: < .hhh It means when the police are out of their depth (.) which  
is always <they consult me  
[...]  
(S01E01 0:18:23)

The excerpt 6.2.1.2. features a conversation between John and Sherlock, which functions in the form of *question-answer* dialogue as a means for the audience to get to know the character of Sherlock. Line 01 presents two questions, both aiming to reveal the occupy of the detective, setting a strong expectation that the answer will be provided.

The following line 02, however, does not provide a direct, functional response, thus, is articulated rather as ‘a game’ for leaving up to John to make his own judgments about the detective's profession. This also functions as an element creating a contrast between John and Watson drawing on a difference in their deductive ability.

Line 03 then provides a rather slow, hesitant, and reluctant guess of Sherlock being a detective, which was made on the base of the previous scene when Sherlock was asked for help by a Detective Inspector Lestrade. By statement 06, Sherlock gets the attention of John, which is enough for him to provide his explanation. The screenwriters intended to incorporate the famous characteristic of Sherlock being “the world’s only consulting detective” through the words of Sherlock himself by the means of which, also drawing on Sherlock’s trait in favour of letting others admire his extraordinary abilities. This scene creates insight into the intention of screenwriters to building up towards setting up Sherlock’s superior behaviour towards authority. On one hand, Sherlock is scripted to imply his superiority over police, providing an implication of an inadequate ability of police solving the crimes, which leaves the viewers with a conclusion of Sherlock as an indeed intelligent, rational, and scientifically approached man. On the other hand, through the utterance, Steven Moffat and Mark Gatiss featured also another remark creating the effect of Sherlock as a self-centered man.

For example (6.2.1.3.), Sherlock and Lestrade as well as John already find themselves at a crime scene in Brixton, where a woman's dead body was found. To understand the following conversation, we need to have the proceeding context. There was a script “RACHE” engraved on the floor right next to the dead body, to which the forensic specialist previously referred to as holding the meaning of “revenge”



in German. According to Sherlock, the victim was trying to write “Rachel” (name of the victim’s daughter), that he wants to contact in order to get the identity of the dead woman.

### 6.2.1.3. Sarcastic remark

- 01 S: Yeah (.)where is it↑ S(.) he must have a phone or an organiser  
<we can find out who Rachel is=  
02 L: =She was writing Rachel?  
03 S: <No↓ she was leaving an angry note in Ge:рман <of course she  
was writing Rachel .hh°no other word it ca:n be° (.) Question is  
<why did she wait till she was dy:ng to write it  
[...]  
(S01E01 0:28:37)

This extract contains a discussion between Sherlock and Lestrade about the shreds of evidence occurring at the crime scene. Line 01 presents an open-question indicating longing for a piece of evidence, which is missing Sherlock’s attention. Line 02 then provides an incomprehensible, and astonished utterance formulated as a request for further information, to the implication provided in the second part of 01. Drawing on the proceeding context, there line 03 can be understood as a sarcastic remark. This remark serves to a humorous effect for it refers to the previous statement of the forensic specialist. Moreover, the statement is expressing signs of frustration for Sherlock is trying to make his deduction, expressing annoyance of Lestrade’s as well as the forensic specialist's slow reaction. In terms of speaking to an authority (Lestrade), Sherlock’s sarcastic utterance seems disrespectful. However, taking into account the fact of Sherlock perceiving himself superior to the police, such behaviour is then understandable to his believed position, although expresses signs of arrogance, for exalting oneself over others is considered rude. Sarcasm is being perceived also as a stance of humour, yet in this case intention of the authors was to make Sherlock appear rather mischievous than being funny.

Example (6.2.1.4.) is taken from the very beginning of *A Scandal in Belgravia*, which follows the scene from the previous episode in which Sherlock happens to meet Moriarty for the first time. There Sherlock and Moriarty find themselves by the swimming pool, where Moriarty is threatening Sherlock in the form of taking John as a hostage, making him wearing a bomb vest. At the same time, Sherlock is pointing a gun at Moriarty, the situation gets very tense when suddenly a phone ring appears.

#### **6.2.1.4. Sarcastic remark**

01 Mo: Do you mind if I get that?

02 SH (*nonchalantly*): No-no (.) ple:ase↓ (.) You've got the rest of your life↓

(*Jim takes his phone from his pocket and answers it.*)

(S02E01 0:01:53)

Line 01, presents an utterance, which is formulated as a direct polite question. The politeness of Moriarty's character, however, appears shiftily, considering the previous context, in which he was threatening Sherlock. The unusual and sudden change in the manner nevertheless draws on the aim of the producers to feature his unpredictable, psychopathic behaviour. Line 02, provides a very calm and polite response to what was indicated as a question-answer exchange but implies the act of sarcasm. Taking into account the dramatic moment, that by all means requires the vigilance of the main importance, Sherlock's response came very unusual. Being set under such pressure, however remaining handling it by easing the tight situation by implying Moriarty, by all means, may answer the phone, for he has got the rest of his life left to do so, suggests that as soon as he hangs up the phone, he will with the highest probability shoot him. This remark serves to a mocking sarcastic effect to the audience,

for the exchange puts, in contrast, the dramatic moment previously created to then oddly appearing politeness.

When it comes to Sherlock's and Moriarty's communication the conversation tends to get sarcastic as both of the characters are very similar as described in 3.2. *Characters*. This mockery and sarcastic relation between the two characters, is also what the scriptwriters were building up towards in setting the scene. Not even by the menacing attempt of Moriarty threatening Sherlock by killing John, to examine Sherlock's emotions and weaknesses let he himself intimidate and remains calm. This remark also underpins a particular attempt of the creators drawing the character of Sherlock Holmes as a focussed, not easily disturbed man, for whom emotions are no weakness.

Example (6.2.1.5.) is from the episode *A Scandal in Belgravia*, where at the very end of the episode, Mycroft is helpless and forced to accede to Irene's demands in exchange for the confidential material (which is located in her coded mobile phone), upon which depends her life. Sherlock, however at the last minute saves the situation by confronting, he broke the code to her phone supplied by the implication, that she has got carried away by sentiment in the form of having feelings for him.

#### **6.2.1.5. Implication and understanding**

01 I: £Oh dear God↑ (.) look at the poor man (.) .hh You don't actually think I was interested in you

(.)

Why?

(.)

<Because you're the great Sherlock Holmes< the clever detective in the funny ↑hat

*(He steps even closer to her, their bodies almost touching.)*

02 S: °No:°

*(He reaches out and slowly wraps the fingers of his right hand around her left wrist, then leans forward and brings his mouth close to her right ear.)*

(6s)

03 S: .hh°because I took your pulse°↓

*(Flashback to Irene kneeling in front of him at the flat and putting her hand on top of his, then him turning his hand over and resting his fingertips on the underside of her wrist. In the present, Irene frowns in confusion, while Sherlock tightens his grip a little around her wrist.)*

[...]

(S02E01 1:20:15)

In order to understand this remark, it is important to recall the preceding context. The whole episode *A Scandal in Belgravia*, the viewers observe Sherlock's behaviour, presuming he is attracted to Irene, however in the end it is Irene, who's feelings are revealed. Line 01 presents Irene's reaction to Sherlock's previous claim to have feelings for him. Her utterance is formulated as a set of mockery, insulting and lowering comments to the character of Sherlock Holmes, nevertheless, functioning rather as Irene's self-preservation instinct, for she knows Sherlock revealed her secret. Line 02, however, presents a very calm, direct, functional, and transactional response, denying the suggestion provided.

Line 03 then features Sherlock's implication, from which it is apparent, that the whole time he has already been several steps ahead of her. This remark is in the episode accompanied by a flashback to the scene which features Sherlock touching Irene's wrist, this scene, however, was previously intended to make an effect of Sherlock being romantically attracted to Irene. However, in the final scene the screenwriters reveal the intentions of this previous Sherlock's behaviour, implying that Sherlock noticed Irene's heartbeat fastened as he previously touched her, and since he is endowed with the power of identifying human nature and intentions, he recognizes this remark as a sign of being nervous when close to someone you are attracted to. That is, in line 03 Sherlock implicates, what he figured out, which is that it is Irene who shows her weakness and loses

‘the game’. There, Sherlock’s main motivation for claiming such a statement was not to reveal Irene’s emotions but prove himself and his superiority over her. This remark served to the screenwriters to draw on Sherlock’s favour in intrigue and playing games, as the whole season it appeared Sherlock Holmes being romantically interested in Irene, which subsequently was proved to be vice-versa.

Example (6.2.1.6.), appears at the very end of the episode, following the previous extract, where Sherlock was told that Irene is dead. He is now standing by the table at 221B Baker Street near the window, thinking about her.

#### **6.2.1.6. Recognition**

01 S: /ðə/ Woman.

*(Opening the top drawer of a nearby cabinet, he puts the phone into it and is about to withdraw his hand when he pauses, then puts his fingers onto the phone again and looks at it thoughtfully.)*

02 S: /ði/ Woman↓

*(He lifts his head and gazes out at the rainy city for a while, then turns and walks away.)*

(S02E01 1:28:33)

This example contains something, which “*Stivers (2005) characterizes as a modified repeat*” (Sidnell 116). There, Sherlock is not repairing the word “the” as far as its form is concerned but its intonation and semantic meaning instead. As in line 01, the usage of the definite article refers to the character of Irene, the second one however is referring to the attributes of the character, stressing the uniqueness of hers. Though the basic rule of the pronunciation of definite article, when appearing before a consonant sound, is /ðə/ and not /ði/ (phonetic transcription when appearing before vowel sounds), in this case, such pronunciation was used to stress the following word.

What the creators when setting this scene were building up towards was, through the picture of Sherlock Holmes thinking about Irene, to draw on the consequent respect of Sherlock towards her. Although having no romantic inclinations towards

Irene, the audience can observe Sherlock's recognition of her intellect for she was the only woman to ever best him at anything. In consequence of which, he, later on, describes her as *the woman*. The development of Sherlock's character towards respecting woman is also a trait through which, Steven Moffat and Mark Gatiss underpinned Doyle's original character of Sherlock. Furthermore, this remark also served the screenwriters to draw on another trait of the modern iteration and thus to create Sherlock a more naturalized, human-like, and realistic character, showing a bit of emotion.

### 6.3. Emotional Sherlock Holmes

The dialogue (6.3.1.1.) appears at the very end of *A Scandal in Belgravia* after Sherlock unmasks Irene's secret, of having feelings for him, which he perceives her weakness (6.2.1.4). He realises, she used his name as a code to her mobile phone full of sensitive information, on which her life depends, therefore recalls her action as a remark of sentiment.

#### 6.3.1.1. About Sentiment

- 01 S: You got carried away (.).hh the game was too elaborate  
(.)  
You were enjoying yourself too m[uch]
- 02 I: [No] such thing as too much.
- 03 S (*walking closer and looking down at her*): <Oh, enjoying the thrill of the chase is fine  
(.)  
craving the distraction of the game .hh I sympathise entirely  
<but sentiment!  
(1s)  
Sentiment is a chemical defect found in the losing side↓  
[...]
- 04 S: I've always assumed that love (.) is a dangerous disadvantage  
(1s)  
thank you for the final proof↓  
(*He lifts his thumb again but before he can type in the fourth character, she seizes his hand and gazes up at him intensely*)  
(.)

- 05 I: Everything I said (.) it's not real↓ (2s) °I was just playing the game°  
06 S: <°I know°  
(*Gently pulling his hand free, he types in the final character*)  
(2s)  
07 S: And this is just losing↓  
(S02E01 1:19:51)

Line 01 draws on Sherlock's previous implication revealing Irene's intentions. The statement serves as an evaluation of Irene's actions, which he sets under a critical eye, subsequently suggesting her game was too elaborate in consequences of which she got carried away. 03 is then intended to feature Sherlock's trait of favour in intrigues and playing "games", as it manifests his enjoyment of superior position when enhancing the game by making the thrill of the chase a pleasurable moment. However, by implying he also does enjoy similar games, he is straightaway suggesting he would never allow himself to make such a mistake.

02 Irene's effort to handle the situation claiming there is no such thing as "too much" when enjoying the superior position in a game then comes to nothing for Sherlock's statement "*sentiment is a chemical defect, which could only be found in the losing side*" 03. Sherlock, therefore, is implying he outsmarted her once again. Suggesting he recognizes no such a thing as sentiment, however, builds up to indicating Sherlock's character as an unsympathetic person. Moreover, later on, the revealing of Irene's sympathy for him, together with the expression of Sherlock's stand towards emotion such as *love* 04, creates an effect of belittling Irene's feelings, accompanied by expressing words of gratitude simultaneously creating the remark of sarcasm on the lexical level. The implementation of the words "thank you" in line 04 does not provide a polite expression, which would suggest Sherlock is being nice to Irene but serves rather as a mockery remark towards her. Having the preceding context of *A Scandal*

*in Belgravia*, Sherlock's statement then underpins the intentions of the producers in making the character of Sherlock Holmes appear as a cold, emotionless, and unsympathetic person.

The example (6.3.1.2.), from *A Scandal in Belgravia*, is set to the scene in which a dead body assumed to be Irene Adler's was found. As a consequence of this finding, Sherlock and Mycroft find themselves at the morgue of St. Bartholomew's hospital in order to verify the identity of the dead person. After identifying the dead woman to be Irene, they are then standing in the corridor outside, looking out of the window, when Sherlock looks around at the sound of sobbing. A family of three people is standing at the end of the corridor, cuddled together and grieving the death of someone close to them, which makes Sherlock wondering about his precepting of emotions.

#### **6.3.1.2. Talking emotions**

01 S: Look at them↓

(3s)

They all care so much (.) Do you ever wonder (.) if there's something wrong with us?

(1s)

02 My: All lives end (2s) all hearts are broken (2s) caring is not an advantage .hh (*He looks at his brother.*) Sherlock.

(*Sherlock blows out another lungful of smoke, then looks down at the cigarette in disgust*)

(2s)

03 S: This is low tar:

04: My: <Well (.) you barely knew her↑

(2s)

05: Huh!

(*He walks away down the corridor*)

(S02E01 0:47:00)

The example presents a conversation between two brothers showing Sherlock questioning his current state of perception of emotions. While from the first two sentences,



it seems as Sherlock is despising someone on the basis of their feelings, his final utterance, be it a question towards his brother, indicates Sherlock being despised by himself. The question provided in line 01 suggests Sherlock automatically included his brother to his claim, which seems understandable, taking into account the fact, they both had been raised by the same parents, thus had the same prepositions for developing their character. Line 02 serves an indirect response providing an implication to what appears as Sherlock's wondering and doubtful utterance. Mycroft's statement, implying this is the way life is, claiming having feelings is not an advantage in this world, implies Mycroft understood Sherlock's utterance questioning his attitude towards emotions, as a result of his empathy towards Irene's destiny. This effect of Sherlock as a man vacillating his current approach to emotions was created to draw on Sherlock's more likable character. Endowing him with the attribute of empathy, the screenwriters were drawing on building up to his character as an emotionally evolving man, which is also apparent in Doyle's stories between 1923 and 1927 (Robertson 2020).

The following example (6.3.1.2.) provides an excerpt of conversation from the episode *The Sign of Three*, in which as a consequence of their friendship build throughout the previous episodes, John asked Sherlock to be his best man. This dialogue appears as a flashback when John, Sherlock, and Mary are greeting guests at John and Mary's wedding. David is Mary's ex-boyfriend, who nevertheless appears to have good relations with Mary notwithstanding their break up, in consequence of which she invites him to the wedding giving him the function of an usher. Sherlock, however, indicates David's relation to Mary being more than only friendship based, therefore invites him to 221B Baker Street, to sit down and talk about it, however claiming to be discussing the wedding details.

### 6.3.1.3. Threatening

- 01 D: So: (.) what exactly are my duties as an usher?  
*(He picks up the Sudokube from the desk and idly plays with it. Sherlock frowns disapprovingly, then puts down his pen and folds his hands)*  
(2s)
- 02 S: .hh let's talk about Mary first.  
(.)
- 03 D: Sorry, what?
- 04 S: <Oh, I think you know what↓  
<You went out with her for two years  
(1s)
- 05 D: A-ages ago (.) we're ju- we're just good friends n[ow]
- 06 S: [Is] that a fact=  
*(He looks down at his notes in front of him.)*
- 07 S: = .hh whenever she tweets, you respond within five minutes regardless of time or current location <suggesting you have her on text alert (.) In all your Facebook photographs of the happy couple Mary takes centre frame whereas John is always partly or entirely excluded↓
- 08 D (*uncomfortably*): £You can't assume from that I've still got some kind of .hhh interest in Mary?
- 09 S: <You volunteered to be a shoulder to cry on on no less than three separate occasions <Do you have anything to say in your defence.  
*(David opens his mouth but is unable to speak.)*  
(2s)
- 10 S (*looking down and making a note*): I think from now on we'll downgrade you to casual acquaintance. No more than three planned social encounters a year  
<and always in John's presence  
.hhh I have your contact details (.) I will be monitoring↓  
*(He puts the pen down and folds his hands again, looking intensely at David.)*  
(2s)
- 11 D (*a little wide-eyed*): They're right about you↓ you're a (.) bloody psychopath!
- 12 S: High-functioning sociopath (.) with your number.  
*(He grins maniacally, showing a lot of teeth, then drops the smile and steeples his hands in front of his chin, looking sternly at David. David looks down, then lets out a nervous breath and gets up and walks away. Sherlock picks up the Sudokube and puts it back into its proper position on the table)*  
(S03E02 0:09:45)

Line 01 presents a request for providing specific details concerning David's function at the wedding believing of this being the reason for the summoned meeting apparent from the previous context. It is obvious from the observance of David's behaviour, supplied by his surprised reaction 03, that he is startled by Sherlock's statement in line 02. 04 then provides a very direct response, partly functioning as an implication of David's acquaintance of what was previously suggested. David's bewilderment is apparent also from his abashed utterance in line 05, indicating his ineptitude towards Sherlock's claim. 08 David is trying to play it cool, not revealing his lasting feelings to Mary suggesting the absurdity to what is implied through 06 and 07. In this excerpt, we see Sherlock asking "is that a fact?" 06 after implying David still is in love with Mary, which David denies. Sherlock does not ask David whether it is true or not, he uses a stance of a rhetorical question, for he already knows David is lying and is about to make his point. After Sherlock provides his hypothesis, which includes his long-lasting observation of David's online communication with Mary, David then goes on to recall him a "bloody psychopath", which Sherlock denies straightaway repairing his statement to identifying himself as a "high-functioning sociopath". This, however, is not the first time audience hears this statement. The very first occurrence of such a claim is to be already found in *A Study in Pink* (S01E01 0:57:51).

Line 12, nevertheless provides a threatening remark. The effect of the exchange is scary as it puts in contrast, Sherlock's previous statement, suggesting Sherlock has been following David for a long period of time (of which he had no clue as apparent from his reaction) and the non-verbal interaction in the form of a sternly grim Sherlock gives to David. This conversation interaction is, on one hand, set as a showcase of Sherlock's enjoyment in intrigues drawing on his sociopathic, frightening, and manipulative

behaviour already underpinned in previous excerpts. On the other hand, however, provides the screenwriters' attempt to feature Sherlock's friendship to John and Mary as apparent from the context, when revealing he acted in this way as a manifest of his caring for John and Mary's future, seeing the potential cause of a problem in David's romantic interest in Mary.

In the example (6.3.1.4.), Sherlock is giving a speech as the best man at John and Mary's wedding, however, his speech although remarkable and touching at the beginning, turns out to be a disaster as he subsequently gets distracted by his thoughts. Whilst giving the speech he realizes the two cases which he investigated throughout this episode are intertwined and also linked to John and Mary's wedding, where one of the guests is to get murdered and the murderer is to be one of the other guests present. Therefore, whilst giving a speech, he suggests playing the game he called *murder*, rules to which he starts explaining.

#### **6.3.1.4. Sherlock's speech**

- 01 S: Imagine someone's going to get murdered at a wedding. Who exactly would you pi[ck?]
- 02 H: [I] think you're a popular choice at the moment, dear.=
- 03 S: (*gesturing behind him*): =If someone could move Mrs. Hudson's glass just slightly out of reach (.) that would be lovely!  
(S03E02 1:09:45)

Line 01 presents Sherlock's explanation of the rules of a game he suggested to play. Although the event such as a wedding is required to serve a fun distraction, there Sherlock's intention was not to entertain the guests but to gain time to indicate who the murderer is. As a consequence of indicating Sherlock's speech as a disaster, moreover as apparent from Sherlock's request provided in (03) being drinking a bit too much

and finding his actions of talking about a murder at a wedding inappropriate, line 02 provides an attempt of Mrs. Hudson in form of an implication to direct Sherlock's behaviour. Furthermore, according to Krenželoková, "*it may be regarded as illocutionary sarcasm as she is conveying her surprised attitude over the act*" (Krenželoková 40). Perceiving the seriousness of Sherlock's utterance in contrast to Mrs. Hudson's mockery commentary which is supplied by her polite addressing of Sherlock as a *dear*, the utterance creates a sarcastic effect. For the previous remarkable feat of Sherlock at the beginning of the speech, the overall impact of the interaction in this scene underpins with the audience the image of Sherlock Holmes as an eccentric yet warmhearted man.

This dialogue (6.3.1.5.), is from the very last episode of *Sherlock BBC - The Final Problem*. Through the previous episodes, the friendship of John and Sherlock was strengthened by several probes in the form of Sherlock faking his death or the death of John's wife Mary. The following excerpt is set to the apartment at 221B Baker Street, where Sherlock, in the presence of John, is talking to his brother about his newly discovered sister, who he had no idea existed.

#### **6.3.1.5. Sherlock's bond to John**

- 01 S: °Why can't I remember her°  
(*Mycroft pauses for a moment, glancing in John's direction but not looking at him.*)  
(1s)
- 02 My: This is a private matter
- 03 S: <John stays↓  
(*John had been about to get up but now looks across to Sherlock, surprised. Mycroft leans forward in his chair.*)
- 04 My: °This is family.°
- 05 S: That's why he stays!  
(S04E03 0:09:30)

This excerpt taken from the last season of the series provides us with an insight into Sherlock's bemused reaction to the information of having a sister. Line 01 presents the detective whose character was found as endowed with the ability to remain focussed and being uneasily disturbed (6.2.1.3.) in a different light. There the audience may observe Sherlock though abounded in excessive intelligence, being sincerely confused by the fact of not remembering the existence of his sister. Mycroft's utterance 02 does not provide Sherlock with an answer to his question but serves rather as a strict and hostile approach towards the presence of John in this scene. Implying this is supposed to be a private, family discussion for John is not part of the family, therefore has nothing to do there and should leave.

From the excerpt, it is to observe Sherlock's radical change of voice and aggressive behaviour towards Mycroft, for insisting on John's lack of presence at this conversation. At this moment Sherlock stands for his friend, claiming he is to stay, and despite Mycroft's claim, that it is a family problem, Sherlock resists his brother, very firmly declaring John, though being of no blood relation, is a family. The overt and frequently verbalised affiliation to John may be understood as a further, firmly constitutive feature of Sherlock Holmes's character. As formulated by Steven Moffat in the documentary *Unlocking Sherlock* (2014), Sherlock's incapability and struggles with humans (as apparent from the given context) become manageable for him only when having Watson by his side, therefore when dealing with this problem, he needs much reliable, competent dependable human being in the world, which is, exactly what John Watson is. Therefore, this relation of Sherlock and John is what the producers Steven Moffat and Mark Gatiss were building up towards when scripting the series. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century adaptation, Sherlock's character was planned to undergo a change and mental development throughout the series and this was achieved by the endeavour of

the screenwriters to draw Sherlock's human qualities through his interactional liaisons with the character of John Watson.

#### **6.4. Summary of Findings**

The research demonstrated a close examination of Sherlock's discursive interactions with other key protagonists in the series namely Detective Inspector Lestrade, Irene Adler, James Moriarty, John Watson, Mary Morstan, Molly Hooper, Mycroft Holmes, and Mrs. Hudson. The verbal exchange enabled the research to observe and interpret how the fictional character of Sherlock Holmes emerged through talk in action.

There were found particular linguistic features prevalent in Sherlock communicative interactions throughout the analysis set out by the scriptwriters to convey particular messages and create situations that then enabled them to display Sherlock's attributes. Manifests of the features were showcased on the extracts taken from four selected episodes of the TV series *Sherlock BBC (2010)*, sampled to provide Sherlock's salient traits emerging through his communication interaction. Of note were three key aspects forming the fictional character of Sherlock Holmes found through analysing the series, labelled *The Loner detective*, *Sherlock's superior behaviour*, and the phenomenon of *Emotional Sherlock Holmes*.

**(6.1.) "The Loner detective"** captured the character of Sherlock Holmes misinterpreting the implications other characters provided, however, the statements implied by Sherlock were then found with comprehension. Therefore, this remark may be considered as drawing the character of the detective as being endowed with the ability to follow the conversation principles as a consequence of which, is his previous misinterpretation of this linguistic feature then regarded as intentional. In his talk, Sherlock Holmes usually tends not to express his romantic interests. It can

be demonstrated through his inexplicitness, indirectness, and ignorance towards the references on his sexuality. Sherlock's utterances, marked with a frequent occurrence of mockery and rudeness towards others in his communication, then through these occurrences showcase Sherlock's manifests in the TV series as an unlikeable and loner behaviour.

The analysis **(6.2.) "Sherlock's superior behaviour"** displayed manifests of the superiority of Sherlock Homes towards other participants in the conversations. His statements were often intentionally made unclear and requested an explanation from other participants, as a response to which Sherlock's utterances repeatedly displayed the usage of sarcasm to enhance his extraordinary abilities. Furthermore, the sarcastic and mocking commentary served as a showcase of his frustration and annoyed attitude towards slower reactions of others or as a means to indicate their level of intelligence. Sarcastic remarks may often be hurtful and Sherlock uses them to draw on the difference in intelligence between him and his colleagues, for which his character often seems to exalt himself over others. His usage of language manifests features of implication, indirect and inexplicit statements as the evidence of his favour in intrigues. Sherlock also repeatedly manifested his positive attitude and admiration for intrigues and a 'good game' by his own deeds and the recognition and admiration of such actions of others.

**(6.3.) "Emotional Sherlock Holmes"** As displayed in the first transcript, Sherlock manifested a negative attitude towards love and attributes of emotions. Initially, he took a strict stance in order to prove his negligence to feelings. In the following excerpt, Sherlock's reaction however already proved signs of empathy based on the findings of Irene's death, enhanced by his mightly "wrong" approach to the feelings as he formulated his doubts about his stance towards emotions. Sherlock makes hasty and irrationally perceived decisions, such as during his best man speech



at the wedding, on the contrary to his usually rational approach. The main motive for it appears to protect the marriage of John and Mary, thus drawing on his character as a caring person. The importance of John's presence is shown in the final excerpt in which Sherlock took an offensive stance towards Mycroft to showcase Sherlock's emotional perceptiveness through his insistence on John's stay.

In the analysis, three features emerged upon which I reflected in this thesis. Even though the 2010 iteration featured a modern adaptation of the original and classical stories of Sherlock Holmes, the producers endeavoured to hold on to the original using Doyle's stories as a template for their TV series. On reflection, the features were not just prototypical of Sherlock, there the scriptwriters reintroduced Sherlock's character and deepened it drawing either on his loner tendencies, arrogant and superior behaviour, or his emotional involvement.

However, to create a modern, more daring adaptation of Sherlock Holmes, in developing the narratives of the character, the producers took more liberty drawing on the modern setting and transferring the story to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In adapting Sherlock for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, in particular, the character was endowed to stand against the traditional gender performance, sexuality, and personality. Despite the claim of the producers that Sherlock is above sex, the series presents the character of Sherlock with a queer subtext as it was what the audience of the 21<sup>st</sup> century expected.

Nevertheless, even without a Victorian entourage, the producers of *Sherlock BBC* (2010) managed to still present Sherlock Holmes as an iconic detective remaining the original traits as captured through wonderful descriptive skills of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in his books.

## 7. Conclusion

This thesis aimed to demonstrate a new iteration of the character of Sherlock Holmes in the British TV series *Sherlock BBC* (2010). It attempted to answer the question of which of the traditional characteristics of Sherlock Holmes the screenwriters chose to illustrate in the TV series and how were those manifested in the communication interactions of Sherlock with other characters.

The approach to the identification of Sherlock's key features was setting the transcripts of the screenplay under review and by application of CA methodology strive to indicate the manifestation of Sherlock's behaviour through the verbal discourse in four episodes of *Sherlock BBC* (2010). Since the Conversation Analysis was applied to a TV dialogue this type of data approach provided an extremely rich source of data. Regarding the performance of the actors and their deliberate choices to enact and stylise the character a particular way, the perlocutionary force of the meaning communicated through the individual interactions was intensified. This remark enhanced the comprehension of the audience, helped the producers to communicate the character of Sherlock Holmes, and provided a valuable enhancement of the data for the analysis.

Having subjected the screenplays to close analysis, a number of traits were prevalent in Sherlock's discursive interactions with other key characters. Those were the attributes of *The Loner detective*, *Sherlock's superior behaviour*, and the manifests of an *Emotional Sherlock Holmes*.

In the case of *The Loner detective*, the manifest of Sherlock's loner character was by the screenwriters accomplished mainly through the intentional misinterpreting, ignoring, and mocking commentaries towards others through which the character of Sherlock Holmes was perceived as a codger with no interest in having a romantic relationship and rather focusing on his work instead.

Even though, the transcripts incorporated numerous references to the ambiguous relationship between Sherlock and John, the character never explicitly made a stance about his sexuality. This remark served to the effect of Sherlock as an asexual man. Both Moffat and Gatiss are well aware that the stories flourish around Sherlock's possible asexuality. Therefore, this perhaps more modern, daring interpretation of the creators, drawing on Sherlock's character through modern iteration, could align with the expectations and interpretations of the 21<sup>st</sup> century audience.

There were found three remarks manifesting the occurrence of *superiority* in Sherlock's behaviour in the section *Sherlock's superior behaviour*, thus mockery sarcasm, inexplicitness of Sherlock's statements, the appearance of his frustration and annoyance towards the level of intelligence of others. The occurrence of such features was regarded as manifests of Sherlock's arrogant and self-centered behaviour. However, in this case, it was found that it is particularly the use of sarcasm which builds up towards the recognition of Sherlock's superior attitude towards others.

The last section of the analysis, drawing on the emotional character of Sherlock Holmes, overall evinced that Sherlock's character had undergone certain changes concerning his attitude towards others in the first two episodes examined in this thesis. Even though Sherlock's sexuality was rendered absent in the series, nevertheless, it was not the case with the emotions. Although the excerpts in this section served instances of threatening and mockery commentary, in this case, these remarks were indicated as manifests of Sherlock's concern about others. Forasmuch as the series at first captured Sherlock as a friendless, asocial, rude, and eccentric character, there the gradual refreshing process of humanization, which the producers included, became apparent throughout the episodes.

Thus, this section provided an example not only of Sherlock's eccentric, manipulative or sociopathic behaviour but also stages a complex interplay between the brilliant, rational analytical mind and the character of Sherlock Holmes endowed with the attribute of empathy and his evolvement to a warmer, emotion capable man with respect towards women.

In conclusion, the undertaken analysis provided an original insight into the iteration of the character of Sherlock Holmes as it was created through the pen of Steven Moffat and Mark Gatiss in the British series *Sherlock BBC* (2010). Although applying CA to the analysis of a fictional character is perhaps not a conventional approach, the research demonstrated that the application of CA to fictional discursive interactions may be appropriate. The research displayed that CA methodology has the merit to showcase certain behavioural patterns, help to gain insights into the character of Sherlock Holmes, and get hold of his original traits manifested through his verbal interaction in the TV series *Sherlock BBC* (2010).

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## 9. Filmography

*Sherlock BBC* (2010 - 2017): Gatiss, Mark, Moffat Steven (4 episodes, 86 - 90 min.)

*A Study in Pink* (2010, 88 min.)

*A Scandal in Belgravia* (2012, 89 min)

*The Sign of Three* (2014, 90 min.)

*The Final Problem* (2017, 88 min.)

*Unlocking Sherlock* (2014, 56 min.)

*A Study in Scarlet* [series]. Director Henri Safran. UK, 1968.



## 10. Appendices

### 10.1. Appendix 1: Transcription conventions

The glossary of transcription conventions (below) was used to enrich the original transcripts by encoding interactionally relevant information. Transcription symbols conventionally used in conversation analytic research were developed by Gail Jefferson (2004). Drawing on Jefferson, transcription symbols used here were adopted from Sidnel's Conversation Analysis (2010) and Conversation Analysis 2nd ed (Hutchby and Wooffitt 2008).

[ ]	Square brackets between adjacent lines of concurrent speech indicate the onset and end of a spate of overlapping talk.
Word.	A full stop or period indicates a falling tone at the end of a turn. It does not necessarily indicate an end of an utterance.
?	A question mark indicates a rising intonation, not necessarily a question.
!	Exclamation mark is used to indicate an emphatic tone.
Soun-	A hyphen function as a mark of a sharp cut-off or a self interruption.
Sou:::nd	Colons are added for an indication of long stretches. The more colons, the longer is the stretch.
.hhh	A dot before an 'h' indicates a speaker's in-breath. The more 'h's the longer the breath.
£	A pound sign represents a smiley voice.
=	Equal signs usually come in pairs (one at the end of a line, and another at the start of the next line). The lines provided by the same speaker, connected by the equal signs indicate there was a single,

	continuous utterance with no break or pause, which was broken up through overlapping talk.
<	The “less than” symbol indicates a rushed “jump-started” talk.
<>	Outward chevrons indicate, that the talk was produced noticeably slower than the previous talk.
°word°	Degree signs indicate that the talk is noticeably quieter than the preceding talk.
( <i>word</i> )	The text in italics in parentheses indicates an inserted explanation of the background or an afterthought or the perlocutionary intention of the speaker.
A:	Character initial followed by a colon indicate the person speaking.
<u>Word</u>	Underlined part of the word indicates the rise in pitch or volume.
[...]	The three dots in square brackets indicate missing text.
(.)	A dot surrounded by round brackets indicates a “micropause” or silence.
(3s)	The number in the brackets indicates a time gap marked within an utterance or between utterances.
↑	The up arrow marks the rising intonation.
↓	The down arrow marks the falling intonation.
/ðə/	The slashes indicate, that the word found in between them appear in the form of its pronunciation, following the rules of IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet)
[S01E01]	Extract headings refer to the exact point of the transcribed dialogue as it appears in the particular episode.

## 10.1. Appendix 2: *Sherlock BBC* complete transcripts attached on CD

The data analysis of selected *Sherlock BBC* interactions was accomplished on the basis of the transcripts accessed and downloaded from the website [www.arianedevre.livejournal.com](http://www.arianedevre.livejournal.com). This website provides a free access to transcripts of all episodes of the *Sherlock BBC* TV series. For my research I used the transcripts of episodes *A Study in Pink* (2010), *A Scandal in Belgravia* (2012), *The Sign of Three* (2014), *The Final Problem* (2017), which served as the main source material used for the selection of the data samples that were subjected to the analysis.

### 10.2. List of Data Samples

Data Extract	Episode	Short description
6.1.1.1.	S01E01	Molly asks Sherlock on a date.
6.1.1.2.	S01E01	Sherlock providing a room tour.
6.1.1.3	S01E01	John endeavours to find out Sherlock's area of romantic interest
6.2.1.1.	S01E01	Sherlock explaining his findings of the victim coming from Cardiff.
6.2.1.2.	S01E01	Sherlock dares John to ask him questions in the taxi.
6.2.1.3.	S01E01	Sherlock's sarcastic remark about the meaning of Rache.
6.2.1.4.	S02E01	Sherlock's sarcastic remark by the swimming pool.
6.2.1.5.	S02E01	Sherlock confronts to broke the code to Irene's phone.
6.2.1.6.	S02E01	Sherlock's recognition of Irene.
6.3.1.1.	S02E01	Sherlock recalls Irene's action a remark of sentiment.
6.3.1.2.	S02E01	Sherlock is wondering about his precepting of emotions.
6.3.1.3.	S03E02	Sherlock talks with David about his lasting interest in Mary.
6.3.1.4.	S03E02	Sherlock is giving a speech at the wedding.
6.3.1.5.	S04E03	Sherlock is talking to his brother about sister, who he had no idea existed.