

Tema 1. Las lenguas humanas

ACTIVIDAD 4. Lenguaje, lengua y pensamiento

1. Visiona La llegada (2016) Director: Denis Villeneuve Guionistas: Eric Heisserer y Ted Chiang Actores: Amy Adams, Jeremy



2. ¿Por qué “llegan” los extraterrestres? ¿Cuál es su propósito? ¿Qué traen?
3. ¿En qué cambia Louis Banks con la llegada de los heptapodos? ¿Qué le hace cambiar?
4. ¿Cuáles son los temas lingüísticos más relevantes de la película? Enuméralos y descríbelos
5. ¿Cuál es la idea sobre la hipótesis Sapir-Whorf expresada en la película? ¿Es una visión relativista fuerte-determinista o relativista débil? ¿por qué?
6. ¿Qué aspectos relacionados con la traducción se plantean en la película? (Puedes saber más en https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indeterminaci3n_de_la_traduccion)
7. ¿Qué es un logograma? Puedes conocer más sobre los logogramas de la película en <http://blog.wolfram.com/2017/01/31/analyzing-and-translating-an-alien-language-arrival-logograms-and-the-wolf-ram-language>

Date: Fri, 09 Mar 2018 16:39:40
From: LINGUIST List [linguist@linguistlist.org]
Subject: Arrival: Linguistics on the Silver Screen

Dear LINGUIST List readers and subscribers,

It is not often that we see linguists portrayed on the silver screen. So, when *Arrival* was said to feature a linguist as the leading lady, it was not unexpected that many in the linguistic community were excited at the prospect of having our field highlighted by Hollywood. Today's letter discusses the image of the discipline and its practitioners as represented in the movie—if you have yet to see the film here is an official spoiler warning and an endorsement by us here at LINGUIST List.

Arrival begins with the appearance of 12 alien spacecrafts landing in various countries on Earth. As a result, Dr. Louise Banks, a professor of linguistics, is contracted by the US military to decrypt the alien's language and orthography, which appears as non-linear circular symbols. To do so, Dr. Banks uses a whiteboard and markers to communicate with the aliens. The simplicity of this solution was comically juxtaposed by the intricate machinery used by the physicist working alongside her. As usually, simplest solutions turn out to be the most ingenious. She uses fieldwork techniques that many linguists who do language documentation would be familiar with. She begins by teaching the alien lifeforms her name in attempts to elicit the same information back and moves on to more complex concepts once basic words are established. One of the most exciting aspects of watching the movie as a linguist was seeing how well they portrayed fieldwork, particularly the moments when she has been mulling over a theory and has a break through. Unlike many fields portrayed in movies, Dr. Banks isn't portrayed as someone who can magically solve the riddle of the language immediately but has to work through the language like any other linguist would.

The film doesn't just use linguistic fieldwork methods to drive the plot forward but utilizes popular linguistic theories at its thematic center. The film's plot relies heavily on an extrapolated version of Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis. In particular, Benjamin Lee Whorf's theory of linguistic relativity, and his discussion of Hopi time. This theory suggested that the Hopi people did not consider the passing of time as a linear progression of days but rather as a cyclic return of daylight. The concept of time and language is central to the film's plot and Dr. Banks' understanding of the alien lifeforms' language. While this theory is largely contested by the wider linguistic community, the film uses it as a thought experiment on how language could determine the way in which we see and interact with the world. While the film takes it to a degree that the linguistic community at large would find implausible, the film does do a decent job of extrapolating on Whorf's theory while maintaining the basis of it. More importantly, the film highlights the fact that language is the basis for how we interact as a society and that part of linguistics is trying to better understand humanity through how we communicate.

While the movie had its flaws, it was nice seeing a linguist doing accurately portrayed fieldwork on the silver screen. Hopefully, Hollywood can take a hint from the success of *Arrival* and put more linguists in the spotlight.