

## WHAT'S IN A VOCATIVE? ADDRESS(ING) CREATIVITY IN ENGLISH FILM DIALOGUE

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### ABSTRACT

Creativity is a pervasive component of language that involves the production of unattested, nonce formations through structural and semantic manipulations, and the inventive recontextualization of more conventional words and expressions. Moving from the *Pavia Corpus of Film Dialogue*, the study endeavours to describe how patterns of creativity are dialogically constructed in filmic speech, by focussing on address forms and in particular on the formation of new vocatives and the artful exploitation of existing ones. The unique participation framework and the complex multimodal and multisemiotic nature of films call for a different configuration of the dialogic co-construction of creativity as compared to other spoken and written registers, which accounts not only for the simulated interactions among characters on screen, but also for the higher-order relationship between the collective sender (i.e. scriptwriter, director and production crew) and the viewing audience, for whom dialogues are primarily conceived. A rich array of creative strategies have been identified in the vocatives used in the films, including word-formation, syntagmatic expansion, punning and phonaesthetic echoing, semantic processes of metaphoric and metonymic extension, dialogic repetition across turns, and intra- and extra-textual references, which find a counterpart in the visual component of films and foster the viewers' emotional engagement and their active interpretation of the innovative deployments of the language.