

Tommi Röpö

## "Don't smile over there!" How to study the dialogue of youth films?

In this article I present some characteristics of cinematic discourse by comparing its nature to that of everyday conversation. Elinor Ochs (1979) divides speech into relatively planned and relatively spontaneous discourse. Paraphrasing Ochs, cinematic dialogue is extremely planned discourse. Planning leads one to think of cinematic text as an ideological construct. Thus author's intentions become an essential object of study. One means for studying cinematic dialogue and its ideological aspects is provided by philosophical-linguistic speech act theory, which lays emphasis on the speaker's intentions. The cornerstone of speech act theory was the division of speech acts by John Austin into three different levels of signification: Locutionary is a certain meaning of an expression. Illocutionary is the intended tone of an expression. Perlocutionary level, again, refers to the thing that one wants to reach with the speech act. I have worked up the starting points of discourse analysis based on speech act theory with the features of discussion analysis that emphasise interactivity. The recipient or discussion partner is, however, seen mainly as the interpreter of the speaker's intentions. Thus a single film can also be seen as a one big speech act, the "ideological message" of cinema.

As an example I have utilised the approach presented above to three Finnish youth films made during the crisis of Finnish cinema in the late 1950s and early 1960s: Kuriton Sukupolvi (1957), Jengi

(1963) and Käpy selän alla (1966). I look at how youth is represented in the films' dialogue. My main example is Käpy selän alla, which I link to the radical atmosphere of the period. Therefore a scene, where young people are shown to have hypothetical power over the major social institutions, becomes central. The dialogue and narration of the scene show, that young people's social power is possible within the realm of fantasy, one's own imagination, where image and spoken dialogue, such as the questions posed by a police officer using passive form and imperatives, the founding structures of the society are depicted as ridiculous. According to Louis Althusser, the relations of an individual and society appear distorted, when they produce the impression of an autonomous subject who is independent of the forces of production. Only when individuals grasp their subjectivity through such representations, it is possible for them to be above society – like with the young people in Käpy selän alla.

When studying the dialogue of youth films, the question of the relations of the form and content of speech acts becomes central. By applying to illocutionary and perlocutionary levels of speech act theory to the speech acts of young people in the films one can see, that when Kuriton sukupolvi and Jengi aim at radical representations of youth by using slang expressions, they however remain to be superficial attempts to cover up the family-centred state ideology of old Finnish cinema. Käpy selän alla, again, starts from spontaneity and the importance of content. This illustrates, that one can be radical without the formal signifiers of language, if the content is right.

Lotta Aittanen

## "See you vittu later!" The use of the word vittu in the film Freakin' Beautiful World

I have studied the different uses of the word vittu ("cunt") in Jarmo Lampela's film Sairaalan kaunis maailma (Freakin' Beautiful World), which premiered April the 11<sup>th</sup>, 1997. My aim here is to study the various uses of the word vittu, and the different emotional tones expressed by it. I also look at the possible gender differences in the uses of the word.

All the young people in the film use the word vittu, and different vittu expressions are used in nearly all scenes of the film. Different derivatives of the word vittu are not really used. I saw no differences between girls' and boys' uses of the word vittu. The assumption of earlier research, that girls wag their tongues and boys swear, was not to be seen in this material, in which both genders cursed with equal vigour.

Paraphrasing Magnus Ljung, I divided the vittu-expressions into independent expressions, which include swearing (e.g. "Hyi vittu!"), interjection additions (e.g. "Tsiigaa nyt vittu noita"), unfriendly suggestions (e.g. "Siirry vittuun siitä!"), discussion particles (e.g. "Mä luulen et mä, vittu, voisin pitää pari päivää matalaa profiilia."), and uninterdependent expressions, which include adverbs (e.g. "Vittu kusi-pää."), and accentuating expressions (e.g. "Mitä vittua?").

In the overwhelming majority, the word vittu was used as interjection additions (201 cases out of 358). These sentence additions often accentuate the content, but the affection reflected by them is milder than in swearing.

This usage is likely to represent the phenomenon, which is called the use of the word vittu as a punctuation mark in spoken language. The second most common use of the word was as an adverb defining its main word (61/358). Such use does not necessarily express negative emotion in young people's speech. Also the uses of the word vittu in accentuating, phrase-like expressions (49/358), and prototypical swearing (41/358). The uses of the word in unfriendly suggestions (4/358), and as discussion particle (3/358), however, remained minor.

Sanna Maskulin

## "Kinkkua, anna minä" "Ham Let Me" – The Characteristics of the Dialogue in the Films of Aki Kaurismäki

This article discusses the dialogue in the films of Aki Kaurismäki. The peculiar and original humour of Kaurismäki rests strongly on the dialogue. The most striking aspect of his dialogue is self-consciousness. In his films Kaurismäki proposes, through dialogue, the same question as did the Soviet avant-gardists in 1920's or the auteurs of modern European tradition – namely what is cinema and how does the fictional reality in the cinema construct.

On the one hand "kaurismäkeän" dialogue works the same way as traditional, classical dialogue: it has dramatic and narrational functions. In other words, it constructs fictional reality and continuity. However, unlike classical dialogue, it does not aim to be invisible and go unnoticed. It has not only narrational but also stylistic function. It actively draws attention to its own, unique quality. By doing so it challenges the continuity of fictional reality. The tension between these two opposite functions is the rupture where self-consciousness reveals itself.

A distinctive aspect of self-consciousness in Kaurismäki's dialogue is the fewness and scarcity of spoken words and the stylized, "written" nature of speech. Unlike conversation, dialogue is always written, organized and coherent. In his films Kaurismäki emphasizes this to the limit. Also intertextual allusions with the iteration of cinematic (and cultural) clichés to the point of parody reveals the written originality behind the spoken word. Characters unassuming nature and stylized behaviour as well as the aural aspects of talk, such as intonation, increase the impression that characters quote rather than speak with their own voice.

The maxim of writing dialogue for cinema is "less is more". Kaurismäki brings this to the utmost. Spoken utterances are sometimes so sparse and elliptical that they begin to remind subtitles that are spoken aloud. Sentences are so short that they fit on the screen without having to leave anything out or summarize the content of what has been said. In this respect dialogue takes almost a shape of an image the same way as does the intertitles in silent movies or balloons in cartoons. Dialogue is spoken aloud but like in silent film its origin is literary, written text. Silence is a powerful and central element in all Kaurismäki's films. The absence of speech gives room to visual expression. Image is not married to speech but to music, as in silent movie. One could say that not only Kaurismäki's silent film *Juha* (1999) but all Kaurismäki's films are silent films – with the addition of sound. Nevertheless, the addition is not made on the expense of the image.

**Ari Honka-Hallila**

**How language was tamed. The problems of presenting translations in early sound cinema**

When silent cinema was

brought in front of an audience of different language, one merely changed its intertitles. Since this was not possible in sound cinema, many different means for making cinema understandable were tried out in the beginning. In Finland, where foreign languages were mastered by only a few, these means were in 1929-31 as follows: At least music films were screened without any translations. Imported films of multilingual production were mainly in Swedish. The methods of translation included a programme leaflet with lists of lines, voice narration and dubbing in Finnish and in Swedish, projecting subtitles on the screen next to the film, and adding subtitles to the film. The last mentioned became the regular means for presenting translations in 1931, when the relatively inexpensive subtitling system by the Norwegian Leif Eriksen was taken into use. Foreign languages were brought to the ears of many Finns for the very first time by films, as well as by music records and radio. Cinema attendance decreased slightly during these years, but this had probably more to do with economic reasons than those to do with cinema.

**Hannu Salmi**

**"Explanations in Finnish". The Problem of Intertitles in Finnish Fiction Film 1907-1916**

The first Finnish feature film completely preserved to the present day is Teuvo Puro's *Ollin oppivuodet* (Olli's Years of Apprenticeship, 1920). In sum, 25 fiction films were released before Finnish independence in 1917 when also film production was abruptly interrupted. No fiction films were made in 1917 and 1918. Only from one single film, Puro's *Sylvii* (1913), some footage

is left. This unorganized negative material does not cover the whole film, neither does it tell much about the premiere copy of the film in general. Furthermore, there is no single frame of intertitles left from the Finnish fiction film prior to 1920. The aim of this article is to focus on the particular question: When intertitles, either expository or dialogue titles, came to Finnish cinema? What was their role in the language of early Finnish cinema? Because there are no filmic sources available, showing intertitles, the article combines different kinds of historical sources, hand brochures, advertisements, reviews, memoirs, and other written sources. In addition to this, the comparison to international and neighbouring film cultures is essentially important. It seems that the first fiction film *Salavainanpoltajat* (The Moonshiners, 1907) did not employ intertitles at all. At least, there are no evidence of their usage. The first one to surely use verbal language on the screen was *Vasikan häntä* (The Calf's Tail, 1908), a four-minute long comedy, which even tried to appeal to the audience by advertising its Finnish "explanations". The film presumably offered expository titles between the narrative sequences, indicating a temporal and spatial change in the film. At that time, intertitles had, of course, been seen in foreign films but their translation had not yet been organized. This was to happen in the beginning of the next decade when the increase of film import made it necessary to take care of the translation into Finnish and Swedish (later also into Russian). The first traces of a dialogue text can be found from Konrad Tallroth's film *Kun onni pettää* (When Luck Fails), released in 1913. That year full-length fiction film, fol-

lowing the traditions of film d'art and *Autorenfilm*, made a breakthrough onto the Finnish screen. The Finnish audiences were acquainted with four long features. Teuvo Puro's *Sylvii* (1913), filmed already two years earlier, gives an opportunity to reflect more thoroughly about the role of intertitles. The remaining negative material gives an idea about the aesthetics in general. The comparison of Puro's style with the original play by Minna Canth (that was the basis of the film) seems to refer to the fact the 43-minute long film had to lean heavily on verbal clarifications. Most probable is that Puro used expository titles and only a few, if any, dialogue texts. In *Ollin oppivuodet*, seven years later, Puro already employed quite much dialogue titles, but their placement was different from that of the other Finnish directors, and most certainly, from other film makers of the period. Puro showed the titles before the shot where the words were spoken, suggesting that the spectator should place the words correctly by following the moving lips of the actors. If *Sylvii* used dialogue titles, this method was probably used already there. But the fact that the position of the camera is quite far off and, according to the memoirs of the film makers, no close-ups were used, there was hardly any possibilities for the spectator to identify words with moving lips. Additionally, it must be pointed out that still during the 1920s, the role of dialogue titles in Finland was not as remarkable as, say, in American cinema. This leads to suggest that Finnish cinema of the 1910s most probably did not give much space for the dialogue in their "verbal interface". Dialogue titles were used, but most of the verbal explanations were given as expository titles.