An Analysis of Medical Discourse in the TV-series “Bones”

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The popularity of investigative crime series has given rise to specific forms of language used on television, blurring the lines between everyday and specialist discourse. The focus of this talk will be to identify certain features of scientific language, in particular the text type of medical case representation (cf. Maher, 1990), and explore the strategies behind its use on the TV-series “Bones”.

In an overview of the main results of a more detailed analysis we will first investigate how the series uses scientific language in a number of ways, not only to emphasise, or sometimes create a scientific atmosphere, but also to mark the characters, especially the main character, and their language as “distanced” from everyday life. Secondly, the high amount of medical discourse gives rise to the issue of intelligibility and need for clarification for the audience: the final part of the talk will therefore focus on how this is achieved by providing the viewers with a functional character, who unconsciously voices the audience’s questions and therefore makes the show more comprehensible.