

Research on the Communication Effect of Film Poster Reproduction Type—An Empirical Analysis Based on Multimodal Visual Grammar

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Abstract: The paper comprehensively studies the communication effects of two types of representation in multimodal film posters from the perspectives of cinematography, imagology and communication, and analyzes the reasons for the effects. The empirical part of this paper will use the questionnaire survey method and the investigation experiment method to explore the communication effect of the narrative type and concept type of the film poster in today's society, and the communication effect is divided into three aspects: "attracting the audience's attention", "transmitting the film information" and "promoting the audience's action".

1. Introduction

With the advent of the age of visual information and the age of consumption, the main path of the public's understanding of the world has shifted from text to visual information (Paul Lester, 2003).^[1] As an important form of visual art, poster plays an increasingly important role in film publicity. Film is the seventh art that synthesizes many art forms, and it is also a complex and important media of communication, with a wide audience and a huge market. Film posters express meaning through various modes such as graphics, text and color (Yuan Yanyan, 2012), which is multi-modal. Starting from the film poster, the study of its communication effect can not only provide inspiration for the poster design with personality and connotation, but also guide the film publicity; It can also promote the research and development of the combination of cinematography, iconography, cognitive psychology, linguistics and communication, and enrich the research model of communication effect.^[2]

In the 1990s, systemic functional linguists represented by Kress & Van Leeuwen extended multimodal visual grammar from systemic functional grammar and created a multimodal discourse analysis theory with "representation meaning", "interactive meaning" and "compositional meaning" as the analytical framework, providing theoretical basis and analytical methods for image interpretation. Since then, more and more scholars have applied the theory of multimodal discourse analysis to study film posters, print advertisements, elementary and secondary school textbooks, etc.

Before that, domestic scholars' studies on film posters were mostly from the perspective of art design or film history appreciation, mostly holistic and general, or case studies, with few studies on

the representation types and communication effects of posters, let alone the correlation between the two. So how does the film poster affect its communication effect? How do the two types of representation affect the communication effect respectively? In the empirical part of this paper, questionnaire survey method and investigation experiment method will be used to explore the communication effects of the narrative types and conceptual types of film posters in today's society, and analyze the reasons for the impact.^[3]

2. The representation types of multimodal film posters

2.1. Representation type interpretation and data selection of multimodal visual grammar

In order to further quantitatively explore the communication effects of different modes of film posters, this paper combines the framework of multimodal visual grammar analysis to divide film posters into narrative types and conceptual types. Representation meaning is the expression form of the relationship between people, things and places described by the image. It can be divided into narrative representation and conceptual representation, and the judging criterion lies in whether there is vector interaction in the image (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1996). The narrative type poster usually takes the figure as the graphic subject, and forms the clear direction of action, reaction and psychology by the eyes, limbs or tools, which is used to show the ongoing action and event change process. Conceptual types represent the more universal, stable, and permanent nature of the participant in terms of class structure or meaning, and usually involve the three major processes of classification, analysis, and symbolism.^[4]

According to the explanation of the above concepts, this paper selects five film posters from Mtime's massive poster library as the experimental sample of the questionnaire. The selection criteria areas follows:

- Two kinds of posters of different representation types have been published for the same film;
- Posters of the same size and definition;
- The film's creator is not well known or the mainland box office is less than 1 million;

2.2. Reproducing type analysis and making hypotheses

According to the statistical analysis of the sample, the selection of the representation type of the ultimate poster of the film is 85% narrative representation, and only 15% concept representation. The film types using concept representation are mainly comedy or thriller. Film is a narrative art, and its propaganda feature is to show the story through the poster. However, some films (such as comedies or thrillers) need to grab the audience's strong attention, so this paper proposes hypothesis 1: the sensory stimulation (that is, attracting the audience's attention) of conceptual representation posters is stronger.^[5]

In terms of conveying film information, conceptual posters are weaker than narrative posters in information presentation due to the lack of characters and narrative action processes; Rich in symbolic meaning, conceptual posters have a stronger ability to express theme ideas than narrative posters (hypothesis 2). Similarly, narrative posters are better able to show the relationship between characters and reveal the development of the narrative plot of the story (hypothesis 3).

The most time-effective communication effect is to promote the audience to buy tickets and watch films, then what factors have the greatest influence on the behavior of watching films? Hypothesis 4 is put forward: Audience's affection for posters has the greatest influence on film-watching behavior.

3. Investigation and analysis of communication effect

3.1. The communication effect of posters

For the research of the combination of film studies and communication studies, there are four main measures of film communication effects: text analysis; Audience feedback; Market feedback; Awards (Zhao Yu, 2015). Some scholars also divided the communication effect into three layers when measuring the communication effect of surrealist posters (Yin Qiang & CAI Yinan, 2013).

Therefore, this paper initially measures the communication effect of film posters based on audience feedback in questionnaire survey, and divides the communication effect of film posters into three sub-variables at the level of attitude and behavior: first, attracting audience's attention; Second, convey the film information; And three, move the audience to action. And through the SPSS analysis after the questionnaire survey, to further demonstrate the communication effect of multimodal film posters.^[6]

3.2. Survey overview and questionnaire setting

This research questionnaire selects two film posters with prominent characteristics from (Figure 1 and Figure 2). The sample bank and measures audience feedback from three aspects of communication effect. Respondents will first receive informed consent, and then answer the questionnaire. The questionnaire is divided into three parts: basic information, attitude questions and behavior questions. The basic information includes age, gender, highest education and professional background. The attitude and behavior questions were used to scale questions, and respondents were asked to rate the two posters respectively. In order to reduce the influence of audience's personal preference for films and posters on the measurement of communication effect, three control variables of "film love", "frequent viewing" and "box office correlation" were set for collaborative analysis.

This questionnaire survey adopts the sampling method combining random sampling and stratified sampling, and is published on the "questionnaire network". A total of 248 questionnaires are collected, among which 218 are valid. The alpha value of reliability analysis is 0.202, indicating high reliability.



Figure 1 Poster A (narrative type).



Figure 2 Poster B (conceptual type)

The participants of this survey included 103 males and 115 females (see Table 1), and the age distribution met the skewed distribution. The subjects' major backgrounds were drama, film and television, art design, other humanities and social sciences and other natural design, accounting for 33.9%, 20.6%, 25.7% and 19.7% respectively (see Table 2). It can be seen that the distribution of participants in this survey is fairly balanced in terms of gender and professional background, but

the samples are mostly young people in college, which may limit the universality of the conclusions of this study among people with low education and middle-aged and elderly people.

Table 1: Gender.

	Number of times	Percentage	Effective percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid male	103	47.2	47.2	47.2
female	115	52.8	52.8	100.0
Total	218	100.0	100.0	

Table 2: Professional background.

	Class	Number of times	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	Art design	45	20.6	20.6	20.6
	Other humanities and social sciences	56	25.7	25.7	46.3
	Drama, Film and Television	74	33.9	33.9	80.3
	Natural science	43	19.7	19.7	100.0
	Total	218	100.0	100.0	

4. Factor analysis and mean analysis of dependent variables

Further factor analysis was made on each influencing factor of the communication effect (see Table 3). The three common factors can well express the variables, and verify the division of the three levels of the communication effect in this paper. In addition, the extracted values of most factors are greater than 0.7, and the analysis effect of factors is relatively ideal, which has research significance.

Table 3: Rotating element matrix.

	Components		
	1	2	3
Attract B	843.		
Love B	856.		
Character Relations B		740.	
Plot Development B		835.	
End to B		852.	
Theme Ideas B		775.	
Time and Place B		661.	
Understand film B			832.
Buy tickets to see the filmB			772.
Wish to collect B			627.

Extraction method: main component analysis. Rotating shaft method: Maximum variation method with Kaiser normalization. a. Convergent cycle in 5 iterations.

The dependent variables in this paper measure the communication effect of "attracting audience's attention" and "transmitting film information" from the attitude level, and then measure the communication effect of "promoting audience's action" from the behavioral level (see Table 4). Among them, questions 10 and 11, "Will this poster attract you to stay and watch if you see it in daily life" and "How much you like this poster" measure "attracting audience's attention", the results show that posters can attract audience's attention well, and narrative representation posters have better ability to attract audience's attention than conceptual posters. Questions 12 and 13 measure

how much information the audience can get from the two posters to verify the effect of the posters in conveying the film information. The results show that the narrative posters are superior to the conceptual posters in character relationship, plot development, ending direction and time and place information transmission, but the conceptual posters are stronger than the narrative posters in the performance of theme ideas. To a certain extent, the hypothesis of this paper is verified.

Table 4: Descriptive statistics.

	N	Minimum value	Maximum	Average	Standard deviation	Variance
Attract A	218	1	5	3.67	1.044	1.090
Attract B	218	1	5	3.29	1.122	1.259
Love A	218	1	5	3.53	1.012	1.024
Love B	218	1	5	3.27	1.215	1.477
Character Relationships A	218	1	5	3.62	1.041	1.084
Plot Development A	218	1	5	3.13	1.070	1.145
Ending Toward A	218	1	5	2.95	1.194	1.426
Topic Idea A	218	1	5	3.17	1.074	1.153
Time and place A	218	1	5	3.28	1.085	1.177
Character Relations B	218	1	5	1.93	1.034	1.069
Plot Development B	218	1	5	2.26	1.064	1.132

5. Reasons for differences in communication effects

The distribution state of each factor under the scatter plot is different, and the K-S test results show that the data does not conform to the normal distribution, so the non-parametric test method is used to measure the difference of the communication effect of the two posters. According to the wilcoxon rank sum test, there are strong differences in other factors except collection intention, and it can be seen that narrative type and concept type have a significant impact on communication effect.

Further analysis of the correlation among the factors shows that the audience's love for the film and the frequency of watching the film will affect their judgment on the poster communication effect, but the correlation test result is 0.245, showing a weak correlation. If the communication effect is divided into internal levels, there is a certain causal relationship between "attracting audience's attention" and "transmitting film information" at the attitude level and "attracting audience action" at the behavioral level. By controlling the audience's preference for films as an external variable, the partial correlation analysis is conducted. Through data comparison, it can be concluded that "attracting audience's attention" measured by the two factors of attraction and affection has the greatest influence on "attracting audience's action" at the behavioral level (the correlation coefficient is above 0.6, showing a strong correlation). Therefore, this paper believes that whether a poster can attract the audience's attention determines the audience's actions to a greater extent than the strength of its message transmission, which reflects the communication effect of the poster.

6. Regression analysis that prompted audience action

Table 5: Model summary.

Model	R	R squared	Adjusted R squared	Standard skew error
1	.779.	.607.	.603.	.788.

a. Predicted value: (constant), know film B, love B

Visual spectacle indeed determines audience action to a large extent, but attitude preparation after visual stimulation also plays a crucial role in audience action. To verify this view, this study conducted regression analysis on audience's liking degree, willingness to learn about films and action to buy tickets. After testing the significant correlation between the three variables, the conditions for regression analysis were met. The R-square value is 0.607 (see Table 5), which indicates that the model is relatively reasonable.

The regression model passed the F test ($F=166.104$, $P<0.05$), indicating that at least one variable would have an impact on ticket-buying behavior. The formula of the model is: Ticket viewing $=0.221+0.231* \text{Love} +0.631* \text{Know the film}$.

7. Conclusions

In this paper, the communication effect is defined as "attracting the audience's attention", "transmitting the film information" and "prompting the audience to act", and the communication effect of the two types of reproduction film posters is flexibly compared through factor analysis, difference test, correlation analysis and regression analysis. Using data to verify the views, it is found that the narrative posters have the greatest visual appeal to the audience, and visual appeal is the biggest influence factor on the communication effect. At the same time, conceptual posters are better at expressing theme ideas, while narrative posters are more prominent in conveying other information. In the causal relationship between audience actions, the attractiveness of the poster and the audience's affection for the poster play a strong role. There is a regression relationship between the degree of love for posters, the willingness to know about films and the behavior of viewing and buying tickets. In general, narrative posters are naturally attractive to human eyes because people interact with vectors, and the information transmission of the relationship between characters is also very conducive to the audience's understanding of the content of the film and their willingness to act. Although in the era of new media, the importance of film posters to film publicity tends to decline, different ages and different professional backgrounds are by no means obstacles to stop the spread of film posters. Although professional background has a relevant impact on the attractiveness of posters and the information transmission effect of the relationship between characters, there is no significant correlation between the degree of love for posters and ticket-buying behavior. Film is an art belonging to the audience. German thinker Walter Benjamin once said that the emergence of film art has made art popular and democratic, and the sacred aura of art in the past has disappeared. As long as the film art exists, the value of the film poster will not die out. However, the film poster should return to the image itself, study the meaning of representation and other image knowledge, and return to the film itself, study the expression form of the connotation of the film. Only by carefully designing, can we create meaningful posters in the waves of The Times.

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