Original Paper

Genre Analysis of Movie Trailer Discourse: A Systemic Functional Linguistics Perspective

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Abstract

Genre analysis from functional perspectives has been extensively applied to various discourses in recent decades. However, movie trailer discourse (MTD), as a crucial promotional tool, remains understudied. This research conducts a generic analysis of 20 English movie trailer transcriptions drawing on Hasan's Generic Structure Potential (GSP) theory and Martin's Schematic Structure framework. Adopting a descriptive and qualitative methodology, the study investigates the generic properties of MTD and explores its semantic realizations through the three metafunctions (ideational, interpersonal, and textual) within Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL).

The study addresses a gap in genre research by tentatively applying SFL to MTD analysis. Findings reveal that MTD exhibits a fixed schematic structure with distinct stages for meaning realization. Furthermore, MTD serves three key functions: (1) providing a narrative preview, (2) engaging audiences, and (3) integrating seemingly fragmental elements into a cohesive unit. This study not only expands the application of SFL to MTD but also offers insights into enhancing language mechanism for language learners to express their ideas appropriately in multimodal discourse.

Keywords

genre analysis, movie trailer discourse, generic structure potential, schematic structure

1. Introduction

A movie trailer, from its birth, is the consequence of the development of film industry, which made a quick progress in the 1960s (Bordwell & Thompson, 2001). As a condensed cinematic preview, it employs multimodal techniques—sound, images, dialogue, monologues, and on-screen text—to strategically engage potential audiences before a film is officially released. An effective and appealing trailer is undoubtedly crucial in film market promotion. Among all the multimodal techniques employed in a movie trailer, linguistic factors count as an essential part. This study specifically

examines their linguistic elements in a movie trailer—**Aside** as a monologue guiding audience's interpretation; **On-screen Text** displaying information of studios, actor/director names, themes, cast stuff, release dates and, etc.; and **Fragmental Dialogues** excerpted from movies. We analyze 20 official English trailers (2002-2008) certified by the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) covering the themes of romance, war, animation and so on. For the convenience of our analysis, we transcribe the linguistic elements chronologically—On-screen Text (capitalized), Aside (bolded, left-aligned), and Dialogue (right-aligned, with null strings marking discontinuities). (see Appendix: Trailer 1 [Blood Diamond] for a sample). Through these 20 separate transcripts, we place the research objectives on seeking the answers to the following questions:

1) What schematic patterns define Movie Trailer Discourse?
2) How do linguistic elements enact the three SFL metafunctions?

2. Method

2.1 Genre

The initial study on genre could be traced back to the Aristotle's categorization of poetry, novel and drama (Aristotle, 1983). The pioneering studies on genre usually focus on poetry, prose and other literary forms which define genre as "a set of criteria which include the medium of the text, the way in which the text is presented and the structure of the text" (Yu, 2003).

However, the notion of genre has been developed by Bakhtin (1981; 1986), who believes the meaning of a text is based on certain situational background. He (1986) also identifies speech genres as "relatively stable types" of interactive utterances and broadens the notion of genre to include everyday activities as well as literary genres, in both written and spoken modes. He broadened the notion to include everyday routines as buying and selling, medical consultation, casual conversation to social activities such as court discourse, TV interviews, sermons, lectures.

Swales (1990, p. 58), as a researcher of English for Specific Purpose (ESP) defines genre as "a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognized by the expert members of the parent discourse community, and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre". Swales (2001, p. 31) further declares that the term genre today is not only used in literary domain but refers to a distinctive category of discourse of any type, spoken or written, with or without literary aspirations.

The study of genre has aroused the interest of systemic linguists. Martin defines genre as "a staged, goal-oriented social process realized through register" (Martin, 2004). This definition has been further elaborated by Eggins and Slade (1997, p. 56) as follows: a genre is staged as the meanings are made in steps, it usually takes more than one step for participants to achieve their goals; a genre is goal-oriented in that texts typically move through stages to a point of closure, and are considered incomplete if the culmination is not reached; genres are negotiated interactively and are the realization of a social purpose.

2.2 Genre analysis from SFL

The past decades have witnessed the research shift of genre analysis from literary domain into non-literary ones. An obvious example for this is that more and more research work focuses on the socially-related studies, such as the texts of news (Van Dijk, 1988; Scollon, 1995; Zhao's, 2001; Yang, 2004; Chen, 2003), advertisements (Huang, 2001; Torto, 2017), business discourse (Li, 1997; Huang, 2005). More socially-related studies are carried out from the perspective of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) (Halliday & Martin, 1993; Halliday & Hasan, 1985; Eggins & Martin, 1997, etc), the linguistic school which holds the view that language is used to serve social functions. Thus, the genre analysis from functional perspective is one approach of studying genre in a more communicative way, studying the linguistic realization in a specific context.

2.2.1 Generic Structure Potential

Systemic functional linguists Hasan introduces the notion of Generic Structure Potential (hereafter GSP) to generalize the range of staging possibilities associated with a particular genre. Based on her theory, there are two elements in GSP – obligatory and optional elements, and the sequencing and recursion of the two elements in a text. According to Hasan (Hasan & Halliday, 1985), it is the obligatory elements that determine the generic status of a text. We can ascribe a text as belonging to a particular genre only if it is inclusive of the entire obligatory element, and the optional elements give variety to the structural resources within a genre.

2.2.2 Schematic Structure

Martin (2004) believes that genre is "a staged, goal-oriented social process". He proposes that genre networks would be formulated on the basis of similarities and differences between text structures which thereby define text types. In Martin's model, each genre has a Schematic Structure (hereafter SS) that outlines the stages necessary to fulfill various communicative purposes. Martin (1985) defines SS as "represents the positive contribution genre makes to a text" and believes that different discourses in the same genre has a distinct SS, highlighting how texts are organized into stages to achieve specific social purposes.

2.3 The Three Metafunctions

One of the basic assumptions in functional linguistics is that we use the language to realize the different functions. In System Functional Linguistics (hereafter SFL), language is used to realize ideational, interpersonal and textual functions, which Halliday give an abstract term as Metafunctions. He believes that language, spoken or written, aims to achieve different social purposes or functions and make a detailed study on each of these functions.

2.3.1 Ideational Function

The ideational function serves to represent the natural world, taking language as a tool used to organize, understand and express our perceptions of the world and of our own consciousness. In other words, it is concerned with how our experience is construed in discourse weather it's spoken or written. Language is used to show the conceptual meanings, focusing on sequences of activities, the people and things

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involved in them, and their associated places and qualities, and how these elements are built up and related to each other as a discourse unfolds.

2.3.2 Interpersonal Function

The interpersonal function encompasses the dynamics of the relationship between the speaker and the hearer, enabling the speaker to express one's attitude and influence the attitudes or behaviors of the hearer. With great interest in studying interpersonal function, Martin proposes the Appraisal system which refers to a system of interpersonal meanings concerned with evaluation – the kinds of attitudes that are negotiated in a text, the strength of the feelings involved and the ways in which values are sourced and readers aligned (Martin, 2003). There are three aspects of appraisal system – attitudes, amplification and sources. Attitudes have to do with evaluating things, judge people's character and express their feelings, and the three respectively correspond to appreciation, judgment and affect. Amplification is concerned with the grade of attitudes, which is how strongly we feel about someone or something. The third aspect of appraisal is sources, which help to ask the question "Who are the evaluations coming from".

2.3.3 Textual Function

The textual function is concerned with the organization of language, how language be organized together to express coherent concept. Cohesion is one of the most important ways of realizing the textual function in a discourse, which refers to the linguistic devices by which the speaker can signal the experiential and interpersonal coherence of the text, and is thus a textual phenomenon, which is different from 'coherence' as a mental phenomenon (Thompson, 2000). Halliday and Hasan (2001) give a detailed study of cohesion. Besides the cohesion within the sentence, they believe that "discourse structure" is used to refer to the structure of some postulated unit higher than the sentence, for example the paragraph, or some larger entity such as episode or topic unit (Halliday & Hasan, 2001). Halliday and Hasan (2001) make a distinction between cohesion as a relation in the system and cohesion as a process in the text.

3. Result

3.1 Generic Structure of MTD

In alignment with Hasan's (1985) Generic Structure Potential (GSP) model, this study conducts a generic structural analysis to characterize MTD at the genre level. The analysis proceeds in two steps: first, we identify the different linguistic elements in MTD (as outlined in the Introduction) and then figure out the actual obligatory elements, the optional elements and the sequencing and recursion of these elements. Then the generic structure potential is summarized, as well as the schematic structure set by Martin to explore the generic structure of MTD. To provide a generic structure potential for MTD, we shall have an analysis including all the actual structures of each transcript to clarify the structural elements and their sequencing and recursion pattern. The analysis of generic structure of MTD is given in Table 1.1, followed by a GSP formula suggested for representing the genre of MTD.

Table 1.1 Elements in Trailers Used as Research Data

Text 1 *Blood Diamond*: A^FC^FS^FC^FD^FC^(AN^FC)x(3)^ FT^WS^ST
Text 2 *The Da Vinci Code*: FC^FS^FC^(A^FC)x(3) ^FD^FC^ST^SI^FC^AN^FT^ST^WS
Text 3 *Flags of Our Fathers*: FS^FC^SI1^A^FC^SI2^A^SI3^FC^FD^FC^SI4^SI5^FT^WS^ST
Text 4 *The Holliday*: FC^SI1^FS^FC^SI2^(A^FC)x(2)^ A(ST)^A(FD)^FC^(A^FC)x(2)^ A(AN^FC)x(4) ^A(FT)^FC^WS
Text 5 *Marie Antoinette*: FS^FC^FD^FC^SI^ (SI^FC)x(3) ^ST^ SI^FC x(5)^AN^FC^FT^WS^ST
Text 6 *Monster in Law*: FC^ A^ FC^FS^ (A^FC)x(7) ^A(AN^FC)x(4) ^A (ST)^A (FT)^ WS
Text 7 *Running With Scissors*: FC^ (SI^FC)x(5)^A^FC^A(FT/FD)^FC^A (AN^FC)^ A(FT)
Text 8 *Superman Returns*: FC^FS^FC^SI^FC^ST^FC^FT
Text 9 *A Beautiful Mind*: FS^(A^FC)x(8) ^A^FS^FC^A(AN^FC)x(3) ^A(FT)^SI^WS
Text 10 *The Lake House*: FC^FS^FC^(SI^FC)x(3)^(A^FC)x(4)^A(AN^FC)x(2)^ SI^FC^A(FT)^ WS^ST
Text 11 *The Ant Bully*: FS^FC^(A^FC)x(3)^A^FS ^A(AN)^FC^A(ST)^A(FT)^SI(FT/ST)
Text 12 *Open Season*: FC^FS^FC^(A ^FC)x(9)^ A(AN^FC)x(2) ^A(FT)^SI^FC^SI
Text 13 *Jumpe*r: A^FS^FC^FD^FC^ST^A^SI^FC^SI
Text 14 *Smart People*: FC^FS^FC^ST^FC^FD^FC^SI^FC^SI^ST^AN^FC^FT
Text 15 *Rambo*: A^FS^FC^A^SI^ST^A^FC^FT^A^WS
Text 16 *Sex and the City*: FS^A^FC^ST^FT^ST
Text 17 *Defiance*: FS^(SI^FC)x(2)^SI(AN)^FC^FD^FC^SI^FT^FC^ST
Text 18 *Kung Fu Panda*: FS^A^FC^A(AN)^FC^FT^A^FC^FS^ST
Text 19 *Hellboy:* FS^FD^(A^FC)x(2)^FS^SI^FT
Text 20 *Nim's Island*: FS^(A^FC)x(5)^A(AN)^FT^FC^WS^ST

Note:

A: Aside	AN: Actor's / Actress's Name
FC: Film Conversation	FD: Film Director
FS: Film Studio	FT: Film Title
SI: Screen Information for story introduction	ST: Screening Time for movie release
WS: Working Staff	

In Table 1.1, some notations need to be clarified: all the text data are transcribed in the sequence of appearance marked by the sign "^". The elements in the square "□" shows the repeated pattern. For example, in Text 1, (AN^FC)x means the same pattern "Actor's / Actress's Name (AN) + Film

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Conversation (FC)" repeats x times. In Text 1, x is 3 in bracket, so the same pattern AN^FC happens 3 times. The information about AN, ST, FT, etc is either verbally presented by Aside voice or printed on the screen as Screen Information (SI). The A(AN^FC) x means the pattern "AN^FC" is being presented verbally as Aside (symbolized by A before the pattern) x times in the trailer.

From all the elements in each transcript, we observe that the obligatory elements in a trailer are FS, FC and FT; the optional elements are A, AN, SI, FD, ST and WS; but what we also discover is that in a trailer there must be either A or SI, which has equal function as an introductory voice for introducing the movie story or taken as a narrator to tell some story or background information when the story happened. A trailer must have either Aside or SI to work well in introducing stories. In this sense, we categorize the A and SI into the obligatory elements because there must be either of them in a trailer or for most data discourses both of A and SI appear in a trailer. Thus, the obligatory elements in MTD are A or SI (at least one of them or both appeared), FC, FS and FT. The optional elements are AN, FD, ST and WS.
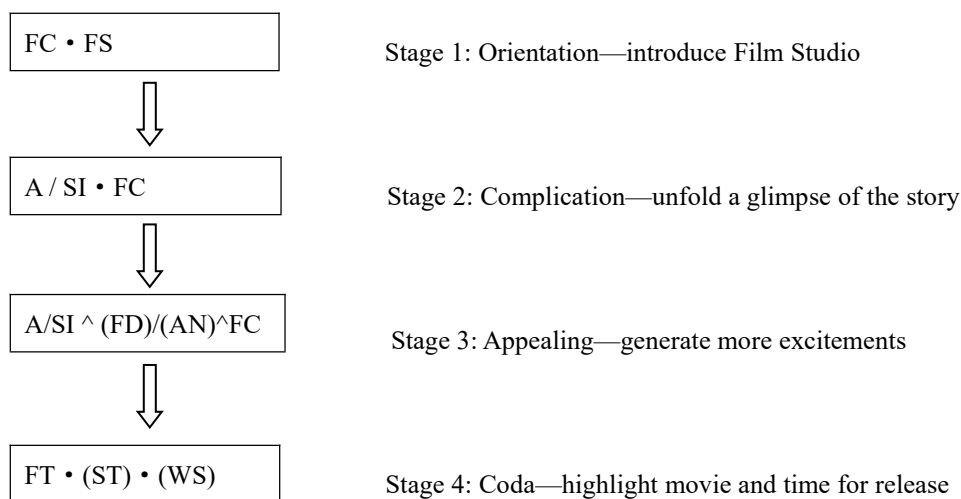
According to Hasan's GSP theory, it is the obligatory elements that determine the generic status of a discourse. By focusing on obligatory elements, discourse analysts can identify the typical features of a genre and understand how texts conform to or deviate from these features via linguistic semantics. In MTD, to attract potential audience before the movie is officially released, an effective trailer must present the obligatory elements consisting of: 1) Aside (A) or Screen Information (SI), which provides narrative exposition and contextual background; and 2) Film Conversations (FC), excerpted from the original film that reinforce and echo the thematic content introduced through the aside and screen information. Furthermore, as promotional texts, trailers must incorporate additional essential elements, namely the Film Studio (FS), Film Titles (FT), etc. all of which constitute indispensable features of cinematic promotional discourse.

However, a discourse consisting of only the obligatory elements does not seem to exist. Optional elements add flexibility and variability to a discourse. For example, in MTD, the trailer producer may add Actor/Actress Name (AN) and Film Director (FD) into the discourse to enhance the movie's appeal by the star power of renowned performers and the commercially successful directors. Working Staff (WS), as unsung heroes, appears in most, if not all, of the trailers.

3.2 Schematic Structure of MTD

Hasan's GSP theory provides us with some inspiration of understanding the obligatory and optional elements of a genre at the micro-discursive level by examining how linguistic choices realize generic structure. Complementing this perspective, Martin's (1997) schematic structure theory expands the analytical scope by conceptualizing genres as "staged, goal-oriented social processes" (Martin & Rose, 2007). Schematic structure, with its "staged" trait, determines how texts are organized into stages to achieve specific social purposes. Therefore, compared with Hasan's micro-discursive analysis of language elements, Martin's schematic staging is macro-discursive. Under the framework of Martin's Schematic Structure (SS) discussion, MTD can be divided into the four stages in Martin's model with

each stage containing at least one obligatory structural element necessary for genre realization, while permitting optional elements that enhance rhetorical effectiveness.

FC・FS	Stage 1: Orientation—introduce Film Studio
A / SI・FC	Stage 2: Complication—unfold a glimpse of the story
A/SI ^ (FD)/(AN)^FC	Stage 3: Appealing—generate more excitements
FT・(ST)・(WS)	Stage 4: Coda—highlight movie and time for release

Figure 1.1 The Schematic Structure of MPD

The figure above generally shows the four stages we term as Orientation, Complication, Appealing and Coda. In each stage, there is at least one obligatory element. Orientation shows the obligatory information of Film Studio via the on-screen text. Complication starts to tell part of movie story in forms of Aside monologue or Screen Information (in a few data cases) echoed by excerpted film conversations. Appealing generates more excitement on the audience part by introducing famous actors or highly-achieved directors. Coda makes a natural ending of movie trailer, highlighting movie names, release time and presenting the cast and crew which we term as working staff. According to Hasan's GSP theory and Martin's SS discussion, we attempt to figure out the formula of the generic structure of MTD in the following:

$$FC・FS ^ A / SI・FC ^ A /SI ・(FD)/(AN) ・ FC ^ FT・(ST)・(WS)$$
$$①\qquad②\qquad\qquad③\qquad\qquad\quad④$$

Figure 1.2 The GSP Formula for MTD

In the formula, the elements included in the brackets are optional, whereas the others are obligatory. The caret sign ^ indicates appearance sequences of different element introduction in MTD, while the order of the elements on each side of the dot ・ can be reversed. For example, in Stage 2 Aside can appear before the film conversation or after it. The slash / stands for the replacement of each side of the slash. Taken as an example, in Stage 3, the on-screen text (termed as SI in the formula) helps introduce the story by presenting information on screens may take the role of the verbal Aside in other texts, yet in one trailer, there must be either SI or an Aside to realize introducing functions. We have actually

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seen many cases that Aside and SI usually appear simultaneously in one trailer. The numbers ① ② ③ ④ stand for the four stages marked in Figure 1.2.

From the formula, we can observe that in MTD the obligatory elements determine the generic structure, while optional elements make the diversity and variables of the actual texts (Hasan & Halliday, 1985). Each text follows the relatively stable stages with every stage containing at minimum one obligatory element. We also find that the obligatory elements and stages in MTD show the generic structure of this kind of genre, which means both Hasan's Generic Structure Potential and Martin's Schematic Structure model operate synergistically in shaping this genre. This dual perspective yields a comprehensive understanding: where GSP explains what structural elements are at micro-discursive level while Martin's framework clarifies how these elements are realized with staging at a more macro-discursive in MTD.

As for the first research question *what schematic patterns define Movie Trailer Discourse (MTD)*, we have explored the generic structure under the framework of Hasan's GSP theory and Martin's Schematic Structure discussion. Through our study we find that the MTD has its own characteristics and relatively fixed stages. The obligatory elements A / SI, FC, FS and FT determine generic structure of the trailer discourse while the optional elements are AN, FD, ST, and WS used to add variability to produce different trailer discourses. In all the elements, Aside, SI and FC are most related to introducing the movie story serving as the main techniques to attract audience.

Along with the generic structure, we have also found out the different stages to realize the genre of MTD. The first stage FC•FS gives information about the movie company or film studio. The second stage A / SI•FC is responsible for introducing the proper amount of movie story. The third stage A / SI • (FD)/ (AN) aims to attracts audience by providing more excitements by introducing a famous actor or actress and referring to a highly achieved director. The elements in the last stage FT•(ST)•(WS), taken as a close in a trailer, tell information of movie names, release time and all the cast and crew that we term as Working Staff (WS). The elements inside each stage can be reversed, but between the stages there are usually strict orders of sequence and any change of the order will seem somehow inappropriate. For example, in most trailers, Film Studio (FS) usually goes first before Film Conversations (FC) functioned as a story introduction; the actor's or actress's names (AN) seldom appear before the conversations or screen information used as a glimpse of story-narrating; Working Staff (WS) always comes last as a close alongside with Film Title (FT) and Screen Time of release (ST). The elements (obligatory and optional) and fixed schematic structure (stages) constitute a unique generic feature in MTD.

3.3 Functional Realization of MTD

Among the four stages outlined in Figure 1.2, the second stage (A / SI • FC) is the most pivotal component, as it reveals part of the film's story to the audience and aim to attract them to watch the movie. Along with the conversations selected purposefully by the trailer producers, Aside (A) and Screen Information (SI) frequently assume a critical role in offering narrative exposition. These

elements are central to addressing our second research question: How do these linguistic elements enact the three SFL metafunctions? Specifically, they elucidate: 1) How is an appropriate portion of the story conveyed to the audience? 2) How does a trailer discourse achieve emotional resonance on audience? 3) How seemingly unrelated elements integrate into a cohesive unit?

To investigate the questions above, we conducted some exemplary data analysis through in the framework of SFL and explored the three functions realized in MTD. Our analysis focused on the second stage (A / SI •FC) since other elements—whether obligatory (e.g., FS, ST) or optional (e.g., AN, FD, WS)—primarily serve commercial purposes (e.g., promotion) rather than narrative introduction.

3.3.1 Ideational Function of MTD

According to Halliday, the ideational function is concerned with how language construe meaning of experiences, ideas and events, which helps people understand what happen in reality. As a discourse, MTD is designed to realize ideational function by informing the audience of what the movie is about. With its distinctive generic features, MTD have different types of meanings: Film Studio (FS) gives the information about the movie producer; Screening Time (ST) usually informs the audience of the exact date to watch the movie; Film Title (FT) can repeat as on-screen words or expressed by Aside as introducing the meaning of movie names. However, the meanings construed in a MTD does not refer to the types we mentioned above but the meanings about the movie story. In Figure 1.2, the language construed meaning of the movie story is mainly in the stage ② 一 A / SI • FC. Thus, analyzing the meaning construed in MTD will need to focus on the part of Aside (A) (in a few cases SI serves as the same function of Aside) and Film Conversation (FC) as these two parts are the major means to fulfill the ideational function by conveying proper amount of information about the story.

Table 1.2 Some Aside Extracted from MTD

Text 1	It came from the heart of the earth.... A stone so rare men will do anything to possess it.... And all who touch it are left with blood on their hands.
Text 2	A murder that hides a message…. A code…. only he can break….
Text 3	The right picture can win or lose a war…. Now, this picture, people went crazy over it. Country was tired of the war. One photo, almost all on its own, turned that around….
Text 4	Two women with the same problem…. Have come up with the same solution…. This Christmas…. From Nancy Meyers…. The director of …. Can a change of address…. Change your life…. Cameron Diaz….Kate Winslet….Jude Law….Jack Black….

	The Holiday….
Text 6	Charlie had given up on trying to find a perfect man until she met Kevin….
	Today she's going to meet his mother….
	And get the surprise….
	Of a life time….
	Now she (mother) is taking matters into her hands….
	And making this….
	A wedding to remember….
	From director of Legally Blond….
	Jennifer Lopez….Jane Fonda....Michael Vartan....And Wanda Sykes
	This Mothers' Day….
	Monster in Law.
Text 9	John Nash was one of the most brilliant minds of his generation….
	He saw the world….
	In ways that no one could image…
	From producer Brian Grazer and director Ron Howard….
	The extraordinary gift….
	That set him apart….
	Could put his mind….
	Beyond its limits….
	Universal Pictures, Dream Works Pictures, and Imagine entertainment presents.
	One man's journey to the greatest discovery of world….
	Academy Award Winner RUSSELL CROWN, Academy Award Nominee ED HARRIS, and JENNIFER CONNELLY….
	A Beautiful Mind.
Text 10	From Warner Bros. Pictures…
	Comes a love….
	Without limits….
	And the place that reaches across time.
	SANDRA BULLOCK….KEANU REEVES….
	The Lake House.

Text 11	Something strange is going down in Lucas Nickle's front yard….
	And Lucas's problem only gets bigger as he gets smaller….
	From Warner Bros.Pictures….
	JULIA ROBERTS, NICOLAS CAGE, NERYL STREEP, and PAUL GIAMATTI….
	This summer, the battle for the lawn is on….
	The Ant Bully.
Text 12	Boog was a bear who lived the easy life….
	Until Elliot opened his (Boog's) eyes….
	To a whole new world….
	Now in order to survive….
	They'll have to use their instinct….
	This fall…
	The season is changing….
	And the odd….
	Are about to get even….
	MARTIN LAWRENCE….ASHTON KUTCHER….
	Open Season

Aside is the main element in every MTD to convey the ideational meanings of the movie story, with conversations before or after as an echo. The ellipses are used for expressing the split of a complete sentence into several clauses or phrases between which dialogues intersect. For example, in Text 12 Open Season one of the sentences in Aside — "Boog was a bear who lived the easy life….Until Elliot opened his (Boog's) eyes….To a whole new world…." has been split into three clauses, and between the clauses are there the film conversations cut from the movie echoing the meanings conveyed in Aside. In short, the Aside and the extracted film conversations both contribute to construing meanings of movie story in MTD. We call it "A^ FC" pattern as the Stage ② in our formula.

To sum up, Aside and Film Conversations are the major strategies to construe meanings in MTD, informing the audience of part of the movie story. Due to the distinctive features of MTD, the linguistic patterns employed to realize the ideational function diverge from conventional discourse. Within this genre discourse, Aside (A) typically assumes a generalized introductory role, while accompanying conversations (FC) are strategically designed to reinforce and echo the narrative premise established by the Aside. In short, Aside and Film Conversations are both at work as two 'voices' to realize ideational meanings in MTD. The former seems like a narrator outside the movie while the latter stay inside the story itself as an echo to the Aside. The two different voices correlate to convey the general idea of the movie, which might be one of the unique linguistic features of MTD to realize ideational function. However, for a good trailer, the well-construed meaning realized by Aside and FC is not enough to

attract audience. Interpersonal and textual are equally important.

3.3.2 Interpersonal Function of MTD

Aside and FC are not only applied to construing ideational meaning in MTD. In the language plane, there are many words or phrases in the Aside to convey interpersonal meanings, and producers use these lexico-grammatical components to influence and attract audience. An exemplary analysis is shown below to explore the interpersonal meanings in terms of appraisal system with Text 9 *Beautiful Mind*.

e.g. John Nash was one of the most brilliant minds of his generation... /He saw the world...in ways that no one could image.../The extraordinary gift...that set him apart...could put his mind...beyond its limits .../One man's journey to the greatest discovery of world.

The words "brilliant", "extraordinary", "gift" show narrator's (in the voice of Aside) attitudes and the judgment of the person John Nash. The words "most", "greatest" and phrase "no one could imagine", "beyond its limits" intensify the meanings conveyed, which is the Amplification in Martin's Appraisal system. From the analysis above, we can conclude that Aside employs a diverse range of attitudinal lexico-grammatical resources to convey interpersonal meanings. There is no denying that beautiful and attractive pictures or strong sound effect are probably main and more effective strategies, giving audience vivid sensation. However, as a genre, MTD strategically employs Aside accompanied with FC to express interpersonal meanings by giving so much appraisal options or arousing curiosity and ultimately achieve emotional resonance on audience.

3.3.3 Textual Function of MTD

In Functional Linguistics, Halliday's textual metafunction is concerned with the organization of language, how language be organized together to express a coherent and complete concept. Cohesion is a major way to realize the textual function in a discourse. According to Thompson (2000), cohesion refers to the linguistic devices by which the speaker can signal the ideational and interpersonal coherence of the text, and is thus a textual phenomenon. MTD consists of many fragmental elements—Aside (A), Film Conversation (FC), Screen Information (SI), etc. How these seemingly unrelated elements integrate into a cohesive unit keep arousing our study interest. Through analysis, we find that there are two levels of cohesion in MTD—the cohesion of the movie story itself (realized mainly by the pattern A^FC) and the cohesion of different elements at different stages outline in Figure 1.1. We will explain the cohesion in MTD from these two aspects.

Firstly, the cohesion of introducing the movie story itself is mainly realized by the elements Aside (A) and Film Conversation (FC). In MTD, Aside is segmented into multiple concise clauses, each of which subsequently reinforced by corresponding FC that function as narrative echoes. The cohesion is in fact realized by the cohesive devices within Aside, which shows how Aside and dialogues are integrated appropriately to construe the same ideational meanings. Let us take Text 12 *Open Season* for example.

Boog was a bear who lived the easy life….

Until Elliot opened his (Boog's) eyes….

To a whole new world….

Now in order to survive….

They'll have to use their instinct….

This fall…

The season is changing….

And the odd….

Are about to get even….

The Aside in Text 12 is syntactically made up of three complete sentences — ① Boog was a bear who lived the easy life until Elliot opened his (Boog's) eyes to a whole new world. ② Now in order to survive, they'll have to use their instinct. ③ This fall the season is changing and the odd are about to get even. These three sentences are subdivided into the nine smaller units (ellipses mark the split), each of which is followed by FC. The split of complete sentences into semantic-related units, the echoing conversations and the arrangement of them are considered be to a kind of cohesion in MTD, because the split units give a consistent semantic-related effects for audience to understand the meaning, dialogues between the splits consolidating the understanding. When listening to Aside and FC, audience can easily feel the echoing effect between narrating and dialoguing and get a whole and coherent picture on their mind.

Secondly, the cohesion of different elements in MTD is also obviously seen in the analysis. If we consider the first level of cohesion of introducing the movie story itself to be the cohesion in a system, concerned with the elements within or between the sentences; then the second level of cohesion would be analyzed as 'cohesion in the process' (Halliday & Hasan, 2001), which has different stages marked with ①②③④ in the formula in Figure 1.2.

Cohesion in the system (in "A^ FC" pattern, stage ②)
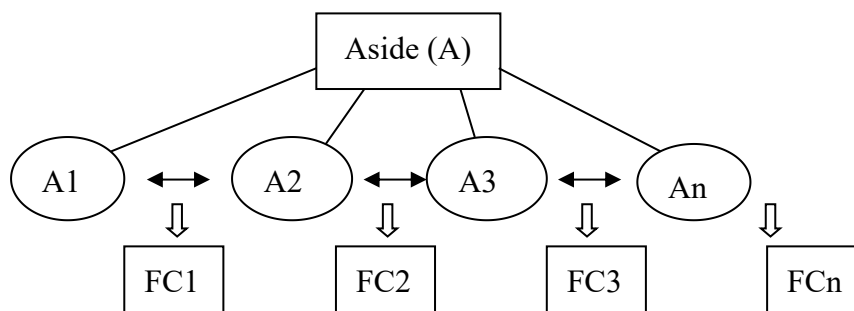
Notes: Cohesion exists in the relation among the cohesive devices in A1, A2, A3 and An, the anaphora and cataphora relation between Aside and FC, so the relation between elements are "pointing back" and "pointing forward" (the arrows are bidirectional in the figure).

Cohesion in the process (the whole transcript, four stages)
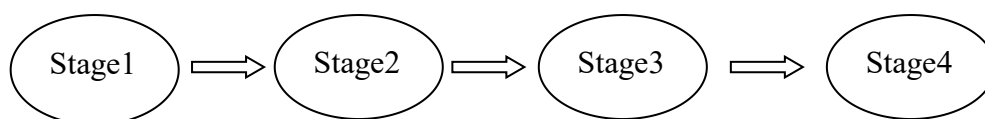
Notes: Cohesion exists in the different stages, introducing different information, and the text unfolds in real time, which has to do with the schematic structure (process) in a kind of genre, so the relation between cohesive elements are that one always follows another (the arrows are single-directional)

Figure 1.3 Cohesion in the System and Cohesion in the Process

To sum up, in terms of its own characteristics, MTD has two kinds of cohesion – the cohesion in the system by the pattern "A^FC", which serves as the primary mechanism for narrative exposition and story introduction; and the cohesion in the process, which through the dynamic integration of ostensibly disparate multimodal elements, ultimately achieve textual coherence and unified meaning-making.

4. Discussion

This study is set within the theoretical framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics, concerned with the genre structure of MTD and its linguistic realizations. Without any deny that all the other multimodal techniques—visual effect by images and movie actions, the sound power and etc. —play significant roles in impressing audience and promoting the trailer, we maintain that MTD's unique linguistic features play an equally crucial role. This research addresses the research questions initially posed, providing empirically grounded insights into the discursive construction of movie trailers.

As for the first question *what schematic patterns define Movie Trailer Discourse*, grounded on the framework of Hasan's GSP theory and Martin's Schematic Structure discussion, our study find that MTD has its own structure features with obvious obligatory and optional linguistic elements; though ostensibly fragmental, MTD follows relatively fixed stages. The obligatory elements are A / SI, FC, FS, FT; the optional elements are AN, FD, WS and ST. Meanwhile, MTD can be divided into four stages according to the different social purposes. FC•FS in the first stage give information about the film maker such as the film studio. In the second stage A / SI•FC serves as the most important part of introducing the movie story and realizing three metafunctions. The third stage is presented by (FD) • (AN) ^ FC, creating more excitement after film conversations in Stage 2 via referring to the honorable directors or famous actors and actresses. The last stage, demonstrated by FT• (ST) • (WS), serves to highlighting movie titles, the release time and staff workers' names. Among all these four stages, Stage 2 is the study focus because it linguistically and structurally conveys the information of the movie itself and serves as the most significant stage to engage audience with story-narrating, appraising and appealing in a condensed but coherent discourse.

One main concern in our study is exhibited in the second research question *how do linguistic elements enact the three SFL metafunctions in MTD*. To address this question, we have conducted the study of the linguistic realization and explore the ideational, interpersonal and textual meanings with some examples. We observe that the ideational meanings are construed in MTD with the pattern "A/SI ^ FC". Typically, the trailer maker summarizes the movie's theme in a brief Aside or Screen Information (SI), often split into clauses or on-screen text which is then echoed by Film Conversations (FC) excerpted from the movie, reinforcing or expanding upon the A/SI content. The interpersonal functional meaning is conveyed to the audience as the ideational meaning unfolds step by step in front of the trailer viewer. Martin's appraisal system provides us with insights that the feelings and judgments conveyed to attract the audience attention, engaging audience not only with vivid pictures or action scenes but also through rich emotional language. Lastly, we examine how the textual meanings are realized by ostensibly fragmental linguistic elements, focusing on exploring different types of cohesion. Through the study, we find that there are two types of cohesion in MTD—cohesion in system and cohesion in process. Though consisting of fragmental clauses, MTD maintains coherence both in narrating movie story (cohesion in system) and in preserving a stable cinematic structure across four main stages (cohesion in process).

This study is a sketchy exploration of MTD as a genre within SFL framework. Though much analysis has been conducted, there must be room for further improvement. Some suggestions should be put forward in a view to facilitating further investigations of this genre:

(1) The data used in our analysis are all English movie previews focusing on their transcriptions and they are limited number for getting a more precise research conclusion. Some movie previews with only pictures and music are beyond our data. So the data is not all-sided.

(2) More quantitative study is required for a more scientific and reliable analysis.

(3) The methodology can be extended into more trailers; the comparative study between different language trailers might be taken to show the different cultural influence on the generic structure.

(4) Focusing on the analysis of language in multimodal communication can help generate more effective discourse, thereby enhancing the ability of employing language mechanism in multimodal discourse.

Appendix

[Text 1 Blood Diamond]

Aside: It came from the heart of the earth.

A stone so rare men will do anything to possess it.

And all who touch it are left with blood on their hands.

Hero 1: A diamond is my ticket out of this godforsaken continent.

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Heroin: So what are you? A smuggler?

Hero 1: No, journalist. Someone tell me you are here to make a difference, huh?

Heroin: And you're here to make a buck.

Hero 1: You know, in America, it's bling bling, but up here it's bling bang.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

OF GLORY and THE LAST SAMURAI

Hero 1 (to Hero 2): Where did you burry it?

Hero 1 (to Hero 2): The only reason you're still alive is because you haven't told anyone where it is.

A: You will find it for me.

Hero 2: My son…

Son: Father!

Hero 2: Where is my son?

Hero 1 (to Hero 2): What if I help you find your family?

Hero 1 (to Hero 2): That makes us partners.

Hero 2 (to Hero 1): I am not your partner.

LEONARDO DICAPRIO

Heroin (to Hero 1): You're using him.

Hero 1 (to Heroin): I'm using him and you are using me and this is how it works.

JENNIFER CONNELLY

Heroin: Do you gonna steal this diamond?

DJIMON HOUNSOU

Hero 2: I am his father. I must go find him.

B: You'd show us where it's hidden.

Hero 1: That diamond is the only chance he has in getting his son back.

Heroin: What if I wanted to go with you?

Hero 1: Hold on.

B: I don't give a damn who's down there, kill them all.

C: Give it to me.

Hero 1 (to Hero 2): Tell him where it is. Tell him.

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Hero2: My family, my home, I do lost everything.

Hero 2: I will find you if it takes my life.

BLOOD DIAMOND

WARNER BROS.PICTURES Presents

In Association with VIRTUAL STUDIOS

A SPRING CREEK/ BEDFORD FALLS Production

In Association with INITIAL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

An EDWARD ZWICK Film

LEONARDO DICAPRIO

JENNIFER CONNELLY DJIMON HOUNSOU

"BLOOD DIAMOND"

MICHAEL SHEEN ARNOLD VOSLOO

Music by JAMES NEWTON HOWARD

Executive Producers LEN AMATO BENJAMIN WAISBREN

Produced by PAULA WEINSTEIN EDWARD ZWICK

MARSHALLHERSKOVITZ GRAHAM KING GILLIAN GORFIL

Story by CHARLES LEAVITT and C.GABY MITCHELL

Screenplay by CHARLES HEAVITT

Directed by EDWARD ZWICK

www.blooddiamondmovie.com

DECEMBER

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