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On Meta-Functional Characteristics of Movie Posters for Multilingual Films: A Multimodal Contrastive Analysis

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Abstract: The paper, based on *Systemic Functional Grammar* and *Visual Grammar*, conducts a comparative analysis of multimodal textual meta-functions of movie posters from the perspective of multimodal discourse analysis. Corpus analyzed consists of 60 pieces of comedy movie posters released in Chinese film market, which are classified into Chinese, German and Indian movie posters according to where a movie was originally shot. This study aims to thoroughly explore the similarities and differences with regard to the way how semiotic resources of different modalities in comedy movie posters are combined with one another to represent meta-functional meanings both qualitatively and quantitatively. Through comparative studies, it is found that movie posters highlight notable variations among different cultural contexts as well as some similarities. Different characteristics and preferences with regard to the use of multimodal resources to represent the three meta-functions are revealed. For example, while Indian movie posters commonly feature demanding visual acts, Chinese and German movie posters tend to showcase offering visual acts. This paper is helpful in stimulating a further multimodal expression in designing Chinese movie posters so as not only to improve the visual effects of movie posters, but also to create limitless imagination of a movie to arouse the audiences' strong curiosity and interest.

Keywords: *Visual Gramma*r, Movie Posters, Realization, Contrast

1. Introduction

With the rapid advancement of technology, the production quality of Chinese cinema has seen significant improvements. Despite this progress, sometimes the viewership of Chinese films, including those in the comedy genre, remains relatively lower than that of productions in other languages. One contributing factor to this discrepancy may be attributed to the production quality of promotional materials such as movie posters. As a visual representation and summary of a film's content, movie posters serve as a crucial medium for attracting potential audiences. Consequently, subpar poster designs may fail to effectively convey the appeal of a film and subsequently impact its viewership.

In recent years, there have been notable advancements in the design and production of Chinese movie posters. Through the incorporation of multimodal semiotic resources, Chinese posters are now able to more effectively convey the essence of a film's narrative to potential viewers. As such, continued linguistic and semiotic research on the quality and innovation of multimodal poster design may serve to further enhance audience engagement and ultimately increase cinema attendance.

To date, numerous studies have examined the design and function of movie posters from different perspectives. While much research has focused on the analysis of individual posters, comparatively fewer studies have undertaken comparative analysis of comedy movie posters for multilingual films that are released in China, using a combined approach of multimodal discourse analysis. This study conducts a comparative analysis of the meta-functional characteristics of movie posters for multilingual films under the guidance of *Systemic Functional Grammar* and *Visual Grammar*. Corpus analyzed in this paper consists of 60 pieces of comedy movie posters for multilingual films that are released in Chinese film market, which are classified into Chinese, German and Indian movie posters according to

where a movie was originally released. This study aims to thoroughly explore the similarities and differences with regard to the way how semiotic resources of different modalities in comedy movie posters are combined with one another to represent meta-functional meanings, both qualitatively and quantitatively.

2. Literature Review

The advent of modern multimedia technology has expanded the ways in which people access information beyond traditional text-based formats to include audiovisual media. As a result, discourse analysis has shifted from a focus on monomodal discourse to encompass multimodal discourse characterized by the integration of images, colors, and other modes. In recent years, multimodal discourse analysis has attracted considerable attention from scholars around the world. O'Toole & Kress were among the first to apply social semiotics to the analysis of multimodal discourse. Their work was influenced by Halliday's theory of social semiotics. Huang (2000, 2001) explores several key issues in functional discourse analysis and highlights Halliday's intention to develop *Systemic Functional Grammar* as a theoretical and analytical tool for discourse analysis [8, 9]. He (2002) argues that *Systemic Functional Grammar* is particularly well-suited for this purpose due to its strong operability and applicability [10].

O'Toole (1994) argued that images, like language, are social symbols and can therefore be analyzed using Halliday's methods [5]. Kress & van Leeuwen (1996) developed *Visual Grammar* based on *Systemic Functional Grammar*, providing a theoretical foundation for interpreting the meaning of images and describing how visual elements combine to create complex statements [2]. They (2006) argued that symbol systems other than language, such as images, also function as social symbols with the potential to express social meanings [4]. Li (2003) was among the first to introduce Kress & van Leeuwen's theoretical framework for visual analysis to China, paving the way for domestic research on multimodal discourse analysis [13]. Hu (2007) distinguishes between multimodal semiotics and multimedia semiotics with the former highlighting the view that multiple modes, as comparable and opposing symbol systems, cooperate with each other to construct complete meaning and the latter emphasizing that all meaning production permeates the ideal symbolic resource system that can be distinguished such as language, gestures, actions, etc., because meaning production is both a symbolic practice and a material process [11]. Zhu (2007) discusses the origins and theoretical foundations of multimodal discourse analysis and argues that this approach helps to overcome limitations in traditional discourse analysis [23]. Wei (2009) discusses several key concepts such as mode, medium, and modality in multimodal discourse analysis [17]. Zhang (2009) further elaborates on the integrated framework of multimodal discourse analysis by examining the relationships between different modes and between grammatical and discourse structures [18]. Zhang (2018) further proposes a new mode for analyzing multimodal discourse based on existing frameworks [19].

Contemporary movie posters often incorporate multiple modes such as language and images, all of which function as social semiotic symbols. As such, multimodal discourse analysis provides a valuable framework for studying movie posters. Studies above contributed to our understanding of various modes including images, colors, layouts, etc., and have enabled scholars to analyze movie posters from a multimodal perspective. Chen (2014) conducted a comparative analysis of Chinese and American movie posters which finds that for a better mutual communication with the audience, both Chinese and American movie posters prefer to create a diagonal or vector to manifest the major theme. It is also found that images that belong to information-demanding type occupy a large amount in Chinese movie posters to set up certain social relationship, while an intimate relationship is established by using more images of information-offering type; Chinese movie posters are inclined to make color contrast to attract viewers' attention and leave them a deep impression [7]. Che & Zhao (2016) examined the meta-functions of posters, finding that the whole poster forms a multimodal layout through different ways of meaning expression, and multimodal resources such as images, words, and colors complement each other to construct the complete textual meaning, carrying the theme of the entire film, fully reflecting the expression means and ideological connotation of the film, and realizing the purpose of communicating visual symbols [6]. Shi (2020) reveals that the graphic mode of the poster for the film *The Captain* shows a complementary relationship, highlighting the main characters and plot of the film for propaganda purposes and contributing to the connection and coherence of the complete textual meaning [14]. Zhang (2020) analyzed posters for the film *My People, My Country*, which shows that an excellent movie poster design is a combination of images, words and clear and appropriate colors, and efficiently conveys the theme and ideological connotation of the film through a reasonable layout of various modalities, so as to complete the task of promoting the film well and stimulate the potential box office in the early stage [20]. Li (2020) analyzed posters for the film *Avengers 4* guided by *Visual Grammar*, finding that language modality cooperates with visual modality to construct a complete meaning [12]. Zhang (2021) analyzed posters for the film *Dangal*, which shows that movie posters help the audience better understand the film and television message and improve readers' ability to read multimodal posters [21]. Shi (2022) analyzed the meta-functions of posters for *Chinese Doctors* which also confirms that analyzing movie posters from the perspective of *Visual Grammar* can help understand how the audience understand the cultural meaning behind a film and grasp a better understanding of the movie theme [15]. Wang (2022) analyzed the posters for *The Battle at Lake Changjin*, revealing that posters not only show the main content of the film, but also play a propaganda role [16]. Zhou (2023) conducted an analysis of posters for *Be Somebody*, which indicates how different modes work with each other to construct a complete textual meaning to help the audience get better movie-watching experiences [22].

In summary, while previous research has applied multimodal discourse analysis and *Visual Grammar* to a wide range of subjects, few studies have explored how different modes interact to construct meaning within a specific type of movie poster. Furthermore, there is a lack of research on visual analysis of series or collections of movie posters. Considering this, this paper aims to address these gaps in the literature and make a significant contribution to our understanding.

3. Theoretical Basis

In 1985, Halliday proposed three meta-functions of language, that is, ideational, interpersonal and textual meta-functions [1]. Kress & van Leeuwen (1996, 2001, 2006) extended that the concept of meta-functions is also appliable to the study of other symbol systems, including visual ones and introduced three meta-functions---representational, interactional and compositional meanings [2-4].

Firstly, representational meaning refers to meaning that illustrate image characters, places, things and their relationships. *Visual Grammar* classifies internal relations of images into two patterns—narrative process and conceptual process [2]. One of the key features of movie posters is their representational meaning, which can be conveyed through two distinct patterns: narrative and conceptual processes. The narrative process primarily focuses on depicting the protagonist and highlighting their inner thoughts. In contrast, the conceptual process seeks to convey symbolic meanings associated with specific surroundings [7]. And the distinction of these two patterns lies in whether they have vector components. Vectors consist of diagonal lines among different elements of images, referring to a direction that is easily developed by an eye line as initiating an action to others or it can be an action when people point to others. They exist in the narrative pattern rather than in the conceptual pattern [7].

Secondly, interactive meaning is used to argue about the interactive relationship between viewers and participants in images, of which the four modal systems—contact, distance, perspective and modality—are further analyzed. Contact refers to an imaginary interpersonal relationship between representational participants and viewers through eye contact [21]. Depending on whether or not there is eye contact between participants and viewers, images can be classified as either information-offering or information-demanding. Information-offering images provide content or information to the audience without direct eye contact. In contrast, information-demanding images feature direct eye contact between participants and viewers, creating a sense of psychological engagement with the content [15]. In everyday life, social distance between individuals indicates either the closeness or distance of their relationships. This concept also applies to the relationship between representational participants in movie posters and their viewers. Social distance can be classified into three types based on shooting distance: intimate, personal, and impersonal. The degree of closeness between representational participants and viewers is determined by the salience of image elements [7]. Perspectives refer to the use of angles to analyze the relationship between the audience and participants in an image. Two main types of angles are commonly used: horizontal and vertical. Horizontal angles can be either frontal or oblique. A frontal angle creates a sense of involvement by depicting participants directly facing the viewer, while an oblique angle suggests detachment [7]. Vertical angles include high, low, and equal eye level. Modality is another aspect of interactive meaning in the analysis of movie posters. It encompasses three elements: high, middle and low modality. High modality places significant emphasis on highly saturated colors in the picture while middle modality features less saturated colors. Low modality, on the other hand, only includes black and white or shades of gray [7].

Thirdly, compositional meaning refers to an approach used to construct a complete and meaningful image by means of information value, salience and framing to connect representational contents of images with interactive means. Information value refers to the value assigned to different elements based on their position [15]. In the analysis of movie posters, information value encompasses three main aspects: the name of the movie, informative messages and persuasive messages. Informative messages include important details such as the names of producers, directors and actors as well as release dates, while persuasive messages consist of promotional content such as catchy taglines. Salience refers to the prominence of an element in relation to other elements in a movie poster. Two main factors that affect an image's salience are color contrast and size [15]. Framing is an artistic technique that involves constructing visual layouts through the use of dividing lines or by connecting various image elements. This approach relies on the visual similarity of shapes and colors to create a sense of continuity and belonging among the various elements. Conversely, empty frame lines and spaces can be utilized to separate these elements, thereby emphasizing their discontinuity and distinctness [7].

4. Corpus Collection

This study employs two primary analytical methods. First, as a case study, qualitative analysis is conducted on individual comedy movie posters in order to investigate and exemplify how representational, interactive, and compositional meanings are used to create interesting and attractive designs. Second, based on the qualitative analysis of individual posters, a quantitative analysis is performed to identify common characteristics among the three types of comedy movie posters. A comparative analysis is then conducted to identify similarities and differences in how the three meta-functional meanings are conveyed.

5. Corpus Analysis

5.1. Qualitative Analysis: A Case Study

This section will focus on the analysis of an individual

comedy movie poster. As an example, we will examine the poster for the Chinese film *Dying to Survive*.

Figure 1. A poster for Dying to Survive (2018).

5.1.1. Representational Meaning

The movie poster (Figure 1) for the film *Dying to Survive* depicts seven main characters in a drugstore. Observed as a whole, the composition of the poster highlights the complex relationships among these characters. First, in the foreground of the image, five central figures are arranged around Cheng Yong, the leading character, a middle-aged male health product vendor in distress dubbed as "God of Medicine", who sits in the center holding a medicine bottle and laughs excitedly. To his left are two patients, Peng Hao and Lü Shouyi; to his right are Liu Sihui and Pastor Liu. The body language and facial expressions of these characters suggest intimacy and happiness among each other. Second, in contrast, two figures stand behind: Cao Bin, a policeman on the left with a serious expression, and Zhang Zhanglin, a drug dealer on the right with a cunning look. The contrast between their expressions and those of the central group represents the plot conflicts in the film.

5.1.2. Interactive Meaning

i. Contact

In Figure 1, each character has a unique facial expression and everyone, except the leading character Chen Yong, makes direct eye contact with viewers. This direct eye contact belongs to information-demanding images, creating an imaginary intimate relationship between the audience and participants, attracting viewers to think about what these characters are exactly thinking about in their inner world and thus increase viewers' interest in seeing the film. As for the leading character Chen Yong, although there is no direct contact between Chen Yong and viewers, his overjoyed facial expression portrays the image of a grassroot individual who eventually achieves career success, which belongs to information-offering images that prompts the audience's curiosity about the success process and therefore increases their motivation to watch the film.

ii. Social distance

In Figure 1, all the seven main characters and their surroundings are shown to the audience from an angel that as if the audience were standing at the point where the group photo was taken, which creates an intimate close social distance between viewers and participants. This social distance not only brings the audience closer to the characters, compared to a further photo-shooting point, but also maintains a certain level of separation with the participants in the poster as protagonists and the audience as bystanders. As a result, the poster conveys the realism of the film's story and reflects its theme while eliciting an emotional response from viewers.

iii. Perspective

Different layouts and perspectives are used in poster-designing to convey specific attitudes and emotions to the audience. In Figure 1, central characters face the audience from a frontal angle with horizontal lines of sight. This suggests an equal relationship between viewers and participants as well as an invitation for engagement. In other words, the poster creates an immersive experience for the audience.

iv. Modality

Based on the saturation levels of colors, modality can be classified into three types: high, middle, and low [15]. In Figure 1, the color space of the poster is divided into two main sections, with the top half of the picture being mainly red-bright, and the bottom half being dark green. This main high dark-bright difference is used to create a sharp contrast and achieve a strong expressive effect. In other words, it produces a powerful visual impact on viewers.

5.1.3. Compositional Meaning

i. Information value

The placement of elements within an image can convey different levels of information value. In Figure 1, characters are positioned in the center to emphasize key information such as the image of main characters and possible plot conflicts among them. Marginal areas provide additional details about these central elements. In detail, the leading character Chen Yong sits right in the center of the poster, highlighting his leading status as the key information. Four characters around him and two characters as the background picture convey further information, such as their relationships with the leading character and their different emotions. Besides, the top of the poster features images of scene to highlight the film context (ideal information), while the bottom includes text such as the film's title and date of release (real information), which are complementary to the reinforcement of the pictures so as to provide the audience with true information more effectively [15].

ii. Salience

Different elements of movie posters will lead to different presentation levels through contrasting colors and sizes. For example, Cheng Yong, as the leading character of the movie, locates in the center of the movie poster, which has very strong salience. On the center bottom of the movie poster, two Chinese characters "药神" (God of medicine) are bold in font and their sizes are bigger than other lines. Besides, the color of

these two characters is white, which forms a sharp comparison with the green-red background of the poster as a whole. In this way, these two characters become bright and prominent so that they can obtain a desired publicizing effect and attract the audience more quickly.

iii. Framing

On the whole, there is an obvious dividing line in Figure 1: on the upper half, the background of the drugstore is red while it is green on the lower half. The red color stands for the rule of law and justice while the green color represents the human nature. Of the whole poster, the green part occupies more than the red one, implying that reason is considered in law enforcement. In such a way, contrastive colors of these two parts helps better publicize the movie and improve the audience's interest in seeing this movie to verify the correct answer to whether reason is taken into account in the law in this film.

5.2. Quantitative Analysis

The main body of the research analyzes 60 movie posters. They are divided into three categories, including 20 Chinese, 20 Indian and 20 German movie posters respectively.

5.2.1. The Realization of Representational Meaning

Table 1. Contrast of Processes of Representational meaning.

Movie origin	Representational meaning	
	Narrative process	Conceptual process
Chinese	19	1
German	20	0
Indian	19	1

As is shown in Table 1, narrative processes are more commonly employed in each type of comedy movie posters, the processes of which are straightforward and effectively highlight the film's theme by constructing a vector. Chen (2014) explains that a vector is formed through an eye line that initiates an action towards others or an action that points to someone [7]. By observing these vectors in posters, the audience are able to get a better understanding of the primary representational meaning of the movie in advance, such as relationships among characters and explicit conflicts among them, and therefore have a stronger curiosity to guess what might happen later. In other words, narrative processes help trigger audience's interest in film watching.

5.2.2. The Realization of Interactive Meaning

Four key aspects are analyzed quantitatively with respect to the realization of interactive meaning: contact, social distance, perspective and modality.

i. Contact

Visual contact is an essential component of movie posters as it provides a direct means of interaction with the audience and conveys the film's intended message. As such, visual contact is a critical consideration in movie poster design. According to the findings presented in Table 2, there exists a difference in the use of direct and indirect eye contact in comedy movie posters among three distinct cultural backgrounds, namely, Chinese, German, and Indian. Specifically, Chinese and German movie posters tend to adopt indirect eye contact with the audience, while Indian movie posters tend to employ more direct eye contact with viewers.

Table 2. Contrast of Types of Contact.

Film origin	Contact	
	Demand	Offer
Chinese	6	14
German	8	12
Indian	14	6

The cultural and audience-specific reasons underlying this phenomenon can be explained as follows. Firstly, Chinese individuals are known to exhibit shyness as a part of their cultural disposition, thereby leading to a preference for indirect communication. This cultural trait is also reflected in the making of movie posters, where participants tend to avoid expressing their inner feelings directly to the audience. Secondly, in the case of German comedy movie posters, while individuals are typically more willing to express themselves to others, there are often implicit meanings of love incorporated within these movies, thereby resulting in the use of indirect eye contact with the audience. Thirdly, for Indian comedy movie posters, the themes explored in these films are diverse and cater to a wide range of audiences, from children to adults. As a result, these posters tend to adopt direct eye contact with viewers, thereby encouraging an imaginary mutual communication between the poster and the audience, which is aimed at arousing interest in the film.

As is revealed, the use of direct and indirect eye contact in comedy movie posters can be attributed to cultural and audience-specific factors, ultimately influencing the visual communication tactics employed by filmmakers and poster designers across various regions of the world.

ii. Social distance

Table 3 presents a significant disparity in the use of various camera shots in comedy movie posters across three cultural backgrounds, specifically Chinese, German, and Indian. Notably, Chinese comedy movie posters tend to adopt a relatively equal distribution of medium and long shots, while German and Indian comedy movie posters predominantly employ medium shots. The cultural factors that underlie these trends in camera shot usage are analyzed as follows. Chinese culture is known for its value of modesty and shyness, which may contribute to a reluctance to openly express one's inner thoughts. This cultural disposition manifests itself in the making of comedy movie posters, with Chinese participants favoring a relatively distant relationship between themselves and the audience in order to minimize the degree of direct communication. Conversely, German and Indian cultures tend to promote a more open and direct style of communication, which is reflected in the closer distance maintained between the participants and the audience in comedy movie posters. This closer proximity enables greater opportunities for mutual communication and facilitates effective publicity for the movie. In a word, the cultural values of modesty and shyness in China, and the value placed on open and direct

communication in Germany and India, are probably key factors that shape the use of camera shots in comedy movie posters across these regions.

***Table 3.** Contrast of Display of Social distance.*

Film origin	Social distance		
	Close shot	Medium shot	Long shot
Chinese	5	8	7
German	6	11	3
Indian	3	15	2

iii. Perspectives

As indicated in Table 4, in terms of horizontal angles, frontal angles are relatively more prevalent in these posters than oblique angles in Indian and German movie posters which tend to feature more direct eye contact between participants and the audience compared to Chinese movie posters. In terms of vertical angles, Indian and German movie posters typically use eye-level angles to underscore the equal status between participants and the audience. In contrast, Chinese movie posters predominantly employ more oblique angles, which may contribute to highlighting the awareness of class and gender differences. This phenomenon can be attributed, to a large extent, to differences in social awareness across cultures.

***Table 4.** Contrast of Perspectives.*

Film origin	Horizontal		Vertical		
	Frontal	Oblique	High	Eye level	Low
Chinese	6	14	7	6	7
German	12	8	2	16	2
Indian	15	5	1	18	1

iv. Modality

Table 5 reveals that Chinese and German comedy movie posters tend to use high modality less frequently than Indian comedy movie posters. Additionally, it is noteworthy that Indian movie posters often exhibit a sharper color contrast than Chinese and German movie posters. This can also be attributed to cultural differences in communication styles. Chinese culture values implicit communication, and thus, Chinese movie posters tend to avoid using highly saturated colors. Similarly, German culture is known for its seriousness,

which is reflected in their movie posters that generally use more muted colors. On the other hand, Indian culture is generally more expressive and open, and this is evident in their movie posters that frequently use sharp color contrasts to grab the viewer's attention.

***Table 5.** Contrast of Modality.*

Film origin	Modality		
	High	Middle	Low
Chinese	10	8	2
German	10	7	3
Indian	16	4	0

5.2.3. The Realization of Compositional Meaning

Three elements: information value, salience and framing are analyzed quantitatively with respect to the realization of compositional meaning of movie posters.

i. Information value

Based on the data presented in the previous Table 6, several conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, when designing Chinese comedy movie posters, designers tend to place the movie's name at either the top or bottom of the poster; this is also true for German and Indian comedy movie posters. The use of direct and prominent visual elements in movie posters like such enables the audience to quickly and easily access key information about the film.

As for informative messages, all three types of comedy movie poster designers choose to place them at either the top or bottom of their posters with positions slightly higher or lower than that of the movie's name to provide the audience with more details so as to help them get more exhaustive information of the movie.

In terms of persuasive messages, their placement varies across different Chinese comedy movie posters while in German comedy movie posters they are mostly located at either the top or center and in Indian comedy movie posters they are primarily positioned at the top. One of possible reasons is that due to conservative cultural values and the limitations of movie-making technology, Chinese movie posters typically employ fewer marketing strategies to attract viewers, in contrast to the more diverse and elaborate approaches seen in Indian and German movie posters [7].

***Table 6.** Contrast of Information value.*

Position	Information value (Chinese)			Information value (German)			Information value (Indian)		
	Title	Informative message	Persuasive message	Title	Informative message	Persuasive message	Title	Informative message	Persuasive message
Top	5	4	3	6	8	7	7	6	13
Bottom	9	11	4	6	8	2	10	12	1
Center	2	1	3	5	4	6	2	1	3
Margin	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	1	0
Left	3	1	2	1	0	0	1	0	1
Right	1	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0

ii. Salience

Table 7 demonstrates that in the design of comedy movie posters, all three types of filmmakers prioritize making the movie's title the most prominent feature on the poster, often at the expense of other text such as the names of producers and

actors. This is done to ensure that the audience immediately notices the most important information about the movie and to generate curiosity and interest. Additionally, Indian comedy movie posters tend to employ greater color contrast than Chinese or German posters, reflecting a greater willingness to

express themselves and a desire to more effectively promote their films.

Table 7. Contrast of Salience.

Film origin	Different ways	
	Color contrast	Bigger size
Chinese	14	20
German	15	19
Indian	19	20

iii. Framing

Upon analysis of Table 8, it can be inferred that movie poster designers, particularly those in German and Indian comedy movie industries, exhibit a high degree of proficiency in creating visually captivating layouts that effectively pique the interest of audiences. By doing so, these posters are able to provide viewers with a more vivid depiction of the complex relationships between characters with diverse backgrounds. This is largely attributed to the more advanced state of their respective film industries, as compared to the Chinese film industry which is still undergoing fast development and progress.

Table 8. Contrast of Framing.

Film origin	Framing	
	continuity	discontinuity
Chinese	12	8
German	14	6
Indian	15	5

6. Conclusion

Contrastive analysis in this research has generated several noteworthy findings.

With respect to representational meaning, comedy movie posters for films of different country origins all use two meta-functional patterns, that is, narrative processes and conceptual processes. However, the analysis reveals a higher frequency of the use of the former, primarily attributed to its ability to employ vectors that effectively aid the audience in comprehending the core content of a film.

In terms of interactive meaning, analysis highlights notable variations among different cultural contexts. Notably, Indian comedy movie posters commonly feature demanding visual acts, while Chinese and German comedy movie posters tend to showcase offering visual acts. This discrepancy can be attributed to cultural disparities and diverse movie-viewing practices within these respective societies. Additionally, analysis indicates that German and Indian posters tend to maintain closer social distance between participants and viewers, fostering enhanced mutual communication and effective movie promotion. In contrast, Chinese posters exhibit a more implicit approach, with a lesser emphasis on close interaction. Furthermore, with regards to perspective, compared with Chinese movie posters, Indian and German movie posters prefer frontal angles. In terms of vertical angles, German and Indian movie posters prefer using eye level angles to emphasize the equal status between participants and

the audience while Chinese people mostly design movie posters from unequal angles to highlight the awareness of class and gender differences. This phenomenon is due to different social awareness to a large extent. In terms of modality, high modality is generally favored in the design of movie posters, with Indian comedy movie posters displaying a greater inclination toward high modality compared to the other two categories.

Compositional meaning encompasses three critical elements: information value, salience, and framing. Regarding information value, it is found that movie titles are commonly positioned at the top or bottom of the posters, strategically capturing the audience's attention to the most crucial information. This trend is consistent across all three categories of comedy movie posters. Informative messages tend to be placed slightly above or below the movie titles, while persuasive messages are evenly distributed in Chinese posters, predominantly situated at the top or center of German posters, and primarily featured at the top of Indian posters. In terms of salience, movie titles are typically rendered in larger fonts compared to other textual elements, such as producer and actor names, thereby drawing focus and intensifying audience engagement. Furthermore, Indian comedy movie posters exhibit a greater utilization of color contrast than the other two categories. Lastly, German and Indian comedy movie posters excel in constructing visually striking layouts to captivate the audience.

However, it is important to acknowledge a limitation of this study. Due to time constraints, not all factors across various aspects could be fully examined, potentially introducing deviations in the collected data. Moreover, the analysis of German and Indian comedy movie posters may be subject to a degree of inaccuracy due to limited understanding of their respective cultural contexts. Future scholars intending to explore this subject should consider the significant findings of this study while remaining cognizant of its inherent limitations.

Acknowledgements

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