Multi-modal Discourse Analysis of the Movie Poster "X-Men: Dark Phoenix"

Luxi Wang[1, a], Xing Xing[1, b]

[1]School of North China University of Science and Technology, Tangshan 063000, China.

[a]1870016132@qq.com, [b]1030750763@qq.com

Abstract

As a typical multimodal discourse, movie posters integrate image, text, color and other modes. The success of a movie and its ideal box office can not be achieved without the propaganda function of the movie poster. Based on the visual image grammar theory framework of Kress & Van Leeuwen, this paper systematically analyzes the promotional posters of the film X-Men: Dark Phoenix, aiming to study its unique multi-modal discourse features.

Keywords

Visual grammar theory; Multimodal discourse analysis; Movie poster: X-Men: Dark Phoenix.

1. Introduction

With the continuous development of economic level and science and technology, media technology has also undergone great changes, the wide application of multimedia technology and the land has changed the traditional.

A single text can no longer meet the needs of modern and colorful life, but pictures, sounds, charts, colors, layout and other multi-modal become the trend of contemporary development.

Therefore, it is an inevitable trend to improve people's multimodal reading ability.

The study of multimodal discourse emerged in western countries in the late 1970s.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, after continuous development, critical discourse analysts, represented by Kress&Leeuwen, began to focus on non-linguistic factors other than language, such as image, sound, posture and space, and highlighted the role of various symbolic modes in the generation of discourse meaning.

Since then, "social semiotics" has become an independent discipline, specializing in the study of the role of various modal symbols, including language, in communication, and focusing on the process of constructing meaning by all the symbolic modes in the social context.

The study of discourse has been extended from static images, text and other symbols to multi-modal texts such as animation, video and music.

This paper, based on the multi-modal discourse analysis method of Kress &Van Leeuwen, interprets the poster of the movie X-Men: Dark Phoenix, aiming to explore how the multiple symbolic resources in the poster can build a complete discourse to influence the audience and achieve the purpose of film and television publicity.

2. Brief introduction of analysis objectf

X-Men: Dark Phoenix is the final installment of the X-Men franchise, which follows one of the most popular members of the X-Men franchise, jean grey, as she accidentally transforms into dark phoenix.

Jean grey is not only trying to control the growing, unstable forces, but also to fight against her own internal demons, her loss of control has torn the entire X-Men family apart, and the entire planet into the threat of destruction.

3. The theoretical framework of multimodal discourse analysis

In the 1990s, multimodal discourse analysis came into being in the field of western linguistics.

Among them, the grammatical theoretical framework for analyzing visual images constructed by Kress & van Leeuwen is the most representative, which has been widely used in various texts such as media, literature, sculpture, painting and photography.

In China, the research on multimodal discourse is also in a stage of rapid development. Domestic scholars such as Li Zhanzi, Hu Zhuanglin, Zhu Yongsheng, Zhang Delu, Gu Yueguo have discussed the theory and research methods of multimodal discourse. There are preliminary studies on media discourses such as movies, PPT, flash, literary discourses, emblems, building layouts, and online teaching applications.

Multimodal discourse analysis is based on Halliday's systemic functional linguistics. The starting point is that language is a social symbol. Halliday believes that there are three meta-functions / pure-functions used to express functional meaning in language systems: concept, interpersonal and textual functions. In "Image Reading", Kress & van Leeuwen constructed an image analysis framework against three pure rational functions, namely, reproduction, interaction and composition

4. Multimodal Discourse Analysis of the Poster of "X-Men: Dark Phoenix"

Movie posters are people's first intuitive feelings about movies. Their function is mainly to arouse audience interest, stimulate audience's desire to watch movies, and play a good publicity role. The poster of the movie "X-Men: Dark Phoenix" has a strong color, unique composition, and good illustrations. Based on Kress & Van Leeuwen's multimodal text analysis method, this article interprets the poster of the movie "X-Men: Dark Phoenix" from two aspects of image and text.

Fig.1 Poster of "X-Men: Dark Phoenix"

4.1 Representational meaning

The image has two meanings of reproduction: narrative reproduction and conceptual reproduction. Narrative representation expresses actions and events, changing processes and instantaneous spatial arrangements, while conceptual representation expresses a summary, stable and timeless essence. In the movie poster of "X-Men: Dark Phoenix", the image participants are eleven characters arranged in the shape of "X" with "Dark Phoenix" as the center, and poster viewers are involved in reading the images. As the most important heroine, "Dark Phoenix" has obvious prominence, which reflects its importance in the poster. In the movie, while she is getting stronger and stronger, she keeps losing control. She no longer belongs to a certain camp, so she shows a split state.

Returning to the other vectors of the narrative images, the main participants 'eyes and expressions are different. For example, the laser eyes look towards the hostess. Professor X 's eyes are dignified and meaningful. The hostile Magneto is arranged symmetrically to its axis. The position is also set to the opposite. This not only reflects the relationship and attitude of each person from the details, but also conveys the theme of the poster as a whole. The eleven protagonists are arranged in four corners of the "X" in alignment, and the obvious line connection also forms a kind of vector.

4.2 Interactive meaning analysis

First, contact. Contact means that the participants and viewers in the image have a certain meaning in some ways. It can be seen from the movie poster that Professor X frowned at the audience. In the movie, Professor X has always acted as a mentor, and in this movie, Professor X himself is also confused. In the poster, he received more attention from the audience, and at the same time conveyed a visual desire to pray to the audience, it seems that he was asking the audience for help. The eyes of other characters seem to be confused and painful.

Second, social distance. The generation of social distance mainly depends on the distance of image framing and the social relationship between image participants and viewers. No matter whether the distance is far or close, it will constitute the element of social distance. As the heroine, jean's full-length photo is centered on the letter "X," surrounded by other characters in the background. The distance between jean and the viewer of the poster constitutes a social distance. She suffered many accidents and even lost control, and the interpersonal relationship between her and the audience was naturally alienated. In addition, it enables the viewer to objectively and truly evaluate the instrument. Behind jean, at a close distance, are professor X and magneto. A close-up of their faces greatly arouses the audience's curiosity: who will win in the end? The other roles, as a secondary part, are at a personal distance.

Third, modality. Modality is the degree to which visual marks such as color and hue are used in an image. From a modal point of view, the contrasting red and blue colors are cut by a golden light symbolizing the power of the dark phoenix in the middle. The color difference is not clear, but it still gives people visual impact and reveals the contest between the two sides. The dark color of the background implies that the film will be accompanied by emotional polish.

Fourth, power relations. Power relations are embodied through perspectives. The poster presents jean from a positive, horizontal perspective, so that the audience can experience her feelings. While other characters are in the same horizontal perspective, but almost all the sides, widening the psychological distance with the audience.

4.3 Compositional meaning

The meaning of composition is reflected in the layout. Through the spatial sequence of various composition elements, the reader can get an overall impression.

First, it is the relationship between picture and text. The poster background of the movie "X-Men: Dark Phoenix" uses black as the main theme. The large X in the middle and the right half are full of intense red lightning. At the top of the poster was the tagline "X-Men: Dark Phoenix: 20 years of legend come to an end," highlighting the film as the final installment in the series, prompting nostalgia and a desire to see the film. Film series name "X-Men", which is situated in the middle of the poster below, the below is the name of the film "Dark Phoenix", is at the bottom of the film's release time and promote the words "witness legend" red has played a very good highlight and propaganda effect, can be seen from this poster graphic between essentially embodies a kind of logical cohesion, enhance the interaction with the audience.

Second, framing. Framing refers to direct or indirect framing means, which can represent a certain relationship between pictures to a certain extent. In this poster, the heroine and the movie's Chinese and English names and slogans are in the foreground, and the background is black and red lightning and his main role. The main color of the image, black, symbolizes confusion and red lightning represents the collapse of the intimate relationship between the protagonists. In this movie, the protagonists are caught in self-doubt and denial. The unique design of the poster highlights the protagonists' confusion, confrontation, seeking a heavy tone of self-worth. In the poster, the image of the reverse character standing alone in the ruins in black is located at the bottom of the central axis, rendering the terror atmosphere and the negative impact of the villain on the heroine becoming the dark phoenix.

Third, information value. According to Kress & Van Leeuwen, the specific element of the role in the image is determined by the position it is placed in. Whether it is on the left or on the right, in the middle or at the edge, or at the top or bottom of the image space, these will affect the information of the role in the image. In general, the known information in the image is placed to the left, the new information is placed to the right, the "ideal" information is placed at the top of the image, and the "real" information is placed at the bottom. The poster of X-Men: Dark Phoenix is divided into two parts with the heroine as the central axis, implying the confrontation between the two camps led by professor X and magneto with the heroine as the core. The heroine and the villain are on the central axis of the poster, implying the influence of the villain on the heroine and the whole X-Men. The name of the film in Chinese and English, as well as the known information of the release time and slogan are located at the bottom of the poster.

5. Conclusion

All With the continuous development of economic level and scientific technology, the wide application of multimedia technology has changed the tradition. The widespread application of multimedia technology and the earth have changed the tradition. People's access to information is not satisfied with a single text modality, pictures, sounds, charts, colors, layout and other multi-modalities have become people's information acquisition channels. This article not only enhances the reader's understanding of the theoretical framework of multimodal discourse analysis through the poster multi-modal analysis of the movie "X-Men: Dark Phoenix", but also enhances the awareness of multi-modality, and also allows people to enhance the design of movie posters. The multi-modal understanding provides reference for poster designers.

References

[1] Hu zhuanglin.Multimodalization in the study of social semiotics [J].Language teaching and research, 2007(1) .

[2] Zhang delu. Exploration on the comprehensive theoretical framework of multimodal discourse analysis [J].Foreign languages in China, 2009 (1).

[3] Li zhanzi. Social semiotic analysis of multimodal discourse [J]. Foreign language studies, 2003 (5) : 1-8.

[4] Zhu yongsheng. Theoretical basis and research methods of multimodal discourse analysis [J].Journal of foreign languages, 2007(5).

[5] Kress,G.andT.van Leeuwen,T.Reading Images:The Grammar of VisualDesign[C]. London: Routledge, 1996.

[6] Halliday, M.A.K. 1978. Language as Social Semiotic: The Social Interpretation of Language and Meaning ［M］. London: Arnold.

[7] Classsroom: Exploring visual–verbal synergy[J].Tesol quarterly,2002,36.