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**EMOTIONAL IMPACT OF *JAMES BOND* SERIES TRAILERS:
NARRATIVE AND CINEMATIC TECHNIQUES
ЕМОЦІЙНИЙ ВПЛИВ ТРЕЙЛЕРІВ СЕРІЇ ФІЛЬМІВ ПРО ДЖЕЙМСА БОНДА:
НАРАТИВНІ ТА КІНЕМАТОГРАФІЧНІ ПРИЙОМИ**

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Abstract. *This paper examines James Bond series trailers regarding their capability of having significant emotional effect on viewers. Emotivity of this cinematographic sub-genre has been studied from a lingual and cinematic perspective taking into account psychological nature of emotions evoking. The emotional content of subsequent trailers shots has been explicated with the help of index-signs (both verbal and auditory-visual) that serve for psychological and aesthetic evaluation of events and/or characters in movie.*

Given the cognitive interpretation of emotions, based on their lingual and visual manifestations, we have introduced the set of narrative and cinematic techniques that contribute to James Bond series trailers emotivity, namely, voice-over, mimics of interlocutors, as well as meaningful text on the screen. The artistic combination of narrative and cinematic techniques within trailer tends to enhance its emotive capacity with each next film frame exposed, finally culminating with bright frame-poster of particular movie. In this way the greatest impact on viewers is achieved, motivating maximum of a film target audience to watch a new James Bond series.

Key words: *trailer, emotivity, voice-over, shots montage, sound design.*

Introduction.

General focus of contemporary philological studies on different types of multimodal text-related arts, in particular cinematography, makes it possible to reveal the link between cognitive, emotional, evaluative, etc. components of cognition and their lingual representation in polycodal structure of film adaptations [14; 16; 25]. Identification of verbal and non-verbal signs in multimodal coordinates of movie as part of its narrative and cinematic techniques is interconnected with psychological study of emotions and psycholinguistic analysis of their embodiment in film, which gives deeper understanding of how emotivity of film is achieved.

In cognitive poetics [28, p. 18; 21], which has emerged on the cross section of cognitive psychology and cognitive studies of literary texts, the research of emotional states is based on interpreting psychophysiological mechanisms of emotions generation in the process of person's cognition of the world [17]. Cognitive and poetic research involves not only explaining the nature of cognitive processes that occur when emotions are evoked [10], but also exploring the lingual embodiment of the emotions experienced by the characters in literary and cinematic texts.

Moreover, it clarifies the essence of *emotional resonance* phenomenon [28, p. 20], known as a specific ability of literary or cinematic texts to awaken certain feelings and emotions among readers, therefore, prolonging the time of text



perception and personalising text interpretation. Cognitive studies of films, in their turn, focus on cognitive processes that occur during viewer's perception of non-textual aesthetic forms. This analysis determines how cinematic texts manage viewers' attention, directing it to obvious narrative information [3, p. 101], and how films are involved in a so-called *alienation process* [24], when art shows familiar objects and concepts in such a way that they feel new.

Aim and objectives of the research. Our study focuses on a short cinematographic form of trailer as one of the most emotion-evoking cinematographic genres. As it is characterised by great emotional effect on audience due to condensed emotional expression within it, we aim at finding such aesthetic means (both literary and cinematic) that contribute to trailer emotivity. The **purpose** of this article is to find out emotional content of the trailer and relate it to its emotional impact on viewers. It involves completion of the following **tasks**: 1) outlining cognitive nature of emotions expressed in trailers; 2) establishing emotional states of the characters through their semiotic (lingual, i.e. verbal and auditory-visual representation) in cinematic texts; 3) defining emotional value of narrative and cinematic techniques.

Material.

This study is devoted to cinematographic sub-genre of *trailer* [20] as a brief, but emotionally rich advertising of upcoming film that aims at motivating maximum audience for its further watching. Contrary to the first trailers that followed/"trailed" film, summarising the plot of story, contemporary ones are designed to attract prospective viewers' attention before watching movie itself.

The characteristic features of trailer sub-genre include certain technical requirements and narrative specifications. Firstly, according to Motion Picture Association of America the length of trailer cannot exceed 2 minutes 30 seconds. It is not prohibited to have "special shoot" footage, thus creating material specifically for film advertisement. However, traditionally, a trailer is a concise version of the movie made up of selected shots. Secondly, classical composition of trailer is of three-act structure [27], common for any narrative fiction as well as full-length movies, and includes setting background, culminating in dramatic climax and leading to resolution. To keep viewers intrigued the third act is usually accompanied with emotionally evoking music, montage of powerful visual images in subsequent shots and top cast names in the end. The purpose of such an advertisement is not to create a spoiler, but rather reach its target audience before a film premier, create a buzz around it, therefore, convincing viewers to watch it.

Depending on genre and plot of movie the trailer can also vary in its content, emphasising specific film twists, which are its unique selling point. In our research we have studied *James Bond* trailers of the recent decade movies that feature Daniel Craig. What makes these trailers different from any other spy stories advertisements is the main character, known world-wide since the first novels by Ian Fleming [2]. He represents a unique type of exceptionally smart and brave British MI6 agent, around whom the whole story is built. The image of James Bond that has already turned to be iconic is a core of every trailer.

Methods.

In order to delineate emotive components of cinematic texts for their further



study the *methodology of complex multimedia analysis* should be applied. In particular, *the method of multimodal text transcription* [1, p. 45; 5, p. 5] is used to convert audio and visual format of a movie into a printed one.

Detection of mechanisms of emotions explication in trailers is possible given the general psychological algorithm of human emotional response to certain stimuli [11, p. 89], as it is realized as a response of character to emotionally meaningful information in movies. The study of trailers as a cinematic sub-genre from psycholinguistic approach involves analysing the cognitive foundation of its verbal and / or non-verbal components, as well as its emotive value. For this application of *the method of identification of emotivity indicators* in text [12] provides a procedure for identifying emotion markers as index-signs. The latter represent one of the mechanisms of emotion reproduction [8, p. 47; 15, p. 421]: perception, experience, or response and are used to separate episodes of trailer that display emotion evoking events or objects/characters from others.

The research of aesthetic impact of trailers on viewers confirms that the emotional dimension of these cinematographic texts shall be reconstructed using certain textual keys or clues [26]. Wide variety of applied semiotic codes (audial, graphic, kinaesthetic, etc.) convey emotional load in subsequent film frames by integrating different modes of emotive expression (mimics, gestures, posture, voice, etc.) Thus, emotivity of trailer itself correlates with personage's emotional state displayed within it, letting us establish its emotional resonance on viewers.

The analysis of semiotic representation of artistic empathy which appears as a result of viewers' mental simulation [23; 26] confirms that emotions arisen while watching trailer belong to communicatively oriented psycho-cognitive phenomena and have a distinct evaluative character. Assessment is accompanied by bodily reactions (verbal and/or non-verbal) that are part of emotional expression and which are often manifested in trailers for greater emotional impact.

Therefore, using the methodology of complex multimedia analysis, we primarily aim at identifying and interpreting explicit and hidden meanings of index-signs as emotion markers in trailers. This allows outlining mechanisms for reproducing character's emotions in the trailer as well as establishing their emotional value.

Results.

James Bond narrative style is determined by the plot of each series; however, there is a number of repeating motifs that have become a distinctive feather of this cinematic text. The British Secret Service agent faces numerous challenges, while completing M's (his supervisor) assignment with the help of various hi-tech devices from Q (a technological genius) in cooperation/participation of a lovely Bond's girlfriend, aiming at defeating his "larger-than-life-villains" that threaten the whole world. This provides an international multicultural setting of each series, making it different from others. It also moves plot in many unexpected twists with numerous unbelievable events taking place throughout the movie. As far as trailer is usually a synopsis of film narration, it contains all these elements, i.e. setting layout, characters presentation, main story events sequencing, though, shown only in brief to intrigue the viewers and make them watch movie. For this purpose trailers of James Bond series are characterised by high level of emotivity.



As has been mentioned before detection of mechanisms that reproduce emotions in trailers is possible due to the markers of emotionality [7; 12], which are represented by index-signs [22, p. 57]. The latter combine both lingual (i.e. verbal) and auditory-visual representation of character's emotions within trailer, merging narrative and cinematic techniques to create unique emotional impact.

Narrative techniques, applied in *James Bond* trailers are explicated in the structure of cinematic text with the help of their auditory content, in particular, voice-over, speech of actors and text on screen. They are interlaced with cinematic techniques of sound and music design, shots montage of various scale and content.

When applied in trailers *voice-over* [20] is referred to such a filmmaking technique that gives to viewers more information by means of auditory off-camera comments. Contrary to other trailers, in *James Bond* series voice-over is not performed by special actors, but is rather the continuation of conversation between previously depicted characters. In this way provided information acquires personal reference to the particular personage, their past or suppositional future experience, visual demonstration of which is supported by verbal explanation in subsequent frames. The latter are usually arranged in the sequence of close-up shots [17], depicting emotional expression on the personages' faces, followed by a series of quick shots [27] with related story events and exciting moments of plot delineation.

Voice-over performs several distinctive functions. Firstly, it briefly sets up the chronotope of action with the help of short phrases that name the place shown on screen. In *Spectre* trailer agent M tells off Bond for conducting unauthorised mission, saying, "*You had no authority. Mexico city. What where you doing there?*" [19]. Her words are accompanied by subsequent film shots where first her angry face is shown and then James is displayed, when he is running on building roofs of Mexico-city central square during an annual carnival. Both shots can be considered as index-signs of high emotional value for their facial expression and intensity of described events. The same technique is used in *Skyfall* trailer, when villain Patrice tells Bond behind screen, "*Just look at this – England, MI 6*" [18], a second before the explosion of MI 6 headquarters. Thus, naming the place of action guarantees that it will not be confused with any other one by viewers; moreover, it helps to evoke some emotional associations, which audience may have when hearing the name of location.

Secondly, voice-over initially establishes narrative of movie in general, and trailer in particular. It can remind viewers about events of the film backstory, as in *Quantum of Solace* trailer, when Agent M by Ralph Fiennes says to agent M by Judi Dench, "*Three months ago you lost the drive containing the identity of every agent embedded in terrorist organisations across the globe*" (Forster, 2008). This problem appears to be the main challenge for James Bond to face in movie, thus, without being previously informed it is impossible to realise the significance of his assignment. Voice-over can serve to create intrigue and tension in trailer. Look at *Casino Royale* series [4]. Agent M, shown while talking with Bond, first describes Le Chiffre as a private financier for world terrorism and informs that he is going to participate in poker game in Casino Royale in Montenegro. On the screen the viewers can see all the mentioned personages and locations. Then, Bond's "girlfriend" Vesper Lynd is shown. Being the British Treasury agent she reveals another version of plot



development, saying “*If he [Le Chiffre] loses the game he will have nowhere to run. But if you [James] lose the game our government will have directly financed terrorism*”. This technique briefly outlines the storyline of movie, letting audience be involved in its events from the very beginning. They are hooked because of interest evoked in them: feeling of wonder is changed by understanding existing possibilities of story development and the attempt to foresee what is going to happen, though still expecting that things will definitely go wrong first. The feeling of viewers’ anxiety should become even stronger due to dramatic sound effects that with low-pitch tone of music at the background foreshadow possible disaster of the whole movie.

Thirdly, voice-over provides viewers with explanations when necessary, enhancing their understanding of plot and value of objects used by agents. In *Spectre* trailer agent Q demonstrates to Agent 007 his new car with words on background, “*Magnificent, isn’t she. 0 to 16.32 seconds to fuel tricks obviously*” [19]. This description serves to impress its target audience with outstanding characteristics of the car that seem to be unbelievable comparing to common ones. It makes viewers inquisitive about the tricks announced to be performed during Bond’s driving this car.

The above-mentioned functions of voice-over when combined with cinematic techniques contribute much to *James Bond* trailers’ emotivity. Foreshadowing what is happening on screen it adds psychological value to described objects and personages, explicates correlation between story events, determining their emotional significance for characters. Therefore, it evokes emotional feedback of audience, encouraging them to get involved in film plot, partly shown in trailer.

Speech of actors (personages), another form of character’s auditory representation in *James Bond* trailers, is tightly interconnected with voice-over. In fact, it goes as a logical continuation of the latter, as far as the pace of displayed events on screen is so fast that character’s speech covers both these events and related conversations. It can be presented both in form of monologue and dialogue. Speech of actors (personages) performs similar functions of storytelling and personages’ representation; however, has even greater emotional impact on viewers, because of character’s face depiction with the whole spectrum of their emotions. They refer to index-signs or so-called *symptomatic signs* [22], which depict psychophysiological aspect of human perception of information. Eye contact between interlocutors, set in the focus of subsequent close-up frames, indicates process and result of their surrounding world perception.

In this case, cinematic techniques are included, i.e. changing shot size from medium to close-up [13]. In *Spectre* trailer the mysterious mastermind of Spectre criminal organisation Ernst Stavro Blofeld is shown welcoming James at secret meeting. The change of medium-sized and close-up shots from one character to another, as well as the spot of light directed on Bond in contrast to no light getting on the face of villain creates atmosphere of mystery, evokes feelings of tension and fear. However, Blofeld’s speech makes it clear that characters know each other well (Blofeld, “*Welcome, James. You came across me so many times, yet you never saw me. What took you so long?*” [19] and scepticism in his voice proves that James’s arrival is not a surprise for him, but rather a thought-out trap.



When both personages are speaking, as in *Quantum of Solace* trailer, where James is talking to a Bolivian agent Camille Montes about his revenge, they project their emotions to each other. Index-signs here refer to minor movements of their bodies and facial mimics that reflect corresponding emotions. Sharing personal experience in short, brief sentences, using interrogative intonation for affirmative statements create ambiguous feeling of self-analysis, as if they are talking about each other, but in fact, referring these words to personal experience.

James Bond: *It seems we've both using Green to get to someone.* / Camille Montes: *You've lost somebody?/* James Bond: *I did.* / Camille Montes: *You catch whoever did it? /* James Bond: *No. Not yet.* / Camille Montes: *Tell me when you do. I'd like to know how it feels* [9].

The possibility of double interpretation of personages' words makes viewers not only sympathise to both of them, but also awakens their desire to find out the truth, to see that justice will be served.

The above-given examples illustrate a well-known psychologist Paul Ekman's theory of "mirroring" in action, i.e. forcing audience to reflect emotions, which they observe on screen, experiencing them together with characters [3, p. 88]. This method of conveying emotions though their display in fast-changing film shots is very effective, as it enhances psychological value of the trailer as a USP for movie promotion.

Being one of means of movie promotion *James Bond* series trailers contain *text shown on the screen*, which communicates information from the film poster. This includes cast run (actors starring in movie), the logo of production and distribution studios (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, United Artists, and Columbia Pictures), an official logo of *James Bond* series (007 sign with gun that forms the shape of number 7) and the title of each film in series. The font and size of letters that comprise the above-mentioned words serve as index-signs too, as they make them symbolic, when creating a particular shape meaningful for the film plot. For example, in *Spectre* trailer the sign of spider on ring that is logo of a criminal organization, with which Bond is fighting, is later copied as a background of the movie name. This helps to convey general topic of this Bond series and create atmosphere of mystery and threat. Therefore, even minimal presence of printed text on screen serves as the means of additional symbolic meaning creation, being the way of hidden signs explication.

Conclusions.

In-depth research of both narrative and cinematic techniques, applied in *James Bond* series trailers, has proven that they contribute much to creation of special emotional impact on viewer. Visual component of trailers is accompanied with auditory one in such a way that they both generate solid representation of emotions-evoking events and personages of movie. While voice-over and speech of actors set setting, explicating significant information to audience, montage of shots with relevant content visualises it, making it as comprehensible as possible. Apart from this, sound and music design creates necessary atmosphere in each scene of trailer from its beginning to the end.

Emotions that get explicit to viewers on screen reflect subjective value of objects or situations and in this way make audience experience corresponding



emotions. *James Bond* series trailers usually aim at evoking wonder, intrigue, suspense, and anxiety among their target audience that change each other within 2-3 minute video. The characteristic feature of analysed trailers is that emotivity increases gradually in each next of their three acts. During background setting the characters and main events of plot are revealed with the help of index-signs of high emotional value; then dramatic climax of trailer follows, represented by symptomatic signs of characters' emotional facial expression. Eventually, special effects accompanied with loud soundtrack music are shown, when Bond performs extremely dangerous tricks and finally shoots at camera leading to a kind of resolution.

The above-mentioned narrative and cinematic techniques applied to describe important yet extremely dangerous missions of Agent 007 as well as their unique emotional value allows defining *James Bond* series trailers as a separate sub-genre of spy films. Therefore, further research should cover trailers of other movie genres (i.e. drama, thriller), letting distinguish their specific features and unique emotional effect.

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Анотація. У цій статті розглядаються трейлери серії фільмів про Джеймса Бонда щодо їх здатності мати значний емоційний вплив на глядачів. Емотивність цього піджанру кіно вивчається в мовному та кінематографічному аспектах з урахуванням психологічної природи породження емоцій. Емотивна наповненість послідовних кадрів у трейлерах експлікується за допомогою знаків-індексів (як словесних, так і аудіо-візуальних), які слугують для психологічно-естетичної оцінки подій та/або персонажів у фільмі.

Враховуючи когнітивне тлумачення емоцій, а також виходячи з їх мовних та візуальних проявів, ми представили набір нарративних та кінематографічних прийомів, які сприяють емотивності трейлерів серії фільмів про Джеймса Бонда, зокрема, голос за кадром, міміка та мікроруки співрозмовників, значущий текст, виведений на екран. Художнє поєднання нарративних і кінематографічних прийомів у трейлері схильне посилювати його емотивність у кожному наступному кадрі, завершуючи його яскравим кадром-плакатом конкретного фільму із серії. Таким чином, досягається найбільший вплив на глядачів, мотивуючи максимум цільової аудиторії подивитися новий фільм про Джеймса Бонда.

Ключові слова: трейлер, емотивність, голос за кадром, монтаж кадрів, звуковий дизайн.