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Semantic montage: Cognitive insights for understanding film language in Chinese context

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Abstract

Semantic Montage, a cognitive linguist source cited from the concept of montage in film theory, is used in this research to investigate the significance of metaphor in the study of film language in Chinese context. By integrating Semantic Montage with contextual analysis, the researchers have charted a novel approach to studying film language, concentrating on three key areas: the theoretical terminology of film language, film title, and film dialogue. This research perspective marks a departure from the prevalent approach in previous film studies, which often treats 'film language' as a metaphor without providing a comprehensive explanation. The conclusions were as follows: 1. Validate inconsistencies in the Chinese translation of key terms in Christian Metz's film semiotic theory; 2. The model verifies translation errors in film title; 3. Three forms of Semantic Montage exist in the dialogue of contemporary Chinese cinema, and they have positive implications for exploring how actors' dialogue achieves montage effects in film narratives.

Keywords: Chinese context, dialogue, film language, metaphor, semantic montage, semiotic



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Public Interest Statement

This research was initiated by the identification of inconsistencies in the Chinese translations of Christian Metz's seminal works on film language. Utilizing the concept of Semantic Montage, it examines translational discrepancies and errors in film theoretical texts and titles. Recognized as a pioneer for his direct exploration of the metaphorical nature of film language, Metz's linguistic approach to film analysis has profoundly influenced the direction of this paper. The authors have applied this concept to contemporary Chinese cinema dialogues, uncovering a variety of Semantic Montage expressions.

Introduction

Film language as Metaphor: The interplay between film and metaphor is a profound and inseparable one. For scholars in the field of metaphor studies, the tapestry of our daily existence is richly woven with metaphorical expressions (Lakoff & Johnson, 2008). Cinema, with its unique capacity to capture the essence of human experience, serves as a powerful medium for representing the nuances of daily life. In the realm of film studies, there is a growing consensus that film is not merely a form of entertainment but an art form that thrives on metaphorical storytelling (Duan, 2021). This perspective underscores the cognitive and aesthetic dimensions of film, where metaphors are not just linguistic tools but also visual and narrative devices that shape our understanding and interpretation of the world around us.

The Chinese-language film *Only The River Flows*, which debuted at the 2023 Cannes Film Festival, has sparked a frenzy of discussion about cinema and metaphors, and the film is like a big web of metaphors woven together, filled with metaphors at every turn (Zhou, 2023). While the narrative arc of a film might appear straightforward, the manner of its artistic expression often defies easy anticipation. This complexity is what engenders a sense of simultaneous familiarity and novelty in the audience's experience of cinema. According to Metz (1991), "A film is difficult to explain because it is easy to understand" (p. 69). This seemingly contradictory formulation of language essentially speaks to the limits of our perception of film language. More than a century after the invention of cinema, people continue to employ metaphors to communicate the concept of film language, and we still don't have a single explanation as to what film language is and how to explain it. For a long time, the concept of 'film language' was applied arbitrarily in many circumstances, and in certain cases, it was equated with cinematic expression (Polikarpova, 2019).

Therefore, it is urgent to confront the claim that 'film language' is a metaphor. As Li (2000) point out, There are more than 70 disciplines that study metaphor, including film studies. As far as artistic disciplines alone are concerned, the study of metaphor in film should be the most exceptional. When we speak of the language of painting or the language of music, this metaphor is merely analogous, whereas in film and theatre it is literally including the language that people use on a daily basis, with words and with sound. One might argue that words are also used as lyrics in the music, true, but it hardly reflects the everyday conversational language of the people, which is an exaggerated and non-daily form of verbal expression. In the case of theatre and film, due to the temporal and spatial constraints of theatre, it is mainly the dialogue of people that is presented in the theatre, whereas film contains more complex language styles, and it is not an exaggeration to say that all forms of language that can be expressed by human beings can be present in film. For this reason, the study of film language is as complex as the study of language itself. The complexity of cinema lies in the fact that it is a hybrid of mimesis (non-verbal) and language (dialogue and/or narrator), and that it chronicles the evolution of human cognitive and culture in a particular way (Cabak Rédei, 2009). In our initial investigation, the researchers explored film semiotics, a foundational field dedicated to the study of film language. Analyzing linguistic nuances in Chinese translations, we found that the translation process profoundly impacts the interpretation and understanding of key concepts in this academic field.

Relevant research has demonstrated that there are many similarities between translation and metaphor (Qin, 2022; Schäffner, 2004). And when the two coexist, i.e., when translating a metaphorical content, difficulties arise. Inspired by Metz's analysis of the concept of film language from a linguistic perspective, the researchers found that Semantic Montage in cognitive linguistics helps to solve the problem of superimposing metaphor and translation. Originally conceived by cognitive linguistic researchers, drawing inspiration from film terminologies, the concept of Semantic Montage has been instrumental in fostering an interdisciplinary theoretical reflection.

Disciplines involved in film language study: The people who use different linguistic symbols actually bring their perception of what language expresses into the film. Thus, this paper attempts to explore the issue of understanding concepts related to film language in a specific context (Chinese) based on the intersection of film studies and linguistics on the issue of film language from an cognitive perspective. Research on film language involves three fields: film studies, linguistics and semiotics (see Figure 1).

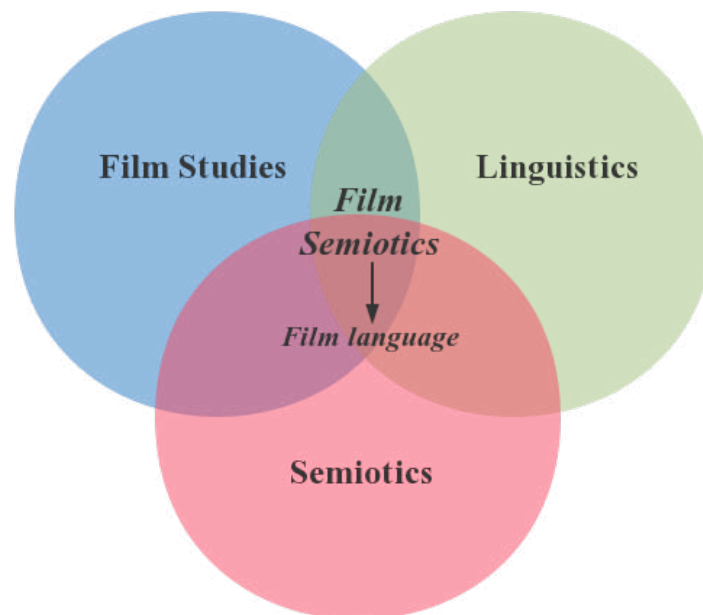


Figure 1. Three areas involved in the study of film language

However, for a considerable period of time, all three of these fields may have treated the issue of film language independently. The approach of the field of film studies has generally been to default to the metaphor of film language itself, i.e., to disregard its relation to real language. For example, there is a well-known book in the field of film studies, written by the Uruguayan director Daniel Arijon, called *Grammar of Film Language* (Arijon, 1976). This book is a detailed and practical introduction to the methods, processes and examples of filmmaking. In some chapters, the author uses linguistic terms such as 'syntax' in the title, but does not really talk about the relationship between film and language, other than to introduce film as a unique language in the opening pages, i.e. the author chooses to default to the idea that film is a metaphor for language.

Arguing the Metaphor of Film Language - Film Semiotics: At the same time, another perspective on the study of film language really confronts the question of the relationship between language and film. The French critic Marcel Martin first proposed the idea of a film language in 1955 and named his monograph after the French term 'film language' (Hedges, 1984). The author attempts to prove that cinema is a language by analyzing the fact that it uses a large number of means of expression that are comparable to spoken

language. And it was Christian Metz, a pioneer of film semiotics, who helped to break through the barriers between linguistics, semiotics, and film studies in film language studies. At a symposium held at the University of Zurich in 2013, scholars from around the world discussed Christian Metz's remarkable contribution to the establishment of the discipline of modern cinema, in particular his linguistically-inspired 'filmic-linguistic' approach, which pioneered the scientific path of modern film studies (Weste, 2019). However, as Metz's theory was originally written in French, some misinterpretation of his work is inevitable when it is translated in other countries (Metz, 2021). This paper examines some of the issues that arise in Chinese translations that affect the understanding of Metz's theory (Metz, 2018). Based on this, the researcher looks at the issue of metaphor in translation and finds the importance of understanding cross-cultural theory from a cognitive perspective, especially when it comes to film language study theory. Although this essay isn't truly based on translation research, we must include it because our understanding of theories written in other languages often depends on the translated text.

Metaphor, Translation and Metaphor in Translation

Similarity of Translation and Metaphor: Translation is like a window on interculturalism, and metaphor is the window's switch. Without realizing it, people frequently use metaphors, which makes cross-cultural translation challenging. The good news is that metaphor and translation are inextricably linked, and elucidating their connection can aid in comprehending the meaning of cross-cultural translations. Metaphor and translation have many correlations, from an etymological point of view, metaphor comes from Greek and refers to the transformation of meaning; translation comes from Latin and refers to the meaning that has been transformed (Qin, 2022).

Furthermore, there are parallels in the realization process between metaphors and translations. The founders of metaphor theory suggested that a metaphor should have a basic structure of two domains (Lakoff & Johnson, 2008). Schäffner describes this structure of the metaphor as :

“Metaphors are a means of understanding one domain of experience (a target domain) in terms of another (a source domain). The source domain is mapped onto the target domain, whereby the structural components of the base schema are transferred to the target domain (ontological correspondences), thus also allowing for knowledge-based inferences and entailments (epistemic correspondences) “(Schäffner, 2004, p.1258).

Coincidentally, the translation process is very similar (see Figure 2). Cognitive linguists believe that the best way to achieve cognitive metaphor is to convert one language into another, and that the process of conversion necessitates the translator selecting appropriate features from the source domain classification and which target domain classification features can be used to reflect these features. Translation can also be thought of as a cognitive process because the conceptual metaphor even views translation as a metaphor. This means that the target language text is a recombination of the original text in the target language culture, while translation is a mapping from the original text to the target language text (Qin, 2022).

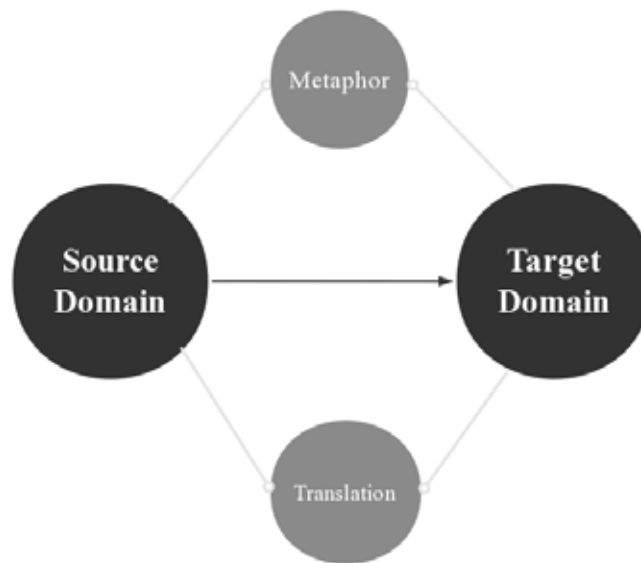


Figure 2. Similar paths for metaphor and translation

Metaphorical Overlay Translation: However, if translation and metaphor are superimposed, the originally clear relationship becomes very complicated. “ Once a metaphor has been brought into international (political) discussion, it can undergo changes when transferred from one language and culture into another ” (Schäffner, 2004). Let’s take the title of a movie as an example. The title of a movie is one of the simplest expressions of the film language, both in terms of number of words and form, but its importance cannot be overstated. The use of cognitive operations in film title translation can effectively enhance the referential and expressive role of film titles (Alousque, 2015). To facilitate the explanation of this problem, the researchers chose two examples, the first of which is a Chinese metaphor that does not involve translation. And the other one is a movie title translated from English into Chinese. The two have similarities in the source and target domains of the metaphors, but they are different.

Example 1 : 花样年华 *In the Mood for Love* (2000)

The title of Example 1 comes from one of director Wong Kar-wai’s masterpieces. This word comes from Chinese and means that a person is in the age of blossoming like a flower. Obviously, the title of the film is a metaphor (Buckland, 2000).

Example 2 : 花月杀手 *Killers of the Flower Moon* (2023)

The Chinese translation of Example 2 comes from the title of the movie’s novel of the same name: *Killers of the Flower Moon*. The flower, the moon, and the killer are three distinct cognitive domains (Wang, 2023). In fact, it is almost impossible to determine the relationship between the three without understanding the culture and history behind the title, and a literal translation alone would be even more inappropriate. “The title comes from an Osage saying that describes the death of blooming April flowers in May, when taller plants crowd them out” (Spanberg, 2017). In fact, the use of this title in the novel and the film is still metaphorical. The story is about the persecution of the Osage nation throughout history. The Chinese translation of the film takes a similarly direct approach, but at the same time abstracts the relationship between the three words. The juxtaposition of the flower and the moon with the killer is actually incoherent. Semantic Montage provides an explanation for this unconventional juxtaposition of concepts.

Semantic Montage: juxtaposition of concepts

Montage - From Cinema to Language: Montage is of French origin, originally an architectural term, but its introduction into film theory has made it a very unique theory in the field. Developed by a group of Soviet film theorists, montage juxtaposes two separate shots in a way that artificially creates time and space, creating metaphors that do not emphasize the parts but focus on the new meaning created by the juxtaposition (Bordwell, 1972).

Liu(2016) cited the montage method in film study to explain some unconventional semantic phenomena, and proposed the concept of Semantic Montage (语义蒙太奇).

Example 3: nà shēng yīn rú yáng guāng yí yàng càn làn 那声音如阳光一样灿烂

(Translation : The voice was as splendid as the sunshine)

The phrase can be divided into three parts: “shēng yīn (voice)” and “yáng guāng (splendid)” are an unconventional juxtaposition of empirical concepts, but between them there is “rú yáng guāng yí yàng(as the sunshine)”, a montage process that allows people to move between two concepts that are not directly related to each other when perceiving the phrase (Liu, 2016). Just as montage works in movies, a similar phenomenon exists in languages. By analyzed some cases in poetry, it can be learned that Semantic Montage is used extensively in poetry, and the interaction of different cognitive domains is used to achieve the interpretation of the target domain (Zhang, 2009). In summary, Semantic Montage can explain new meanings arising from the juxtaposition of concepts, even if they are unconventional juxtapositions. However, without an understanding of the cultural or historical context, the situation in Example 2 is still not fully understood, especially when translated into another language. This points to another problem, the context.

Context & Contextuality - Complement to Semantic Montage: If film language is truly studied as a language, then attention needs to be paid to the context in which the language is grounded, yet this issue has never received much attention in the many discussions of film language (Wang, 2002). Context is what communicators show to each other in a conversation, and what a person shows at a certain time is his or her cognitive environment (Bezuidenhout, 2017). The context of film language has similarities and differences with the conversational context of spoken language. We need to be aware that the language of the film contains spoken dialogue similar to that of reality, but also has a complete context similar to that of a book, that is, we need to consider the complete context of the film when analyzing a particular sentence. Thus, context contains two classifications: the general context in which we communicate with the time we live in and the world at large (Contextuality); and the relationship between episodes in a film (Context) (Wang, 2002). Based on the above analysis of film language, the researchers summarized a model for examining film language (see Figure 3).

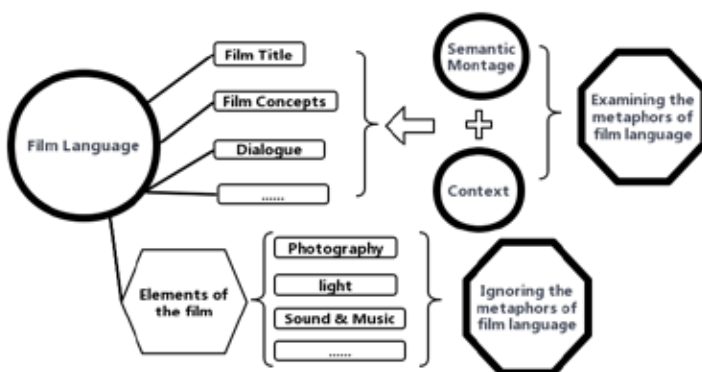


Figure 3. Two ways of examining film language: confronting metaphor or ignoring it

By combining Semantic Montage and Context, the researcher is confronted with the objective fact of film language as metaphor. And there has been another path of studying film language in the field of film studies, which is to refer to all the expressive elements of film as film language and ignore the issue of metaphor.

Semantic Montage is suitable for examining the textual language of film language, including film titles, film subtitles and film theoretical concepts. To examine film dialogue and more specific textual language, it is necessary to add contextual interpretation to the semantic montage. This method is also suitable for checking some cases where the film language has been translated incorrectly.

Data and Analysis

The researchers selected three types of data to explore how the above theoretical paths apply to the examination of film language. The first type of data is a non-uniform theoretical concept that appears in the Chinese translated version of Metz's theory. The second type of data is the translation of the title of a film involved in Metz's theory. The third type of data is a selection of dialogue from the film that the researchers used to illustrate the new form of semantic montage. To make it easier to distinguish between these three types of data, the researchers have labelled them with part I, II and III.

Part I Film Language Theory Terms

Inconsistencies in the Chinese translation of Metz's film semiotic theory: Based on the foregoing, the researchers chose the title of a representative article from the early days of Metz's film semiotics theory as the text for research, with the goal of investigating cognitive differences between different translated versions in Chinese (see Table 1). The title of this article was chosen as the object of the study text because it marks the advent of film semiotics, a modern film theory, and its importance cannot be overstated. The three textual sources chosen by the researchers were all officially published Chinese books.

Table 1. Three Chinese translations of the title of Metz's paper

Original title (French)	Le cinéma : langue ou langage ? Source : (Metz, 1964).
Translated version 1	电影 : 语言还是言语 ? (diàn yǐng : yǔ yán hái shì yán yǔ ?) Source : (Ma & Wu, 2016).
Translated version 2	电影 : 纯语言还是泛语言 ? (diàn yǐng : chún yǔ yán hái shì fàn yǔ yán ?) Source : (Cui, 2018).
Translated version 3	电影 : 语言系统还是语言 ? (diàn yǐng : yǔ yán xì tǒng hái shì yǔ yán ?) Source : (Wang & Zhao, 2021).

The researchers chose a translation comparison approach, focusing on the origin of words from each version of the Chinese translation. The comparative translation approach is classified into two types: diachronic comparison and synchronic comparison (Jun, 2001). The sample comparison review method is a subdivision method in synchronic comparison, by selecting a partial sample of the translated text for analysis (Jun, 2001). Further, the researchers will analyze the conceptual terms in the different versions in the context of

metaphor theory. Metaphors exist in concepts, not in words (Lakoff & Johnson, 2008). And what appears in the study text happens to be concepts, or to be precise, titles that are a combination of multiple concepts. **Chinese translation of key concepts in Saussure's theory:** The two conceptual terms “yǔ yán “ (语言) and “yán yǔ “ (言语) in the Translated Version 1 of the data come from the Chinese translation of the key concepts in Saussure's structuralist linguistics. Saussure coined two words “langue” and “parole” as key terms in structuralist linguistics, but it is very difficult to translate them because neither Chinese nor other national languages can find a word that corresponds exactly to their meanings when translated, so the Chinese use “yǔ yán “ (语言) and “yán yǔ “ (言语) are used as translation substitutes, is not an ideal choice (Zhang, 2020). That is, when Metz's theory was translated into Chinese, the translator borrowed the Chinese translation of two key Saussurean terms. This translation actually builds on the Chinese reader's understanding of Saussure's structuralist linguistics, which is an important contextual premise. We need to acknowledge the cleverness of this translation, but with just a glance at the words in Metz's original title, it is easy to see that this translation may not be appropriate.

Metz's original intention? A new term: In French, the word “langue” refers to “language in the pure sense of human communication” while “language” means “a broad linguistic activity” (Metz, 2018). This means that the two key terms used by Metz in the title of his paper are real in French and do not exactly correspond to Saussure's two terms. Thus, an alternative translation of Metz's theory in Chinese comes from a well-known Chinese film theorist and translator by the name of Cui Junyan. Cui uses the terms “chún yǔ yán (纯语言)” and “fàn yǔ yán (泛语言)” to translate. At the same time, Cui retains Saussure's use of the word ‘parole’, which he translates as “yán yǔ “ (言语) (Metz, 2018). It is clear that Cui's translation complements and innovates the previous one by retaining part of the Chinese translation of Saussure's key terms while using two new words. It is the juxtaposition of ‘language’ and ‘pure’ or ‘broad’ that is interesting, in fact a clever use of metaphor and a strong semantic montage effect.

Refer to the English translation, simple: We have to admit that English is widely used around the world precisely because of one important factor, it is simple enough. In the nearly 20 years since the emergence of Metz's theory, there have been few translated works on film semiotics in English, and Michael Taylor has made what was originally a prose French work into a relatively accessible English translation (Metz, 1991). In the mainstream English translation represented by Translation Version 3, Metz's theory is reinterpreted in some terms, but clearly in a more accessible direction. The term ‘language system’ emphasises the social dimension of language (Metz, 1991). The language system belongs to a juxtaposition of language and system, producing a semantic montage effect and a metaphor. It is worth noting that in the Chinese translation version 3, the word language system is placed before the word language in the title, whereas in the English translation it comes after. Although the meaning of the phrase has not changed much, which word of Metz does the translation correspond to? Has a misunderstanding also arisen?

Part II Title of the film

Wrong film title in the translation of film semiotic theory: When we use the word ‘wrong’ in research, we must be careful, because it needs to be justified, and although researchers are apprehensive, it is time to point out this small error about Metz's theory. The first phase of Metz's film semiotic theory concerned a very important French film whose English title is generally translated as ‘Adieu Phillipine’, and this is still the translation that is widely circulated. As the Chinese translation of the title is mainly through direct translation, it is translated as “zài jiàn fēi lǜ bīn 再见菲律宾 (Goodbye Phillipine)”. The juxtaposition of ‘goodbye’ and ‘Phillippines’ is clearly metaphorical and has a strong semantic montage effect. The combination of words in the film's title makes perfect sense from this perspective. But we are currently discussing the title of the film alone, without examining how it relates to the plot. And when we actually watch the plot of the film, we are

left with the question, does this film have anything to do with the country of the Philippines? In fact, the film has nothing at all to do with the Philippines and the translation of the title is a mistake, due to the fact that the film was given a direct name by the filmmakers of the time in a phonetic translation (Xiaoyu, 2013). The film is the work of the famous French director Jacques Rozier and is a masterpiece of the French New Wave. The director has confirmed in response to a question from a Chinese journalist about the translation of the title that the film is indeed not related to the Philippines (Xiaoyu, 2013). The error in the translation of this title is therefore not due to an error in the translation of Metz's theory in the Chinese translation, but to the fact that Metz used an incorrect translation of the title in the very first place. The culprit for this mistake is the film's distributor, and indeed, such examples are not uncommon in the film industry.

Part III Dialogue in film - three manifestations of Semantic Montage: If in the first two parts of the data, Semantic Montage is mainly used to explain the literal meaning of some cinematic language, it is in the dialogue of the film that Semantic Montage really achieves the chemistry with the context that makes the film unique. The dialogue in the film comes mainly from the script, and the montage visible in the script actually involves very little dialogue (Miyamoto, 2022). However, through the lens of Semantic Montage, the researchers found that the dialogue itself could be presented with a montage effect. Based on limited research data, the researchers cite three types, the last of which in particular deserves further exploration. **The unique Semantic Montage of film:** When we examine the language of film, we need to consider the uniqueness of cinematic expression, and the same is true of the exploration of Semantic Montage. What follows is an example of the unique role of Semantic Montage in cinema, which is by no means limited to the literal level.

Myth of Love (2021) is a romantic film that has become very popular with Chinese audiences in recent years. The dialogue in this film is almost entirely in the Shanghai dialect and the film has many interesting innovations in terms of language. The title of the film is a tribute to a film by the Italian cinematographer Fellini, as the Chinese title of this new film uses the Chinese translation of that Fellini film, called ài qíng shén huà 爱情神话 (see Figure 4).



Figure 4. Intertext of the title : The film tells the audience the origin of the film's title through dialogue

And the really interesting parts of the film are mainly in the dialogue and plot of the characters. There is a passage in the film that exemplifies the powerful role of semantic montage in film. The context of the passage is that the hero and heroine spend a pleasant evening together, and afterwards the hero, Lao Bai, inquires about the place where the heroine, Miss Li, lives and comes to visit her. Miss Li was divorced and lived with

a daughter in a cramped old house. When Lao Bai visited, Miss Li tutored her daughter with her English homework, which took the form of Miss Li reading Chinese words while her daughter wrote English.

On the surface, the words Miss Lee speaks are not directly related to the development of the film’s plot, but the director cleverly arranges several sets of words that, when juxtaposed together, create its own wonderful chemistry. To show this dictation more graphically, the researchers divided the dictated words and phrases into three lines, with the order in which Miss Lee says them in the film being from line one to line three (see Table 2).

Table 2. Semantic Montage produced by dictation of words

Words for dictation in <i>Myth of Love</i> (2021)		
lěng jìng 冷静 (Translation: Calm)	jìng yì jìng 静一静 (Translation: Be still)	Emo- tional over- lay
jù lí 距离 (Translation: Distance)	bǎo chí jù lí 保持距离 (Translation: Keep your distance)	
hòu huǐ 后悔 (Translation: Regret)	hòu huǐ zuò yì jiàn shì 后悔做一件事 (Translation: regret done something)	

In the first line, the juxtaposition of the phrases ‘lěng jìng’ and ‘jìng yì jìng’ emphasises Miss Li’s attitude towards Lao Bai, which is that we all need to be quiet for a while without thinking about anything. The phrase ‘bǎo chí jù lí’ in the second line further reinforces Miss Li’s attitude towards the night she spent with Lao Bai. The content of the dictated words in the third line is essentially a direct statement of Ms. Li’s regret over the one-night stand. The five parts of the dictation are not actually coherent sentences, but the emotions expressed from the first line to the third line are continuously increasing and very coherent. Looking at just a portion of it, the Semantic Montage is already evident whenever the juxtaposition of words and phrases occurs, but to truly understand the meaning beyond the words of these dictations requires the viewer to contextualise the film.

The words and phrases that Miss Lee was reporting to her daughter for dictation should, by common sense, have come from the books she had in hand. But through the director’s deliberate arrangement, Miss Li seems to speak her mind through these words, and the audience can sense that it does not matter whether the dictation comes from the book or not; the words are actually spoken to Lao Bai. The dictated words are linked to the phrases to create a montage effect similar to that seen only in the editing of film footage. This is no longer a case of using a montage in film to analogise a phenomenon in linguistics; this is a genuine montage effect.

However, the effect of montage in films often means switching and reorganising shots, whereas in the clip of Miss Li dictating words, there is little change in the film’s images. This montage effect focuses more on the psychological representation of the characters, which is achieved through language, and is therefore classified by the researchers as a unique manifestation of Semantic Montage in films.

Characteristics of tonal language - the preliminary effects of Semantic Montage: Chinese is a tonal language, where a word can be transformed into another word with a different meaning simply by a subtle change in tone (Li & Thompson, 2022). Chinese contains a variety of dialects, which are much more extensive than what we generally call Mandarin. Due to both of these features, when dialogue in dialect is present in a film or TV episode, it often has a very unique dramatic effect.

The following dialogue is from a Chinese TV episode called *suí táng yīng xióng zhī xuē gāng fǎn táng* 隋唐英雄之薛刚反唐 (2015). This is a TV series set in ancient China with many hilarious sequences.

The dramatic effect of the difference in pronunciation between Mandarin and the southwestern Chinese dialect is reflected in the dialogue clip chosen by the researchers (see Table 3).

Table 3. Semantic montage arising from differences in Chinese pronunciation

Q1;	zhè lǐ dào dǐ yǒu duō shǎo tóng huǒ ? 这里到底有多少同伙 ? (Mandarin pronunciation) Translation: How many helpers are there here?
A1 :	zhè lǐ shì 1 gè rén. 这里是1个人。 (Southwest Chinese dialect pronunciation) Translation: Here is 1 person. Similar to the Mandarin pronunciation : “here are 11 people”.
Q2 :	11 gè rén ? 11个人 ? (Mandarin pronunciation) Translation:11 helpers?
A2 :	bù shì 11 gè , ér shì 1 gè rén 。不是11个, 而是1个人。 (Southwest Chinese dialect pronunciation) Translation: not 11 people, but 1. Similar to the Mandarin pronunciation : “not 11 people, 21 people”.
Q3 :	21 gè rén ? shuō ! tā men dōu zàng nǎ ér qù le ? 21个人 ? 说 ! 他们都藏哪儿去了 ? (Mandarin pronunciation) Translation: 21 helpers? Where are they all hiding?
A3 :	nǐ tīng cuò le , bù shì 21 gè , qí shí 1 gè rén 。你听错了 · 不是21个, 其实1个人。 (Southwest Chinese dialect pronunciation) Translation: You heard wrong, not 21, actually 1 person. Similar to the Mandarin pronunciation : “You heard wrong, it’s not 21 people, it’s 71 people”.

In this conversation, the questioner uses Mandarin pronunciation, while the respondent uses a dialect from southwest China. The pronunciation of the southwestern Chinese dialect represented by Chengdu is almost devoid of the warble consonants found in Mandarin and has been replaced by the flat consonants (Fengtong, 1989). In Mandarin pronunciation, the distinction between warble consonants and flat consonants is very important, as it affects the meaning of the speaker’s expression.

The above dialogue takes advantage of the difference in pronunciation between Mandarin and the southwestern Chinese dialect, and creates a dramatic effect by juxtaposing confusing words. In the original episode, the dialogue could have continued on, based on the principle of constant juxtaposition using confusingly pronounced words. The difference in pronunciation alone does not have a strong dramatic effect, but when similar words are juxtaposed together, the effect is quite obvious. We can summarise this as a Semantic Montage effect produced by the pronunciation characteristics of Chinese as a tonal language. Although the Chinese symbols in dialects and Mandarin are the same, the differences in pronunciation cause them to exist in two domains of awareness.

Throughout the film - a deep blend of Semantic Montage and Context: We need to acknowledge the

point that when exploring any language there are contextual variations to consider, and the language of film is no exception. Researchers have found that a way of effectively integrating realistic contexts into cinematic contexts has emerged in contemporary Chinese cinema, meaning that such films ostensibly tell a story that is actually closely related to the contemporary reality in which we live. Dialogue in such films should be understood not only in terms of the semantics of the sentences, but also in terms of the wider social context. Simply put, some key sentences in the dialogue of the film are not only related to the Context of the film’s plot, but also reflect the Contextuality of real social issues.

Thus the individual film, on the one hand, transcends the real and becomes hyperreality, but on the other hand, it avoids the original author’s narrative and is therefore open to endless interpretations within the body of global hypertext. The death of the original semantic context, along with the death of the author, provides an infinite number of new meanings in the context of other cultural signs-elements of discourse (Barnych et al., 2021).

Admittedly, in a way, there are infinite interpretations of the semantics of film dialogue. But for contemporary cinema, the ability to reflect the concerns of contemporary people should be an important direction of interpretation. Whereas the Semantic Montage in film we have previously explored was limited to a single dialogue, the following example shows how the juxtaposition of multiple words in a sentence can, by adjusting the order of the words, undergo a semantic shift that relates to the context of the film as a whole (see Table 4).

Table 4. The process of spreading a rumour: Juxtaposition of identical words after reordering

Rumour 1	tīng shuō yǒu rén shuì le nǐ xiōng dì xí fù , nǐ bǎ nà rén gěi dǎ le ? 听说有人睡了你兄弟媳妇·你把那人给打了？ Translation: I heard that someone slept with your brother’s wife and you beat that person up?
Rumour 2	tīng shuō nǐ shuì le xiōng dì de xí fù , hái bǎ xiōng dì gěi dǎ le ? 听说你睡了兄弟的媳妇·还把兄弟给打了？ Translation: I heard that you slept with your brother’s wife and beat him up?
Rumour 3	tīng shuō nǐ shuì le nǐ xí fù , hái bǎ xí fù xiōng dì gěi dǎ le ? 听说你睡了你媳妇·还把媳妇兄弟给打了？ Translation: I heard you slept with your wife and beat up her brother?
Rumour 4	tīng shuō nǐ shuì le nǐ xiōng dì , hái bǎ xiōng dì de xí fù gěi dǎ le ? 听说你睡了你兄弟·还把兄弟的媳妇给打了？ Translation: I heard that you slept with your brother and beat up his wife?

The above appears in the film *bǎo nǐ píng ān 保你平安 Post-Truth* (2023), which was released in Mainland China. The hero of the film was imprisoned years ago for beating up someone for the sake of brotherhood, and when he was released from prison, he heard multiple versions of rumours on different occasions about why he was imprisoned.



Figure 5. The film's protagonist is exhausted from trying to dispel rumours

This sentence is juxtaposed in by the repositioning of words to produce four sentences with completely different meanings. The process by which this phrase is reconstructed and uttered by the different characters in the film graphically demonstrates the process of spreading a rumour in real life. If we compare the semantics of the phrase in the context of the film in isolation, it is clear that it can only be read for comic effect. The rumour of the hero's imprisonment is just a lead-in to the film, which focuses on the enormous impact of a rumour on the fate of women.

In contemporary Chinese society and indeed in other countries around the world, news of women being victimised by rumours is commonplace. People use language to create rumours, and the film's rumours, which have been reset and varied, graphically demonstrate the power of language, albeit, of course, in a negative way. If we try to think about the relationship between language and the production of rumours, it actually involves precisely cognition. "People have the ability to conceptualize emotions, not only their own, but also those of others, and in this respect cognition serves as intermediate between language and emotion" (Foolen, 2012). The rapid development of information has immersed people in a digital world, where people use a myriad of complex concepts to restructure language and even create rumours, which is also linked to the greater anxiety of contemporary people. Related studies from years ago have shown that anxious people are more likely to spread rumours than non-anxious people (Walker & Blaine, 1991).

Conclusion

The study of film language cannot be studied in isolation, and this paper addresses the issue of film language research in the context of the Chinese language, involving a consideration of translation and metaphor. The study of film language involves a number of disciplines including film studies, linguistics and semiotics. The study of film language in the field of cinema has long suffered from the problem of neglecting film language as a metaphor. At the same time, these neglectors invoke a great deal of terminology from language to metaphorize cinematic expression, generalizing lighting, photography, and styling as elements of cinematic language, but lacking the work to argue for such metaphors. The semiotic theorists of cinema, represented by Christian Metz, have argued positively for the objective reality of cinematic language as a metaphor and have used the terminology of linguistics to develop film studies in a rigorous and scientific manner. Inspired by this, the researchers invoked the Semantic Montage proposed by cognitive linguistic scholars to analyse the data needed to address three types of film language metaphor research head-on: film language theory

terms, film titles and film dialogue.

Semantic Montage, while proposed by linguistic researchers, has its roots in the montage techniques of cinema. Researchers have combined it with the contexts suggested by film language scholars, reapplying it to the study of film ontologies. This model not only addresses the impact of translation on film language research but also delves into the retrospective origins of film titles. However, the model's true value lies in its capacity to explore new dimensions in film dialogue. It transcends the examination of dialogue's literal meaning as a linguistic form, investigating how dialogue, as a vital element of film language, enhances the medium's distinctive expressiveness.

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