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CREATIVITY IN FILM TAGLINES: EXTRALINGUISTIC, TEXTUAL AND LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS**

The paper deals with taglines associated with US Academy Award winning films and nominees in the period between 1990 and 2018. The list of taglines was compiled based on the database of winners and nominees in the category of Best Picture over the past 29 years. Preceded by a theoretical – linguistic and cinematic – discussion of taglines as memorable dramatic phrases and advertising devices whose aim is to attract audiences by echoing the tone and essence of the films they represent (e.g. “The List is Life.” from *Schindler’s List*, or “Trapped. Hunted. Surrounded. Survive”, from *Dunkirk*), the selected taglines are classified based on extralinguistic and textual factors, and mechanisms of linguistic creativity at the phonological, graphemic-orthographic, lexico-semantic and syntactic levels and sublevels. It is expected that exploiting noun phrases or simple memorable sentences containing elements of language creativity, achieved by wordplay, figures of speech and/or phonological means, and aided by various socio-cultural references, will prove to be the most frequent and productive formula for forming a successful tagline. The methodology employed in this research is qualitative – the analysis is carried out by means of discussing and exemplifying various patterns of film tagline formation at the aforementioned extralinguistic, textual and linguistic levels.

Key words: film, film tagline, paratext, linguistic creativity, wordplay, extralinguistic factors, textual factors

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1. INTRODUCTION

Film taglines represent an intriguing and so far underestimated field of linguistic and cinematic research. The primary aim of this paper is to offer a classification of various factors that contribute to the formation and creativity of film taglines, based on hundreds of examples from the selected corpus. The basic assumption is that a prototypical successful tagline combines the influence of certain extralinguistic and textual factors, as well as those of linguistic creativity that results in simple memorable phrases with alliteration or rhythmic repetition, enriched with wordplay and characterized by simple syntactic patterns.

1.1. Film taglines: definitions, classification and functions

By popular definition, a **tagline** is a form of advertising slogan, a short text which serves the purpose of producing a positively dramatic effect, through its message and structure. A **film tagline**¹ is a supplementary expression in promoting a motion picture. It is an explanatory subtitle, in addition to the actual title, used on posters, DVD/BD packaging of videos and other promotional products. In reference to the general definition of taglines, a film tagline can also be defined as a short phrase officially used for a film as a sort of slogan, which often becomes just as iconic as the film itself.² Finally, and most importantly for the discussion in this paper, from the linguistic standpoint, it is also a kind of **paratext** (Kolstrup, 1996; Mahlke, 2011; 2016) which is an intermediary between the title, the film itself and the audience and, as such, a crucially important aspect in the marketing of films.

According to Kolstrup (1996), the term ‘paratext’ refers to a short prefatory text that serves the purpose of introducing a longer, more complex “text” (a work of art or literature in its entirety), be it a story, novel, poem, newspaper article, painting, piece of music, theatre play, or, for that matter, a film or a TV series. The primary task of any paratext is to enable the first contact between the reader, listener or viewer and the work itself and get them interested in what follows. Typical examples of paratext include newspaper headlines, story and book titles and subtitles, names of different works of art, or, most significantly for the discussion in

¹ Alternative terms are simply ‘slogan’ (Edwards, 1985) and ‘advertising slogan’ (Elaesser-Hagener, 2010). The suggested Serbian translation in this paper is *filmski slogan*.

² The introductory, popular and non-linguistic, definitions of taglines and film taglines have been found at <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tagline>.

this paper, film titles and taglines. Language creativity in forming and/or translating film titles has been the subject of several recent studies in a number of languages (e.g. Kálmán, 1993a; 1993b; Steinsaltz, 2000; Liu–Wei, 2006; Peng, 2007; Lotfollahi, 2012; Panić Kavgić, 2014; Haidegger, 2015). Film titles and taglines are closely connected, as the tagline complements the title, poses a question answered by the title or explains it and elaborates on it.

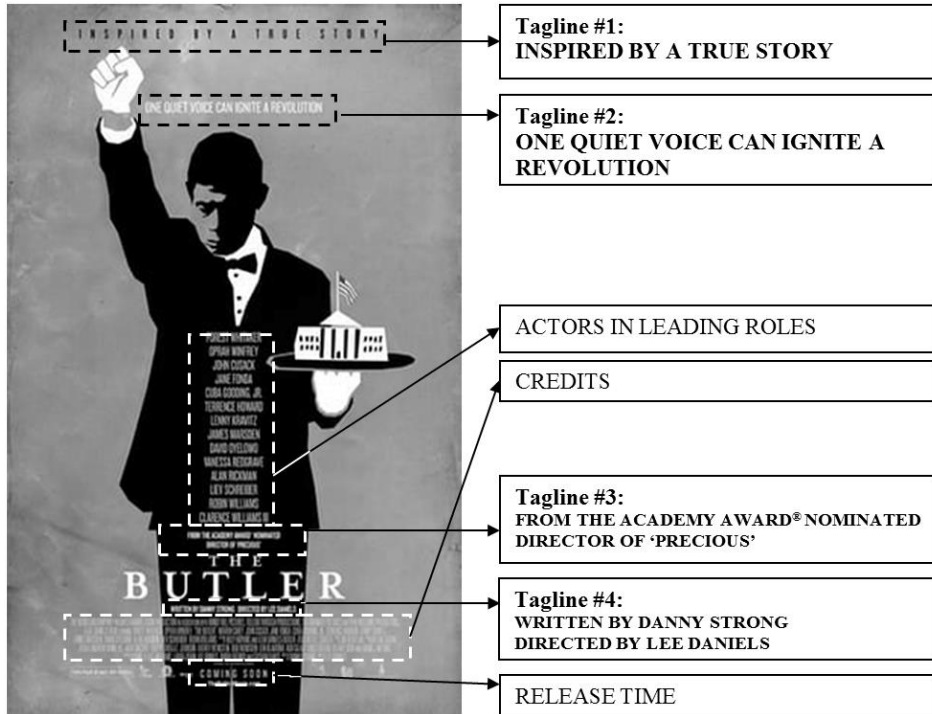
Despite their indisputable importance, one of the rare, if not the only, extensive discussion of film taglines – their functions, historical conventions and style – is by Mahlkecht (2011; 2016), who claims that, “of all the possible paratextual elements and sub-elements that encircle and frame a film [...] the movie tagline is perhaps the one that leads the most marginalized existence” (2011: 162). One of the most plausible explanations for its neglected status among both linguistics and film analysts is that taglines are most commonly found in trailers and film posters which are already framing tools aiding the main work itself, so “being a framing element of a framing element, they may easily escape our attention” (2011: 162). To draw attention to this valuable means of linguistic and cinematic expression, Mahlkecht claims that he “intends to give credit to an advertising tool whose tradition is almost as long and as varied as that of cinema itself” (2011: 163). Taglines have otherwise been only occasionally mentioned and discussed, mostly in articles and books about film posters, such as Edwards (1985), King (2003) or Rhodes (2007), or rare newspaper articles (Mooallem, 2004). Mahlkecht (2011; 2016), on the other hand, basing his claims on a large collection of data, defines the tagline, explains its functions (with emphasis on its praise for the film), accounts for its use or non-use, compares taglines in the past and present, establishes a relationship between the tagline and the poster image, the tagline and the title, and looks into its syntactic, semantic and rhetorical properties.

According to their sensory transmission and perception properties, film taglines can be divided into visual (in posters and other visual promotional materials), auditory (in trailers and teasers) and combined – auditory-visual (in trailers). In this paper, taglines from both posters and trailers will be taken into account, the focus however being on those found in posters, as they are prone to analysis at the graphemic-orthographic level as well.

The position of taglines in posters as graphical representations of films varies depending on their relative importance in the context of the other paratextual and visual elements that acquaint the audience with the film: its title, lead actors, full credits, date and place of release, reference to the director, writer and producer and, most strikingly, the main image hinting at the storyline, as explained by Ndoka (2015), exemplified by his analysis of the poster for the film *Inception*. Similarly,

for the purposes of this research, Picture 1 shows the position and complementing importance of taglines (and, for that matter, the other listed visual advertising elements) in the poster promoting *The Butler*.

Picture 1: *The Butler* – poster analysis: position and content of taglines



Finally, based on Jakobson's (1960) division into six communicative functions of language and reverting to the aforementioned general facts about film taglines, their most conspicuous functions, shared with those attributed to film titles³ (Panić Kavgić, 2014), have remained much the same throughout the development of the art and industry of film and can be reduced to the following:

1) **informational** – the tagline provides information about the central idea, theme, plot, characters and/or socio-cultural background of the film, as well as its stars (actors), the film crew, date of release or technical advancements. In

³ The only difference between film titles and taglines in terms of the language functions they perform is that titles also have a referential, i.e. identificational function, as audiences refer to a film by mentioning its title (Panić Kavgić, 2014), rather than by any of its taglines, regardless of how memorable or eye-catching they may be.

connection with this function, Mahlkecht (2011; 2016) focuses on five aspects of the film that taglines may refer to: the appeals of genre, story, stardom, quality and technical achievements (sound cinema, Technicolor, Cinemascope, 3D). These are either combined into one longer tagline, or, preferably, as in Picture 1, expressed through two or more of them;

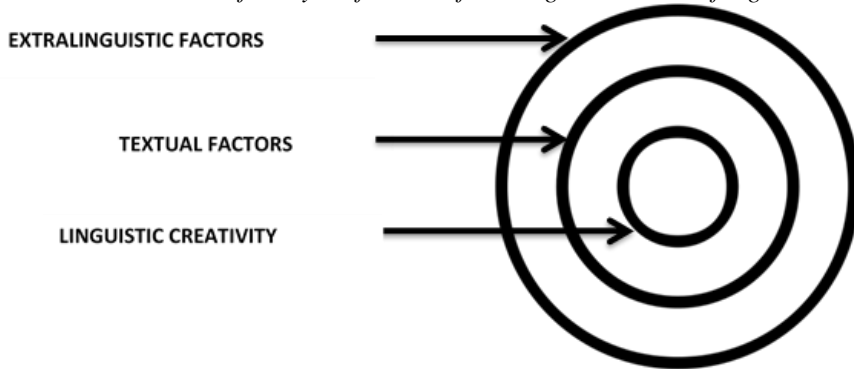
2) **poetic** or **aesthetic** – the tagline represents the result of creative application of linguistic and extralinguistic devices; Mahlkecht (2011) even claims that in most cases, owing to its poetry or “literariness”, “the tagline can be seen as a (persuasive) literary genre all of its own” (2011: 188);

3) **appellative**, stemming from functions 1) and 2) – the tagline is directed at the audience as the decoder of the message; its informational and aesthetic qualities aim at influencing and attracting the audience. Sometimes, especially in earlier times, the tagline openly praised the film. However, nowadays, as Mahlkecht (2011) points out, “to a contemporary (potential) audience such overflowing glorification of a film on the poster will seem either hopelessly dated or even ridiculous” (2011: 184). Rather, praise, which, on its own, “tells us nothing about the actual content, theme or genre of the film in question” (2011: 183), should be skilfully combined with concrete information.

1.2. Factors of creativity

In addition to film taglines as a linguistic and socio-cultural phenomenon, the other key concept in this paper is **linguistic creativity**, which, when it comes to English, has been most extensively studied and described by Crystal, according to whom, the more creative the context, the greater the probability of encountering linguistic experiments (Crystal, 1995: 134). As it was defined in Panić Kavgić (2016a), linguistic creativity includes “all intelligent and witty uses of language, at various levels of analysis, [...] which serve the purpose of devising appealing and associatively charged pieces of language, as newly coined lexical or syntactic units” (2016a: 385). In this paper, linguistic creativity is viewed within a broader frame of extralinguistic and textual factors that contribute to an overall impression of creativity in film taglines, based on both socio-cultural or textual references and the resources of language itself.

The levels of analysis in this research, represented in Picture 2, thus include two contextual “bubbles” – extralinguistic and textual factors – influencing the creation of taglines, surrounding the central and most important factor of linguistic creativity.

Picture 2: *Levels of analysis: factors influencing the creation of taglines*

Extralinguistic factors contributing to the creative potential and originality of a tagline include reference to the following: a true story or historical event, a historical period or spirit of an era, a film, actor, director or producer, or a related novel or story, the time or circumstances of the film's release and its success, the film's intended effect on the audience, or, alternatively, the tagline directly addresses or influences the audience by issuing directives at or posing questions to the film's audience, based on the plot. **Textual factors**, influenced by a wider extralinguistic context and closely encircling the central factor of linguistic creativity (Picture 2), refer directly to the film's story and comprise the following: retelling the general plot, its key parts and/or describing the characters, referring to the central idea or theme of the film, using general or generic phrases about the main idea or general truths (not necessarily applicable to that film only), utilizing sayings, proverbs and quotes by famous people, quoting the film's (imaginary) character's own words, thoughts or guiding principles and employing intratextuality by means of direct self-reference to the title.

The factor of linguistic creativity, with its many realizations at all levels of linguistic analysis, is at the core of a successful tagline (Picture 2). At the phonological level, creativity is achieved through alliteration, rhythmic repetition and rhyming. On the graphemic-orthographic plane, there are instances of eye-catching uses of numeric symbols, punctuation marks and capitalization. Lexico-semantic originality is the result of wordplay, which, as it will be explained in Section 3.3.3., is primarily based on playing with meaning and the application of various figures of speech – metaphors, similes, antithesis, personification and hyperbole. Last but not least, syntax-wise, tagline creators make use of the following syntactic structures: single phrases, sequences of independent phrases, sentence fragments, simple sentences and their sequences, complex and compound

sentences, as well as declarative, interrogative and imperative forms. When it comes to thematization, three strategies are commonly employed to make the tagline more effective and memorable: fronting, clefting and postposing.

Each of the abovementioned layers will be discussed and exemplified by a number of illustrative taglines in Section 3, following the description of the research corpus and methodology in Section 2.

2. RESEARCH CORPUS AND METHODOLOGY

The list compiled for this research contains 570 taglines of 181 feature-length films, ranging from 0 to 13 per film. 29 films were Academy Award winners for Best Motion Picture of the Year, whereas the remaining 152 were nominees in the same category in the period between 1990 and 2018. Academy Awards, also known as Oscars, are given annually by The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, in 24 categories that acknowledge artistic and technical excellence in cinematic achievements. The taglines were selected from the following three relevant online sources: *Internet Movie Database* (section Taglines), *Wikiquotes* and *Great Film Taglines*.

In the selected research material, there are films that were advertised by as many as eleven taglines,⁴ such as *The Sixth Sense* or *Moulin Rouge*, while there are, for instance, 45 films which were associated with one tagline only, as is the case with *The Pianist* or *La La Land*. On average, the number of taglines per film was found to be three, with a representative example, in this respect, being *The Reader* (How far would you go to protect a secret?; Unlock the mystery.; Behind the mystery lies a truth that will make you question everything you know.). Somewhat surprisingly, 22 Oscar nominees had no taglines at all. However, there were no such cases among the 29 Academy Award winners.

Applying the kind of qualitative research methodology based on describing and classifying film titles, taglines and nicknames, introduced in Panić Kavgić (2014; 2016a; 2016b) and Panić Kavgić–Kavgić (2017a; 2017b), illustrative examples of film taglines will be analysed at the aforementioned extralinguistic, textual and linguistic levels and sublevels, listed as underlying factors of creativity in Section 1.2. The classifications will be aided by certain quantitative data where

⁴ Similarly, one and the same film may be advertised by several posters and trailers. Also, there is a potential multitude of taglines for each film and “moviegoers see only the winners” (Mahlknecht 2011: 171).

deemed important or necessary for the overall picture, as in Section 3.3.4. Due to spatial limitations imposed by the scope of this paper, not all taglines will be explained in greater detail – representative examples will be classified into smaller or larger categories and subcategories, depending on the levels of the mechanisms employed in their creation.

3. ANALYSIS: FACTORS OF CREATIVITY

Representative examples of film taglines from the research corpus will be classified into three large groups and their constituent subgroups listed in the introductory discussion: in Section 3.1. – those crucially influenced by extralinguistic factors, Section 3.2. – taglines framed by textual factors, i.e. the context of the film itself, and, most importantly for this research, in Section 3.3. – those formed owing to mechanisms of language creativity, at various levels and sublevels of linguistic analysis. Each tagline is given in its original orthographic form, as found in the sources, followed, in parentheses, by the title of the film (in italics), and, only if needed, by additional explanations, in small capitals, regarding the specific extralinguistic, textual or linguistic factors involved in the creation of the tagline. Some taglines may be repeatedly mentioned as belonging to more than one category.

3.1. Extralinguistic factors

1) Reference to a true story or historical event

- In the last Great Invasion of the last Great War, the greatest danger for eight men was saving... One. (*Saving Private Ryan*) – WWII: RESCUING A US PARATROOPER WHOSE THREE BROTHERS HAVE BEEN KILLED IN ACTION
- In a world on the brink the difference between war and peace was one honest man. (*Bridge of Spies*) – COLD WAR: AN AMERICAN LAWYER'S HEROIC NEGOTIATING ROLE
- One of the greatest heroes in American history never fired a bullet. (*Hacksaw Ridge*) – WWII: A CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR'S BRAVERY
- The true story behind the scandal that shook the world. (*Spotlight*) – *THE BOSTON GLOBE* UNCOVERING A CHILD MOLESTATION SCANDAL WITHIN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

2) Reference to a historical period or spirit of an era

- America Was Born in the Streets. (*Gangs of New York*) – MID-19TH CENTURY CRUEL LIFE IN LOWER MANHATTAN

- Shooting people was “No big deal”. (*Goodfellas*) – 1950’S NEW YORK MOB’S WAYS
 - Glamor was the disguise (*Bugsy*) – 1930’S LAS VEGAS GANGSTER MILIEU
- 3) Reference to a film, actor, director or producer, or a related novel or story
- From the director of Billy Elliot (*The Hours*)
 - A Steven Spielberg film (*The Post*)
 - Based on an idea by Daniel Kraus and Guillermo del Toro (*The Shape of Water*)
 - Cate Blanchett as Katherine Hepburn, the star who stole his heart. Kate Beckinsale as Ava Gardner, the passion he couldn’t resist. Leonardo DiCaprio as Howard Hughes, the man who became a legend. (*The Aviator*)
- 4) Reference to the time or circumstances of the film’s release and its success
- The Journey Continues December 18th (*The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*)
 - America’s #1 Movie Four Weeks in a Row! (*The Sixth Sense*)
 - The most celebrated film of the year⁵ (*Lost in Translation*)
- 5) Reference to the film’s intended effect on the audience
- It’s a crime saga that will shock you. It’s a mystery that will keep you guessing. It’s a thriller that will keep you riveted. (*L.A. Confidential*)
 - You Feel You’ve Witnessed Nothing Less Than the Birth of a Soul. (*Precious*)
 - Gripping, scary, witty and timely! (*Get Out*)
 - Extremely Sweet & Incredibly Heartwarming (*Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*)
 - The funny, touching and totally irresistible story of a working relationship that became a 25-year friendship. (*Driving Miss Daisy*)

⁵ Nowadays, as mentioned in Section 1.1. overt self-praise in taglines is an outdated approach – a fact which is supported by Mahlkecht’s (2011) sharp observation that “if every second film claims to be ‘The greatest film in the history of cinema’, the statement will quickly lose its credibility” (2011: 185). Some films producers have even taken the radical step of, seemingly oddly, spoofing or downgrading the value of their film, with the aim of achieving an original and/or humorous effect. Mahlkecht (2011: 187) gives the example of David Lynch’s *Lost Highway* marketed by “the damning verdict of film critics” that says “Two Thumbs Down”, which is described by Mahlkecht as “something that nobody in their right mind would boast of – but then we *are* talking about a David Lynch film” (2011: 187).

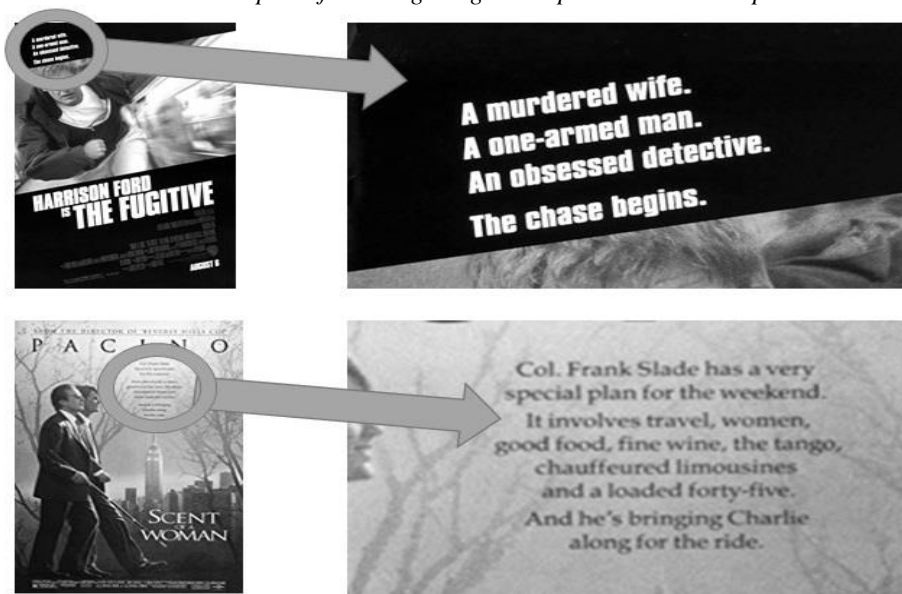
6) Directly addressing or influencing the audience – directives at or questions to the film’s the audience, based on the plot

- ...look closer (*American Beauty*)
- Imagine a life without limits. (*The Aviator*)
- Meet the women you don’t know, behind the mission you do. (*Hidden Figures*)
- Be the First to Meet Fourteen New Characters. (*Toy Story 3*)
- Where will your imagination take you? (*Finding Neverland*)
- How far would you go to protect a secret? (*The Reader*)
- Do you believe now? (*The Sixth Sense*)
- Are you not entertained? (*Gladiator*)

3.2. Textual factors

1) Retelling the general plot, its key parts and/or describing the characters

Picture 3: Examples of retelling the general plot with relevant posters



2) The central idea or theme of the film

- A true story of the mystery of music and the miracle of love (*Shine*) – A BRILLIANT BUT TROUBLED PIANIST’S LIFE
- Fifty million people watched, but no one saw a thing. (*Quiz Show*) – THE BIGGEST TV QUIZ SHOW FRAUD IN US HISTORY

- When 400,000 men couldn't get home, home came for them. (*Dunkirk*) – THE BEST KNOWN EVACUATION OF ALLIED SOLDIERS IN WWII
 - They weren't making a movie, they were making history. (*Argo*) – AN UNDERCOVER RESCUE OPERATION UNDER THE PRETENCE OF SHOOTING A FILM
 - The battle for Middle-Earth begins! (*The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*) – THE ONSET OF TOLKIEN'S EPIC BATTLE BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL
 - Survive is only the beginning (*Room*) – TROUBLED TIMES FACED BY TORTURED MOTHER AND CHILD BOTH DURING AND AFTER THEIR CAPTIVITY
- 3) Generic phrases about the motion picture's main idea: general truths, not necessarily applicable only to that particular film
- In love, there are no boundaries. (*The English Patient*)
 - Blood always follows money (*Hell or High Water*)
 - Everyone's got a secret. (*Winter's Bone*)
 - Miracles do happen. (*The Green Mile*)
 - It takes the power of leadership to unite a nation. (*Darkest Hour*)
 - The road to greatness can take you to the edge. (*Whiplash*)
- 4) Sayings, proverbs and quotes by famous people
- Whoever saves one life, saves the world entire. (*Schindler's List*) – FROM MISHNAH SANHEDRIN 4:5; YERUSHALMI TALMUD 4:9, BABYLONIAN TALMUD SANHEDRIN 37A
 - Houston, we have a problem. (*Apollo 13*) – SOMEWHAT MODIFIED WORDS OF THE CREW OF APOLLO 13
- 5) The film's (imaginary) character's own words, thoughts or guiding principles
- Zed's dead, baby. Zed's dead. (*Pulp Fiction*)
 - Show me the money! (*Jerry Maguire*)
 - "I was born under unusual circumstances". (*The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*)
 - "I love my unofficial title, precisely because I have earned it." (*Inglourious Basterds*⁶)

⁶ The title was purposefully misspelt by director Quentin Tarantino for reasons that have never been revealed, but have been the subject of numerous speculations.

6) Intratextuality – internal relations within the “text”, i.e. the film itself: the tagline contains direct self-reference to the title or its part, with the link-word(s) changed to bold type by the authors for the sake of emphasis

- One **Ring** to Rule Them All. (The Lord of the **Rings**: Fellowship of the **Ring**)
- You’ve never been anywhere like **No Country**. (*No Country for Old Men*)
- Lose your heart and come to your **senses**. (*Sense and Sensibility*)
- Fly **Up** to Venezuela (*Up*)
- The **List** is Life. (*Schindler’s List*)
- Extremely Sweet & Incredibly Heartwarming (*Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*)
- Mélanie Laurent Is a **Basterd**. Brad Pitt Is a **Basterd**. Diane Kruger Is a **Basterd**. Til Schweiger Is a **Basterd**. Eli Roth Is a **Basterd**. (*Inglourious Basterds*)
- 1...Sight 2...Sound 3...Smell 4...Taste 5...Touch 6...**The Sixth Sense** (*The Sixth Sense*)

3.3. Linguistic creativity

Factors of linguistic creativity which contribute to the formation of appealing and memorable taglines, as mentioned in Section 1.2., include various language mechanisms at the phonological, graphemic-orthographic, lexico-semantic and syntactic levels, whose ordering is not random, but is based on the presumed speed and degree of perceptibility and memorability by the target audience. All examples in this section will be given in their original form, with the exception of emphasizing (in boldface) the manifestation of the very mechanism involved in creating a particular tagline. Additional explanations will be provided where necessary, especially at the lexico-semantic level.

3.3.1. Phonological level

The creative usage of language at the phonological level, as stated by Panić Kavgić (2016a: 397), includes the employment of means for achieving audibly or audio-visually appealing taglines. This type of linguistic creativity is most frequently and obviously manifested through:



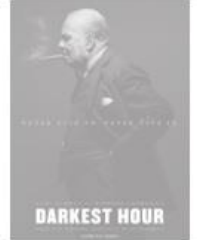




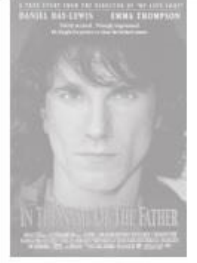




1) **Alliteration**: repetition of the first consonant in several elements of a tagline, used to make the tagline catchier and more pleasant-sounding

- The **List** is **Life**. (*Schindler’s List*)

- He who fought, fought for freedom. (*Braveheart*)
- An irresistible treat about love, letters, and laughter! (*Il Postino*)
- 1...Sight 2...Sound 3...Smell 4...Taste 5...Touch 6...The Sixth Sense (*The Sixth Sense*)

2) **Rhythmic repetition** of part of a word, whole word or phrase, resulting in the so-called “list” (Mahlknecht, 2011: 189), the most frequent kind of tagline characterized by parallelisms, with or without accompanying alliterative effects (Picture 4)

Picture 4: *Examples of rhythmic repetition with relevant posters*

| | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| <p>Undercover. Underhanded. Unrestrained (<i>The Departed</i>)</p> | <p>Our Leaders. Ourselves. (<i>The Queen</i>) Queen of a Nation. Queen of Hearts. (<i>The Queen</i>)</p> | <p>Never give up. Never give in. (<i>Darkest Hour</i>)</p> | <p>Break the story. Break the silence. (<i>Spotlight</i>)</p> |
|  |  |  |  |
| <p>Tea at four. Dinner at eight. Murder at Midnight. (<i>Gosford Park</i>)</p> | <p>His life changed history. His courage changed lives. (<i>Milk</i>)</p> | <p>In search of wine. In search of women. In search of themselves. (<i>Sideways</i>)</p> | <p>In the name of truth... In the name of justice... In the name of love. (<i>In the Name of the Father</i>)</p> |
|  |  |  |  |
| <p>The general who became a slave. The slave who became a gladiator. The gladiator who became a HERO. (<i>Gladiator</i>)</p> | <p>This Story Is About Truth. This Story Is About Beauty. This Story Is About Freedom. (<i>Moulin Rouge</i>)</p> | <p>Beyond his silence, there is a past. Beyond her dreams, there is a feeling. Beyond hope, there is a memory. Beyond their journey, there is a love. (<i>Million Dollar Baby</i>)</p> | |
|  |  |  |  |

3) **Rhyming**: repetition of similar sounds or the same sound in two or more elements of a tagline, most often in the final syllables

- The greatest thing you'll ever **learn** is just to love, and be loved in **return**. (*Moulin Rouge*)
- One ring to rule them all, One ring to **find** them, One ring to bring them all and in the darkness **bind** them (*The Lord of the Rings: Fellowship of the Ring*)
- It's Just a Noisy **Hall** Where There's a Nightly **Brawl**... and All That Jazz (*Chicago*)

3.3.2. Graphemic-orthographic level

As pointed out in Panić Kavgić (2016a), creativity in this domain implies that the visual image itself – the written form of the tagline – “becomes interesting, out-of-the-ordinary and intriguing, owing to the unconventional but contextually appropriate, symbolic and iconic use of digits, capital or small letters” (2016a: 398) and here also punctuation marks. Examples of the kind found in the wordlist represent successful outcomes of playing with letters, digits and punctuation marks. Being visually effective and eye-catching, taglines making use of the following symbols and conventions are easily remembered and frequently exploited:

1) **Numerical symbols**, which look intriguing, reflect an impressive quantity or important point in time

- **1 + 2 = 3** (*Jerry Maguire*)
- America's **#1** Movie Four Weeks in a Row! (*The Sixth Sense*)
- Summer **2000 A. D.** (*Gladiator*)
- When **400,000** men couldn't get home, home came for them. (*Dunkirk*)

2) **Punctuation marks**: quotation marks, dashes, ellipsis, question and exclamation marks:

- “I see dead people” (*The Sixth Sense*) – WORDS OF THE PROTAGONIST
- Truth–Beauty–Freedom–Love (*Moulin Rouge*) – INTERRELATEDNESS OF KEY CONCEPTS
- The most important movie of all time... was never made. (*Argo*) – CREATING SUSPENSE
- Where's Olive? (*Little Miss Sunshine*) – AROUSING INTEREST AND CURIOSITY

- The Battle for Middle-earth Begins! (*The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*) – CAUSING EXCITEMENT AND HIGH EXPECTATIONS⁷

3) **Capitalization**: emphasizing key words or ideas

- Discover the most **MAGICAL** film of the year! (*Beasts of the Southern Wild*)
- This is a story about **LOVE**, Music is the food of **LOVE**, Nothing matters but **LOVE**. (*Moulin Rouge*)
- The general who became a slave. The slave who became a gladiator. The gladiator who became a **HERO**. (*Gladiator*)

3.3.3. Lexico-semantic level

From the lexico-semantic viewpoint, the best creative effects in taglines are achieved through wordplay and/or employing one or more figures of speech.

1) **Wordplay** – following the definition of this concept by Panić Kavgić (2014: 401), the term ‘wordplay’, in its narrowest sense, refers to, first and foremost, playing with meaning (‘puns’), which includes exploiting the semantic effects of confronting homonymous, polysemous or phonologically similar lexemes within one tagline, often with reference to the plot, title, or an analogous saying or cliché.⁸

2) **Figures of speech** (metaphors and similes, antithesis, personification and hyperbole) are realized through words or phrases used for a rhetorical or vivid effect and mostly echo the selected taglines’ poetic function in their communication with the audience.

a) **Metaphor** and **simile** (A is B, A is like B, or hidden similarities between concepts):

- The List is Life. (*Schindler’s List*)
- War is a drug. (*The Hurt Locker*)
- The mission is a man. (*Saving Private Ryan*)
- Hope is a weapon. Survival is victory. (*Dunkirk*)

⁷ As pointed out by Mahlkecht (2011), taglines of the past “definitely shouted louder than those produced in later years”, adding that “no matter which aspect of the film they referred to, they almost invariably ended with an exclamation mark” (2011: 177).

⁸ In the examples in Picture 5, elements which are relevant in terms of wordplay will be given in boldface, whereas they will be underlined in the corresponding title and italicized in additional explanations in small capitals (where the wordplay is not clear enough in the tagline itself).

- Your mind is the scene of the crime. (*Inception*)
- Inside everyone is a frontier waiting to be discovered. (*Dances with Wolves*)
- Every man fights his own war. (*The Thin Red Line*)
- Because there is light at the end of the tunnel. (*Shine*)
- Life is like a box of chocolates... you never know what you're gonna get. (*Forrest Gump*)

b) **Antithesis** – an obvious contrast between elements of a tagline (Picture 6), most often within parallel grammatical structures containing instances of diametrical, complementary, converse, reversive or scalar antonymy (Prčić, 2008: 130–137), affirmative and negated verb-phrase pairs, or an oxymoron:

c) **Personification** – ascribing concrete human characteristics to abstract concepts:

- The Story That Won't Go Away (*JFK*)
- **America Was Born** in the Streets. (*Gangs of New York*)
- When **Ambition Meets** Faith (*There Will be Blood*)
- The **hopes** of a nation **rode** on a long shot. (*Seabiscuit*)
- One **bullet** can **tell** the story. (*American Sniper*)
- **Love knows** no boundaries (*Room*)









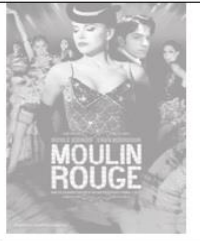





d) **Hyperbole** – exaggeration of the main idea:

- **The most beautiful** love story **ever** told. (*Beauty and the Beast*)
- **The greatest** manhunt in history. (*Zero Dark Thirty*)
- The one movie that has it **all**. (*Chicago*)
- **Everyone** Hustles to Survive (*American Hustle*)

3.3.4. Syntactic level

The **syntactic structure** of film taglines, their **forms**, as well as the **thematization strategies** employed to make them more effective, are represented in Picture 7, Picture 8 and Picture 9, respectively, to provide a visually clearer representation of the many possibilities of their syntactic realization.

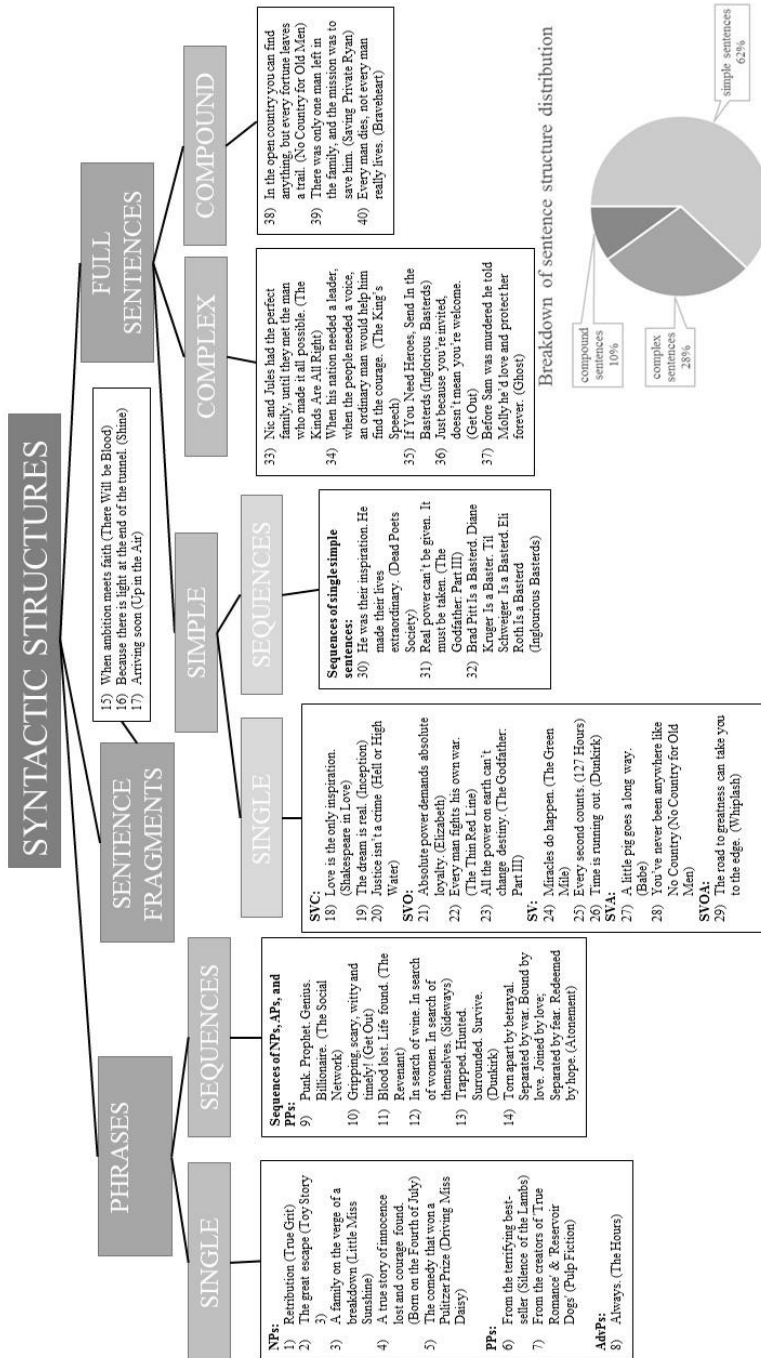
Picture 5: Examples of wordplay with relevant posters

| | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| <p>Just because you are a character doesn't mean you have character. (<i>Pulp Fiction</i>) You won't know the facts until you've seen the fiction. (<i>Pulp Fiction</i>)</p> | <p>Fear can hold you prisoner. Hope can set you free. (<i>The Shawshank Redemption</i>) – LITERALLY, A STORY OF PRISONERS WHO ESCAPE</p> | <p>It's not like things are black and white. (<i>Crash</i>) – RACIAL PROBLEMS IN LA. Moving at the speed of life, we are bound to collide with each other. (<i>Crash</i>) – INSTEAD OF LIGHT</p> | <p>When God couldn't save the King, the Queen turned to someone who could. (<i>The King's Speech</i>) – instead of God save the King</p> |
|  |  |  |  |
| <p>No toy gets left behind. (<i>Toy Story 3</i>) – INSTEAD OF MAN</p> | <p>Nothing on Earth Could Come Between Them. (<i>Titanic</i>) – THE SEA COULD</p> | <p>Fly away home. (<i>Ladybird</i>)</p> | <p>He's quite engaging. She's otherwise engaged. (<i>Four Weddings and a Funeral</i>)</p> |
|  |  |  |  |
| <p>The year's most revealing comedy. (<i>The Full Monty</i>) – CHARACTERS END UP STRIPPING OFF</p> | <p>...A Comedy About the Greatest Love Story Almost Never Told... (<i>Shakespeare in Love</i>) – INSTEAD OF EVER</p> | <p>The show must go on. (<i>Moulin Rouge</i>) – LITERALLY, A STORY ABOUT CABARET SHOWS</p> | <p>Every dream deserves a fighting chance. (<i>The Fighter</i>)</p> |
|  |  |  |  |
| <p>A comedy about growing up... and the bumps along the way. (<i>Juno</i>) – TEENAGE PREGNANCY</p> | <p>Lose your heart and come to your senses. (<i>Sense and Sensibility</i>)</p> | <p>Once upon a time in Nazi occupied France... (<i>Inglourious Basterds</i>) – UNEXPECTED CONTINUATION OF A CLICHÉ FAIRY-TALE INTRODUCTION</p> | <p>If You Can't Be Famous, Be Infamous. (<i>Chicago</i>) – INFAMOUS IS NOT THE OPPOSITE OF FAMOUS</p> |
|  |  |  |  |
| <p>Life, liberty and the pursuit of vengeance. (<i>Django Unchained</i>) – INSTEAD OF HAPPINESS</p> | | | |

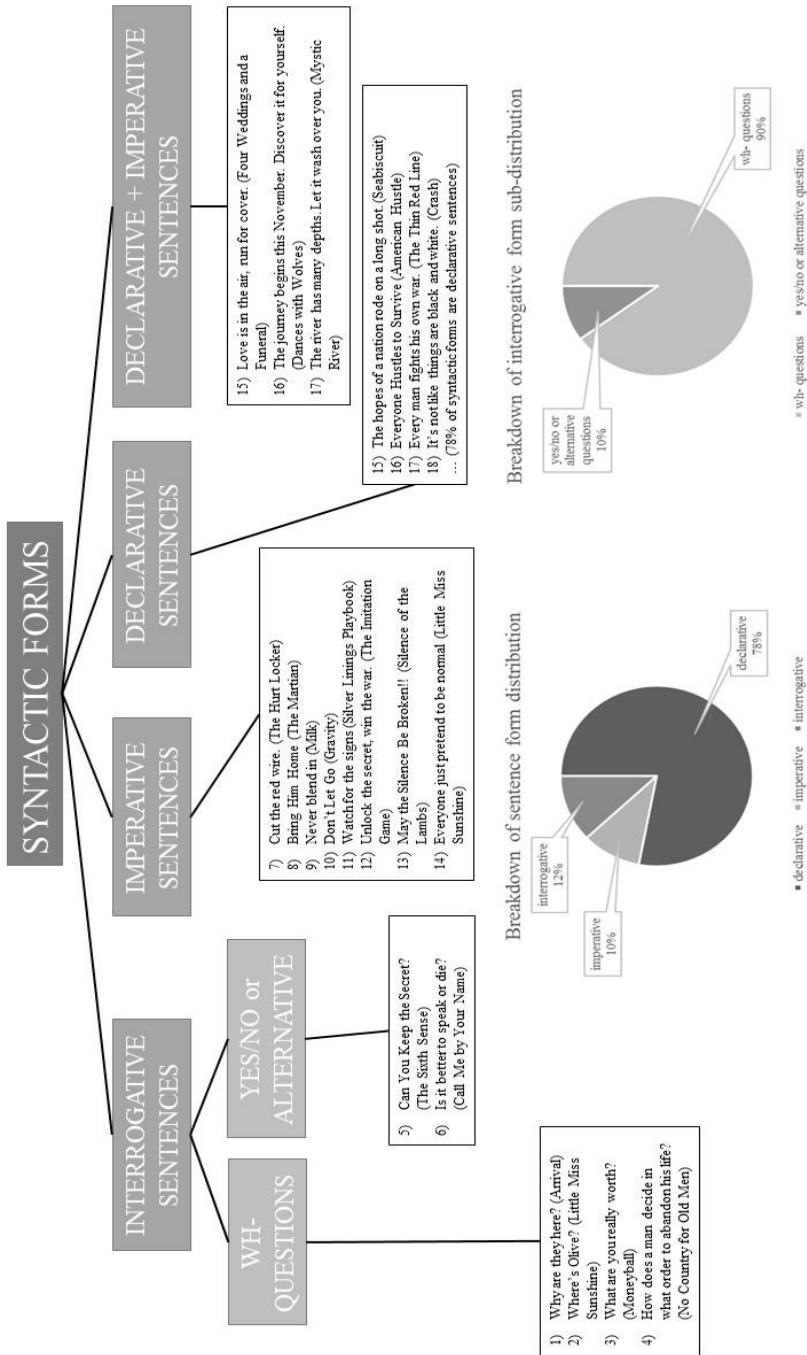
Picture 6: Examples of antithesis with relevant posters

| | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| <p>Small town. Big crime. Dead cold. (<i>Fargo</i>) An ordinary place, an extraordinary thriller (<i>Fargo</i>)</p> | <p>Blood lost. Life found. (<i>The Revenant</i>)</p> | <p>A true story of innocence lost and courage found. (<i>Born on the Fourth of July</i>)</p> | <p>If you believe the impossible, the incredible can come true. (<i>Field of Dreams</i>)</p> |
|  |  |  |  |
| <p>She brought a small town to its feet and a huge corporation to its knees. (<i>Erin Brockovich</i>)</p> | <p>The movie was fake. The mission was real. (<i>Argo</i>) They weren't making a movie, they were making history. (<i>Argo</i>)</p> | <p>Fly away home. (<i>Lady Bird</i>)</p> | <p>One shot, many kills. (<i>Babel</i>)</p> |
|  |  |  |  |
| <p>The dream is real. (<i>Inception</i>)</p> | <p>A little pig goes a long way. (<i>Babe</i>)</p> | <p>When God couldn't save the King, the Queen turned to someone who could. (<i>The King's Speech</i>)</p> | <p>Help is only 140 million miles away. (<i>The Martian</i>)</p> |
|  |  |  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two countries, two loves, one heart. (<i>Brooklyn</i>) • Every man wanted her. But one man dared to love her. (<i>Moulin Rouge</i>) • Everything is suspect... everyone is for sale... and nothing is what it seems. (<i>L.A. Confidential</i>) • Meet the women you don't know, behind the mission you do. (<i>Hidden Figures</i>) • The Longest Journey Begins with a Single Step. (<i>Precious</i>) | | | |

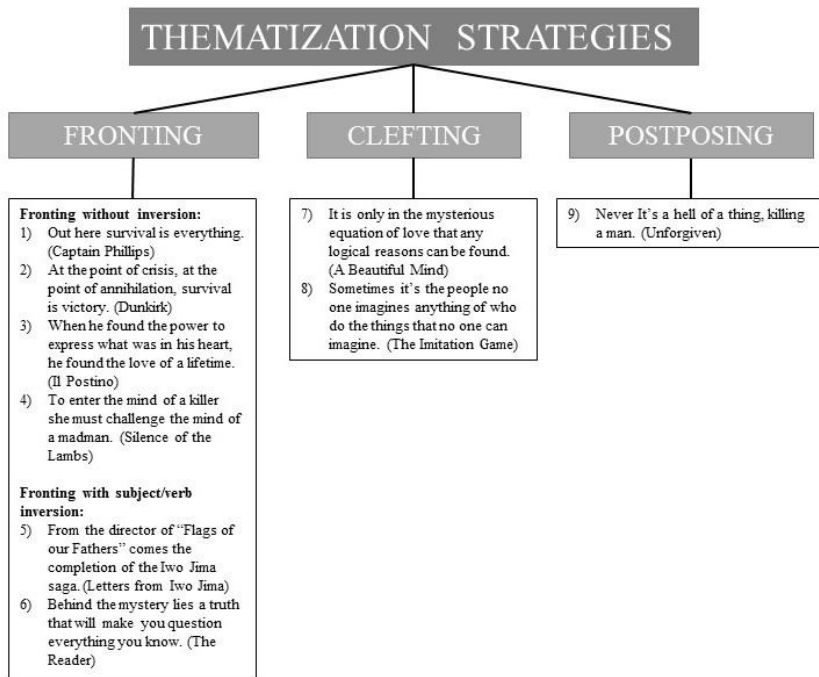
Picture 7: Syntactic structures of film taglines with a descriptive statistical breakdown of sentence structure distribution



Picture 8: Syntactic forms of film taglines with a descriptive statistical breakdown of sentence-form distribution and interrogative-form sub-distribution



Picture 9: *Thematization strategies*



What is most noteworthy in this part of the discussion, as shown in example 9 in Picture 7 (**Punk. Prophet. Genius. Billionaire.**), is the phenomenon that the same structural pattern is often used more times (here as many as four) to achieve parallelism at both syntactic and semantic levels. This fits in the so-called “list” framework – one of the most frequent types of syntactic organization of taglines, also labelled “tagline-as-list”, seen as a “minimalist concentration of utterances with textual homogeneity and coherence” (Mahlknecht, 2011: 189).

In contrast, example 13 (**Trapped. Hunted. Surrounded. Survive.**) demonstrates the application of the “list and twist” or “list with a twist” strategy (Mahlknecht, 2011: 192–193), when the parallelism, either only semantic or both semantic and syntactic, is broken at the very end of the tagline, by introducing an antithetic ending that fails the audience’s “expectations”, either in order to arouse their curiosity or cause a humorous effect.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, prototypical taglines of Oscar-winning and nominated films in the period between 1990 and 2018 combine elements of extralinguistic and textual influence and linguistic creativity, and are characterized by at least three of the following properties. Representative examples of taglines:

- bear reference to a film, actor, director or producer and/or
- aim at directly addressing or influencing the audience and/or
- express the central idea or theme of the film and/or
- contain general or generic phrases and sentences about the main idea, general truths
- phonologically, are characterized by rhythmic repetition and/or alliteration
- orthographically, are rich in punctuation marks and numeric symbols
- semantically and syntactically, fit in the 'list' or 'list-and-twist' framework
- semantically, contain puns, metaphors, antitheses and/or hyperboles
- syntactically, are realized as one or more noun phrases or simple sentences of the SVC or SVO structure, are of a declarative form and, possibly, employ fronting as the preferable thematization strategy

To end the discussion with the prototypical tagline **For some men, the sky was the limit. For him, it was just the beginning.** (*The Aviator*) – seems only appropriate for the closing statement, as the authors hope this paper represents *just the beginning* of their (and other authors') research in this intriguing and ever-expanding linguistic, cinematic and cultural field of study in which *the sky is the limit*.

Olga Panić Kavgić, Aleksandar Kavgić

KREATIVNOST U FILMSKIM SLOGANIMA:
VANJEZIČKA, TEKSTUALNA I JEZIČKA ANALIZA

Rezime

Rad se bavi različitim aspektima kreativnosti u filmskim sloganima (eng. *film taglines*), kao jezičkim i marketinškim sredstvima za promovisanje filmova, i to sa stanovišta kako vanjezičkih i tekstualnih uticaja na njihovo formiranje, tako i elemenata jezičke kreativnosti kojima se odlikuju. Korpus za istraživanje čini 570 filmskih slogana koji su pratili prikazivanje i distribuciju 181 filma, među kojima je 29 dobitnika Nagrade američke filmske akademije (Oskara) za najbolji film na engleskom govornom području u prethodnoj godini, i 152 dela nominovana u istoj kategoriji, tokom perioda od 1990. do 2018. godine.

U uvodnom odeljku iznesene su glavne teorijske postavke koje se tiču definisanja, klasifikacije i funkcija filmskih slogana, koji su, pre svega, sagledani kao vrsta parateksta – kraćeg uvodnog teksta koji služi kao najava glavnog „teksta”, odnosno, umetničkog dela kao celine. Zatim je pažnja posvećena fenomenu kreativnosti – vanjezički i tekstualno uslovljene, te, kao ovde najvažnije, jezičke kreativnosti, i to na sledećim nivoima analize: fonološkom, grafičko-pravopisnom, leksičko-semantičkom i sintaksičkom, prema radosledu upadljivosti i lakoći prepoznavanja uticaja određenog jezičkog mehanizma od strane potencijalne publike. Iznesene su pretpostavke o prototipskim aspektima kreativnosti koji odlikuju slogane najuspešnijih filmova sa engleskog govornog područja u poslednjih 29 godina, kao i glavni cilj rada – da se uočeni vanjezički i tekstualni faktori, kao i oni koji se tiču različitih nivoa jezičke kreativnosti, sistematizuju, klasifikuju i predstave reprezentativnim primerima iz odabranog korpusa.

U centralnom delu rada na najavljeni način predstavljeno je preko stotinu odabranih filmskih slogana, grupisanih u tri velike kategorije – one kod kojih je kreativnost postignuta bilo vanjezičkim, tekstualnim, ili pak nekim od mnogobrojnih faktora jezičke originalnosti. Takav je, recimo, u prvoj grupi, slogan „America Was Born in the Streets” (iz filma *Gangs of New York*), u drugoj „A murdered wife. A one-armed man. An obsessed detective. The chase begins.” (*The Fugitive*), a u trećoj, najraznovrsnijoj i najslojevitijoj, „A comedy about growing up... and the bumps along the way.” (*Juno*). Svaki nivo vanjezičke, tekstualne i jezičke analize podeljen je u odgovarajuće podnivoje na osnovu primenjenog mehanizma, te potkrepljen odgovarajućim primerima.

U zaključnim napomenama potvrđene su pretpostavke iz uvodnog poglavlja koje se tiču prototipskog delovanja određenih vanjezičkih i tekstualnih faktora, kao i primene mehanizama jezičke kreativnosti u stvaranju filmskih slogana. Potvrđeno je i da je ispunjen cilj istraživanja time što su slogani u ovom radu prvi put na najavljeni način klasifikovani, objašnjeni i predstavljeni reprezentativnim primerima iz analiziranog korpusa.

Ključne reči: film, filmski slogan, paratekst, jezička kreativnost, igra rečima, vanjezički faktori, tekstualni faktori

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