
Reading Films for Establishing Intertextual Links: The Students' Solution for Unacknowledged Remakes and Premakes

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Michał Post¹

Abstract:

Purpose: The paper presents a fragment of the author and his seminar students' recent research on multimodal film texts called film remakes, regularly defined as new versions of the existing films and on their multimodal filmic source texts called premakes. In this article, the reading in the sense explained below concerns these two multimodal film texts, with a view to establishing the intertextual relationship between them.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The research reported in the present paper is part of the large-scale, on-going inquiry into the intra- and intermedial adaptation and translation. As such, this research belongs to the broader fields of media linguistics and multimodal translation. To read a film means to understand the story progressing on the screen. The spectators acquire this competence by recognizing the combined semantic entities consisting of both the filmic devices and non-filmic, cognitive means of storytelling. The idea that the reading of films amounts to the understanding of films' stories is also consistent with the firmly-established conceptual metaphors of 'understanding is seeing' and 'to see is to know'.

Findings: Usually the remake status of the film remains acknowledged. The required degree of similarity and a tolerated degree of difference, revealed through comparing two multimodal film texts, provide the basis for such objectives. The reported research has offered a framework for the intermedial comparison and examination of the similarities and differences, and – on this basis – it has prompted a solution to the problem of identification and justification of premakes of unacknowledged remakes.

Practical implications: The outlined framework proved useful and effective in the author's and the students' numerous analyses of multimodal film texts. The author's current research on intermediality shows that the same framework can also be used for the evaluation of the quality of film adaptations and film novelizations.

Originality value: The participants of the author's film project aimed to work out their own student-friendly explications of the concepts of 'film text' and 'multimodal film text analysis'. From their attempt the original concept of narrative-compositional structure and several other related concept emerged.

Keywords: Multimodal text, media linguistics, contrastive analysis, scene, image, conceptualization, image schema, translation equivalence.

JEL classification: L82, K3, K4.

Paper type: Research article.

¹Professor ordinarius, WSB University in Wrocław, Poland, michal.post@wsb.wroclaw.pl;

1. Introduction

The author's film projects 2013- 2019: The reported students' solution to the problem of identification and justification of prefaces of *unacknowledged* remakes has been prompted by the first two film projects that the author has conducted in collaboration with his seminar students. The table below shows the number of participants in the author's film projects.

Table 1. *The number of participants in the author's first two film projects.*

Year	BA level Participants	MA level Participants	
2013	12		Project 1
2014	15	5	
2015	3	5	
2016	7		
2017	5		Project 2
2018	7		
2019	14		
Total	63	10	

Source: *Own study.*

The participants of Projects 1 and 2 were 3rd year undergraduate students of English with very good command of English and adequate training in literary theory and linguistics, and 1st year postgraduate students of English, also very competent in literary theory and linguistics. Their all majored in linguistics and the topics of their diploma papers derived from Projects 1 and 2. As the table above shows, they were 63 BA students and 10 MA students. The total number of films analyzed by them under the two film projects amounts to over 80.

The proposals of the present paper derive from Project 1 and Project 2. The participants of Project 1 aimed to work out their own explication of the concepts of 'film text' and 'multimodal film text analysis'. The reason was that they found the available proposals (Bateman and Schmidt, 2012) too complex and thus relatively useless for their planned descriptive researches. As philology students, to achieve this goal they combined their knowledge of literary theory and linguistics. From this attempt the concept of narrative-compositional structure and related concept emerged.

The participants of both projects worked on the assumption that narrative verbal texts and narrative film texts share the general compositional structure. Thus the research problem of Project 2, "film in intertextual relationships with other source texts", logically and necessarily followed from this assumption. Remakes and remaking represent just one type of such relationships.

Generally speaking, the project participants achieved their goals in three steps. The first step consisted of a collective segmentation of the same film and its related text by the project participants, discussion of possible other segmentations and justification of the chosen segmentation. The second step included independent segmentations of the films of their own choice and of their related texts by individual participants, followed by subjecting the solutions to criticism from the other project participants. The third step involved the application of the Projects' interpretive framework to the chosen films and their related texts by individual students. The results of these analyses made the content of the submitted diploma papers.

In October 2020 the third film project, characterized in the Discussion section of this article, was launched. Project 3 has two groups of MA participants. The first group includes English philology postgraduate students, majors in linguistics, and the second group consists MA postgraduate business administration students. At this very moment my research team consist of 22 MA students of WSB -Wrocław, Poland.

Table 2. *The number of participants in the author's third film projects.*

Year	BA level	MA level
	Participants	Participants
2020		22
2021		22
2022		
2023		
Total		44

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Project 3

Source: Own study.

Remakes and their premakes: As a rule, the premake is not indicated in the title sequences of the remake. In this respect, *film remakes* differ from *film adaptations*, which openly point to their source texts by means of formulaic expressions, such as *based on the novel/writings of [...]*. Film remakes do not include anything like this. Neither in the opening nor in the closing title sequences do the film remakes make use of any formulaic expressions of the *based on the movie by [...]* type. Obviously, the lack of this information in *unacknowledged* remakes can be explained in various ways. However, by remaining silent on the existence of their filmic source texts, film remakes may lead the viewership to wrongly conclude that their products are based on original scripts.

Unacknowledged remakes pose problems for attentive viewers, who notice the resemblance of the film they view to the earlier production within the same medium and who would appreciate a confirmation of their observation, which they are usually deprived of. For instance Clint Eastwood, the maker of the film „Pale Rider” (1985), and at the same time the main actor and the title character in it, has never

confirmed the remake status of the work he authored. Nonetheless, to the film buffs Clint Eastwood's film is a remake of the classical western "Shane" (1953). Many of them make it clear that they know "Pale Rider" is [...] *Clint Eastwood's unofficial remake of George Stevens' "Shane" (1953). I've never heard that he's acknowledged it as such* [...] (www.imdb.com/title/tt0089767/reviews). The viewers may also feel confused and misled for another reason, such as is exemplified by the reception of the Coen brothers film "True Grit" (2010). Both the viewers and the film critics assumed it to be a remake of Henry Hathaway's western "True Grit" (1969). But at the same time the film's closing credits included the information that it had been based on the novel – it turns out, then, that it is a film adaptation, not a film remake.

In her paper, Sabine N. Meyer (2015) argues that "Avatar" (2009) is a remake of „Dances with Wolves" (1990), which may prove a fairly shocking idea to many readers of her paper, and to cinema goers as well, including the author of the present paper himself. But Meyer's assertion is well-founded. She arrived at that conclusion after she had examined the similarities and differences between the two films with respect to plot, character constellations, cinematic styles, and the employment of stereotypes and myths. The "Avatar"/„Dances with Wolves" case shows that the reliable criteria for identification and comparison of premakes with *unacknowledged* remakes are very welcome, even if the compared films seem to make an odd pair at the first glance.

As part of their ongoing research, the author and his seminar students chose to investigate the westerns "Shane" (1953) and "Pale Rider" (1985). The justification for this particular selection is the recurring opinion of the film's buffs, critics and journalists – and a strong conviction of the present paper's author as well – that the former film is indeed a premake of the latter. The author and his project participants addressed the question of linking the two film texts by establishing a relationship of remaking from the perspective of intramedial translation.

Both movies are viewed as representing the case of translation within the same medium (film). As a corollary, the translation equivalence should hold between the premake and its unacknowledged remake. It is via the comparison of the two films that the degree of equivalence can be specified, thus providing the grounds for the assumed appropriateness of the "premake"–"remake" matching of "Shane" and "Pale Rider". The Method part of the article surveys the selected linguistic concepts and instruments applied by the author and his seminar students to perform the comparison of the selected films. All these instruments have been adopted and used with the meanings they had in their original relevant contexts.

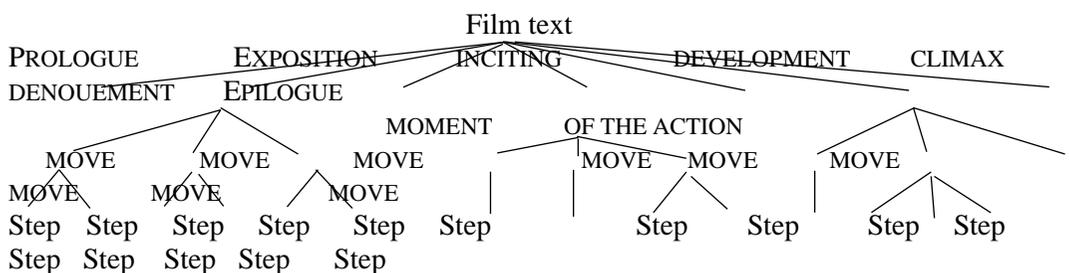
2. Materials and Methods

The comparative parts of the and the modes of presentation of the obtained results were contingent on the general procedure of classical contrastive analysis (Krzyszowski, 1990), which involves three consecutive steps: DESCRIPTION,

JUXTAPOSITION, and COMPARISON. At the first two steps, the structure and content of the source text transferred to the remake are revealed. They are preparatory for the third step, at which the differences and similarities between the compared film texts are shown.

The detailed comparison of the paired films was also based on the theoretical principles of analysis of multimodal film texts proposed by the author (Post, 2017). The central concept of the proposal is the narrative-compositional structure, which consists of seven linearly arranged main segments (Krajka and Zgorzelski, 1974; Gullino, 2004), each being a carrier of a fragment of the film's story. These are PROLOGUE, EXPOSITION, INCITING INCIDENT, DEVELOPMENT OF THE ACTION, CLIMAX, DENOUEMENT, and EPILOGUE. The author and his students assumed that each of the above elements consists of smaller compositional segments, that is of MOVES. Every MOVE, in turn, is composed of smaller segments called Steps (Swales, (1990) for the MOVE-Step dichotomy) (Post, 2017). From the assumptions presented above it follows that the narrative-compositional structure of the film texts is linear and hierarchical, which is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1. The narrative-compositional structure of the film texts.



Source: Own study.

Each narrative-compositional segment carries a fragment of the film's story. Accordingly, the content of the PROLOGUE introduces the characters, facts and events preceding the action proper. The content of MOVES and Steps equals various portions of the content of the main compositional segment, for example, of the PROLOGUE. Simple, declarative sentences and simple phrases constitute the adopted notation for the content of the compositional segments. The general concept of 'content' of narrative-compositional segments" calls for clarification.

For this purpose, the author makes use of the following instruments of cognitive linguistics (Lakoff, 1987; Langacker, 1987) and of cognitive translation (Tabakowska, 2001, 105-159): "scene", "image", "conceptualization", and "image schema". As regards the correlation between the compositional segments and

„scenes”/”images,” the latter are cognitive explications and counterparts of the content of the former.

Concerning, in turn, the relationship between „scene” and ”image,” it is similar to the one between a sketch and a photograph. That is, the „image” is neither a reproduction nor a repetition of the “scene”. Images” are best defined as „scenes” supplemented with details and as one of the possible construals of the “scene”. As for the relations between the elements of “scene”/”image”, they are characterized by image schemas or cognitive schemata. Accordingly, in a single “scene”/image” more than one image schema may mark the internal relationships. This means that in terms of image schemata it is possible to delimitate explicitly that which has been transferred from the source text to the target text (shared image schemas) and that which has been left out or added to the target text (unshared image schemas).

The assumptions concerning the narrative-compositional structure of films and the “scene/image” representation of their content stipulate that film texts are the sequences of „scenes”/”images” organized by the narrative-compositional structure. This means that the relations of equivalence between „scenes”/”images” of the compared texts do hold valid. The degrees of equivalence of texts are estimated on the bases of the shared and unshared image schemas within every compositional segment. Ultimately, the equivalences are the instruments of justification for premake–remake pairings, and of either accepting or rejecting the proposed premake-remake pairings.

The concepts of “scene/image,” of the conceptualization of “scenes” and texts as sequences of “scenes”/”images” made it possible to interpret the relation between the *unacknowledged* remake and its *supposed* premake on their own terms. Hence every film story is an “image” of a huge “scene”, as seen and profiled by a particular conceptualizer, that is the film maker. The same “scene” can also be profiled by a different conceptualizer, that is by another filmmaker who includes and highlights in his “image” different or additional aspects of the “scene.” In the author’s comparative analysis of “Shane” and “Pale Rider”, the overall content of the narrative-compositional arrangements of the *supposed* premake and of the *unacknowledged* remake was formed by the varying conceptualizations of the same “scene”.

3. Results

Description and Juxtaposition: To illustrate the use of the above instruments for the justification of the chosen film as premake, two compositional segments have been selected for the analysis. They are the prologues of the *supposed* premake „Shane” (1953) and of the *unacknowledged* remake „Pale Rider” (1985).

The prologues in both films are actualizations of the same „scene.” It is the “scene” of the Stranger who comes to a frontier family harassed by the land baron in “Shane”

and by the mining company magnate in "Pale Rider." Immediately, a thread of understanding is established between the young members of the family and the Stranger. The family becomes reserved towards the Stranger when he turns out to be a gunfighter. When the hired guns come to molest the family, the Stranger sides with them. In this way he becomes involved in the local conflict and gains the sympathy of the family. The grateful family invites the Stranger to a long dinner. To thank for their hospitality, the Stranger helps the host to remove a troublesome object: a trunk in "Shane" and a rock in "Pale Rider." The reading of the prologues of these two multimodal texts revealed the narrative-compositional structures shown below.

Table 3. "Shane." The narrative-compositional structure of its Prologue

- MOVE 1:** Shane arrives at the Starrets homestead.
 - Step 1. Shane meets the Starrets.
 - Step 2. The Starrets are disappointed to learn that Shane is a gunfighter.
 - Step 3. The Ryker's gang arrives at the Starrets homestead.
 - Step 4. Shane sides with the Starrets and the gang withdraw.
 - Step 5. The Starrets invite Shane for dinner.
- MOVE 2:** Shane has a long dinner with the Starrets.
 - Step 1. A conversation between the Starrets and Shane
- MOVE 3:** Shane helps Joe with his work.
 - Step 1. Shane and Joe cut out and remove a huge trunk.
 - Step 2. The Starrets invite Shane to stay and work for them

Source: Own study.

Table 4. "Pale Rider." The narrative-compositional structure of its Prologue

- MOVE 1:** Megan's prayer.
 - Step 1. Megan buries her dog.
 - Step 2. Megan prays to God.
 - Step 3. Preacher arrives in the valley.
- MOVE 2:** Hull visits the town.
 - Step 1. The storekeeper warns Hull about LaHood's goons.
 - Step 2. LaHood's goons start beating Hull.
- MOVE 3:** A sudden appearance of Preacher.
 - Step 1. Preacher rescues Hull from LaHood's goons.
 - Step 2. Preacher and Hull leave the town.
- MOVE 4:** Preacher and Hull come to the gold diggers' settlement.
 - Step 1. Preacher and Hull meet a man leaving the village.
 - Step 2. Megan reads out the Bible verses about the pale rider and
sees Preacher.
 - Step 3. Preacher is invited to stay in Hull's house.
- MOVE 5:** Preacher has dinner with Hull, Sarah and Megan.

- Step 1. Hull and Sarah quarrel about Preacher.
- Step 2. Conversation between Preacher and the household members.

MOVE 6: Preacher helps Hull with his work.

- Step 1. LaHood's goons, beaten, arrive at the settlement.
- Step 2. Preacher and Hull break the rock.
- Step 3. Club confronts Preacher.
- Step 4. The gold diggers join Hull and Preacher in their breaking of the rock

Source: Own study.

Comparison: The mere lengths of the narrative compositional structures of the prologues indicate that the two conceptualizations of the same "scene" differ in the number of details they include. More precisely, the tables demonstrate that *the prologues of the compared films* are made of different number of MOVES. In „Shane” the prologue consists of 3 MOVES, while in „Pale Rider” it is made of 6 MOVES. The first three MOVES of “Shane” are correlated with the last three MOVES of “Pale Rider”: MOVE 1 = MOVE 4; MOVE 2 = MOVE 5; MOVE 3 = MOVE 6.

The prologue of „Pale Rider” has three additional MOVES. At its beginning, MOVE 1 shows the young Megan, her prayer and Preacher's arrival in the valley in response to it. In MOVE 2, Hull, her stepfather, visits the town. MOVE 3 presents Preacher defeating the gunfighters who attacked Hull. It is MOVE 4 that is the counterpart of MOVE 1 in „Shane”. All in all, „Pale Rider” includes the equivalents of all three MOVES of the “Shane” prologue.

The similarity of the narrative-compositional structures of the prologues extends beyond the identity of MOVES and comprises, also, the identity of Steps which belong to the distinct MOVES. For example, Step 4 of MOVE 1 of „Shane” – *Shane sides with the Starrets and the gang withdraws* – has its counterpart in MOVE 3, Step 1 of „Pale Rider,” named as *Preacher saves Hull from LaHood's goons*. In the source text, at Step 4 Shane comes out from behind the cabin, leans against the wall and warns the aggressors with a brief remark: “I'm a friend of Starret's,” on hearing which they withdraw from taking aggressive measures towards the family. Step 1 of „Pale Rider” is a long violent scene of Preacher beating four aggressors with an ax handle. On leaving the beaten goons he remarks ironically: “There is nothing like a nice piece of hickory”.

The remaining correlations between the Steps of the prologues are the following: MOVE 1 Step 5 – *The Starrets invite Shane to a dinner* – and MOVE 4 STEP 3 – *Preacher is invited to stay in Hull's house*; MOVE 2 Step 1 – *Conversation between the Starret's and Shane* – and MOVE 5 Step 2 – *Conversation between Preacher and the household members*. The last correlation of Steps comprises MOVE 3 Step 1

– *Shane and Joe cut out and remove a huge trunk* – and MOVE 6 Step 2 – *Preacher and Hull break the rock.*

This comparison demonstrates that the prologues of „Pale Rider” and *Shane*” have three equivalent narrative-compositional segments which conceptualize the same scene in a very similar way. However, this quantitative comparative analysis has not revealed the image schemas which the corresponding narrative-compositional segments of both films are based on. Their content cannot be identical in details, but it should involve the same general image schemas. It is because of their presence that the relations of the translation equivalence can be said to exist between the compared segments (Tabakowska, 2001).

Image schemas play a crucial role because each individual conceptualization is unique owing to its individual configurations of schemas. Through the analysis of the translations of the matching narrative-compositional segments, it should be possible to identify the dominant image schemas, which guarantee the minimum of equivalence, and the additional non-shared image schemas as well. The option of the dominant image schemas evolves from the comparison of MOVE 2 and MOVE 3 of the prologue of „*Shane*” (1953) with MOVE 5 and MOVE 6 of the prologue of „*Pale Rider*” (1985).

The prologues of the compared films differ in the details of their conceptualizations of the same scene, which includes the arrival of the Strangers to the terrorized communities. The Strangers come for different reasons. *Shane* comes because he visits the places to where he has not been yet. *Preacher* comes because the young Megan asked for it in her prayer. In both movies, on their coming to the respective communities, both Strangers see terrorized and frightened people fleeing from their valley and their homesteads. The arrivals of the Strangers and the departures of the locals are adequately described by two image schemas. The first one is the CONTAINER schema – in this particular case it is the valley. The second one is the IN-OUT image schema. The Strangers come to the valley to solve the conflict whereas some settlers terrorized by the oppressors leave the valley.

In the analyzed prologues there are two other dominant image schemas which guarantee the equivalence of their MOVES and Steps. In “*Shane*” and “*Pale Rider*” these are the schemas of FORCE and LINK. The first schema is supplemented with the schemas of BLOCKAGE and RESTRAINT REMOVAL. The main obstacles and restraints to be removed are the local land baron, the mining magnate and their hired guns. The Strangers demonstrate their FORCE while arriving to the communities, before removing the main obstacles. In “*Shane*” and “*Pale Rider*” the Strangers side with the harassed families and frighten away the oppressors. *Shane*’s appearance with a big gun on his hip and a short reminder *I’m friend of Starrets* forces the hired guns to leave the place. In „*Pale Rider*,” *Preacher* defends *Hull*, giving the show of his physical force by beating the oppressors.

These demonstrations of FORCE establish the LINK between the Strangers and the other key characters of the community. In both films the established LINK is manifested by inviting the Strangers to dinner. The Strangers express their gratitude for having been invited, Shane saying charmingly *That was an elegant dinner, Mrs. Starret* and Preacher, no less charmingly, coming up with *There's nothing like a shot of whisky to whet a man's appetite... Fine looking fricassee there, mam'am*

It was suggested above that the comparative analysis of the equivalent narrative-compositional segments may involve additional image schemas, not shared by the two films. In the prologue to the western „Pale Rider” (1985), this possibility is illustrated by the image schema of ATTRACTION. For some time the gold diggers have been watching, from a distance, Preacher and Hull together breaking the rock. Then, encouraged by their success, they join them (ATTRACTION) in the breaking of the same rock.

The performed comparison proves that the matchings are based on the same image schemas; however, their conceptualizations are not identical, as the first part of comparison has demonstrated. Still, it is enough for the equivalent fragments to be based on the same dominant image schemas, to be considered, despite obvious differences in their conceptualizations, as linked by the relation of translation equivalence. It can be seen that the prologue of the film „Pale Rider,” despite its elaborate narrative-compositional structure, is very similar to its supposed premake „Shane.” Nonetheless, it is for the researcher to decide whether this degree of resemblance is sufficient to regard “Shane” as the premake of “Pale Rider”.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The author's seminar students' solution to the problem of identification and justification of premakes of *unacknowledged* remakes has been prompted by his ongoing research on intermedia relationships. For some time now it has concentrated on the conversions of the 'book-to-film' and 'film-to-book' types, that is on the traditional film adaptations and film novelizations.

This research has offered a framework for the comparison and examination of the similarities and differences, and – on this basis – for the evaluation of the quality of film adaptations and film novelizations. As said in the Introduction to this article, film adaptations and film novelizations openly acknowledge their source texts in the credits and front covers. On the one hand, in this article an attempt was made to apply the already tested interpretative framework to the *unacknowledged* remakes, that is to the conversions of the 'film-to-film' type.

On the other hand, however, the goal of the comparison here was different: it was to discover the similarities and differences and to decide whether their amount justifies an intertextual relationship of remaking between remakes and their *supposed* premakes. The sample of an application of the interpretive framework in the Result

part of the article is meant to illustrate and possibly support the author's solution to the *supposed* premake–*unacknowledged* remake identification and justification problems. This solution amounts to offering reliable criteria of identification and comparison of *supposed* premakes with *unacknowledged* remakes.

The author and his students were aware of the existence of numerous comparisons of “Shane” and “Pale Rider” on the internet websites. However, they differ from the Project's academic approach to this comparison in that they are non-academic, relatively short, individual pieces of writing produced by film goers, film critics and journalists. For example, one of them appeared in “The New York Times” in 1985. In a letter to the editor titled “Pale Remake?” – all in favour of “Shane” – the closing line read *Come back, Shane. Go away, Mr. Eastwood*. Characteristically, the author of the letter underlined the low quality of “Pale Rider,” rather than proved that “Shane” was the premake of Clint Eastwood's film.

As said above, in October 2020 the third film project was launched. Film Project 3 continues the research of the preceding Projects 1 and 2. The first Projects aimed to work out a student-friendly framework for multimodal film text analyses. The research problem of Project 2 was “film in intertextual relationships with other source texts”.

The present article has presented one of its aspects. Project 3 is a continuation of Projects 1 and 2 in that it aims to apply their interpretative framework to reveal the peculiarities of film-derived written texts. The Project's research topic, in a provisional formulation, is “written texts derived from film texts”. The planned research will cover texts written on the basis of films, i.e. texts ranging from film novelizations to variable piece of writing of the fanfiction type.

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