CONTEMPORARY MOVIE TAGLINE: THE SERVANT THAT RULES

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Abstract

In contrast to a great variety of studies discussing the rhetoric of the contemporary print advertising slogan, this article considers the major functions and historical outline of the movie slogan (tagline) and the discourse strategies it employs to achieve its intended effect – to catch the viewer's attention. More than 900 original movie taglines of 21st-century Eurasian films presented at the largest international festivals are studied. The classification of taglines (annotative – challenge) based on their dominant function and discourse is proposed. In addition to a comprehensive description, the paper dwells on the relationship between the tagline and the elements, framing the film, uncovers the preferences of cinemagoers, and shows what additional information about the film is contained in the tagline, and how the ideas and messages are conveyed.

Keywords: *tagline (movie slogan), film advertising, annotative and challenge taglines, discourse strategy, rhetorical device, wordplay*

1. INTRODUCTION

Cinema is not only a kind of art but also a kind of advertising. With the release of the first motion pictures, it became necessary to explain the plot, the features of the new art, and to excite the interest of potential filmgoers.

At the time of the earliest cinematographic experiments the motion pictures were fascinating and appealing by themselves. As a rule, their titles accurately reflected the events on the screen; take, for example, *The Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat Station*, *Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory*, *The Photographical Congress Arrives in Lyon*. Over time, the titles and the content became increasingly intriguing: *A Miracle Under the Inquisition* (1904), *Tunneling the English Channel* (1907), *The Cameraman's Revenge* (1912)[1]. That set the rhythm and imposed new requirements on directors and producers who attempted to impress different audiences. Films started to be accompanied by a tagline – a memorable phrase (*catchphrase*) expressing the essence of the advertising appeal. Taglines have become a fixed element of film promotion.

It is difficult to say who was the first to apply this advertising tool. In Russian silent cinema, taglines were used for describing the earliest films of the Russian Empire, as well as the first masterpieces of the Soviet Era: "Based on the novel of Pushkin. Ivan Mosjoukine starring" (*The Queen of the Spades*, 1916), "A medieval drama played-out by bugs", "News in the field of cinematography" (*The Beautiful Leukanida*, 1912), "A tragic short story about the silent dancer Giselle, who gains fame through dancing" (*The Dying Swan*, 1916), "Pride of the Soviet cinema" (*Battleship Potemkin*, 1925), "The first film-travelogue across the USSR" (*A Sixth Part of the World*, 1926). Considering the fact that cinema was "born in the "Age of the Poster" – music hall, theatre, carnivals, and the circus" (Edwards 1985: 12), in both, form and function, the movie tagline has long become similar to a print advertising slogan (see Fig. 1). It was later included in all the types and genres of creolized texts, and complemented the multiple image.

[1] In most cases, a worldwide (English) title and tagline are provided. The original spelling is given and analysed only if the semantic aspect is important for interpretation.



France, 1895 Russia, 1912 Russia, 1916 Sweden, 1918 Turkey, 1923

Figure 1. Silent film era advertising

Nowadays slogans (frequently called *taglines, tag-lines, tags, tagline slogans*, *straplines, copy lines,* or *lines*)[2] are used in film descriptions on the Internet, on posters and DVD covers, accompany presentations of cast and crew or are even included in the trailer. Taglines are marginalized elements of cinematic paratext and used to encircle and frame a film (Mahlknecht 2015: 414). Taglines for films have been hitherto largely neglected by scholars. However, one may find a large number of works on the promotional nature of slogans, links between movie copywriting and political sloganeering, practical guides on writing taglines and loglines (a type of slogans), personal blogs of scriptwriters, copywriters and producers[3].

But what exactly is a tagline? Cambridge Dictionary (CD) defines it as a recognizable, "short, easily remembered phrase that a company uses in its advertisements, especially on television or the internet", and refers to the term "slogan". Oxford Learner's Dictionaries Online (OLDO) define the slogan simply as a universal "word or phrase that is easy to remember" used to "attract people's attention or to suggest an idea quickly" along with a tagline – an easily remembered "phrase used in an advertisement". Webster's Dictionary (MWD) traces the slogan's etymology to the Scottish Gaelic word for war cry (*sluagh-ghairm),* gives synonyms and related words (motto, banner, catchphrase, catchword, cry, shibboleth, tagline, watchword) and two meanings, which match this study: "1. a word or phrase used to express a characteristic position or stand a goal to be achieved. 2. a brief attention-getting phrase used in advertising or promotion. According to these definitions, the tagline is part of all life phenomena related to communication and media.

Nevertheless, not all the modern films carry a tagline; not even every poster or trailer comes with a tagline (see Fig. 2). As a rule, lines gradually frame the film in the course of its worldwide release campaign. They may be listed as a short synopsis, look like a logline, and appear on or disappear from posters made up in different countries, which depends on marketing policies and activities. For example, *A Somewhat Gentle Man* (2010) [original: *En ganske snill mann*] has four lines in Norwegian and English on its national poster. In different countries, imagery, the number of lines included in posters and their content are shifting and changing with time:

[2] Wording depends on the country and the definition of the term. Gregory J. Edwards (1985) uses the term *slogan* in the book *The International Film Poster*. Taglines are American terms describing brief public communications to promote products and services. In the UK, taglines are called *end lines* or *straplines* (Wikipedia). In Japan, advertising slogans are called *catchcopy* (*kyatchi kopī*) or *catch phrase* (*kyatchi furēzu*). The American term *tagline* has become widespread in Russia (see Slobodyanyuk 2008: 39); in this paper, it is used as a synonym for the slogan and the line.

[3] See Kernan, L 2004, *Coming Attractions: Reading American Movie Trailers,* University of Texas Press, Austin; Kryukova, IV 2004, *Рекламное имя: от изобретения до прецедентности* [Advertising Name: from Invention to Precedent], Peremena, Volgograd; Slobodyanyuk, EP 2008, *Настольная книга копирайтера* [The Copywriter's Handbook], Vershina, Moscow; Walter, R 2010, *Essentials of Screenwriting: The Art, Craft, and Business of Film and Television Writing,* Revised edition, Plume, New York; Lockhart, Ch 2012, *I Wrote a 120 Page Script but Can't Write a Logline: the Construction of a Logline*, January 22, viewed 19 April 2021, <http://www.twoadverbs.com/logline.pdf>; Sjöblom, P 2016. 'Commercial names' in C Houth & D Izdebska (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Name and Naming,* Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 453-464, etc.

- "Hans Peter Molland and Stellan Skarsgård is a match made in cinema heaven"; "El ganske perfekt film" // Pretty perfect movie, "Tidenes beste norske komedie" // The best Norwegian comedy of all time, "De morsomste sexscene i norsk filmhistorie" // The funniest sex scenes in Norwegian film history (Norway, original poster);
- "A dark feel good comedy" (United States, poster);
- "Toujours prêt à rendre service!" // Always at your service! (France, poster);
- "Насколько добрым он может быть?" // How gentle might he be?, "Чёрная гангстерская комедия с человеческим лицом" // Black gangster comedy with a human face (Russia, poster);
- "Die Schwarze Komödie aus Norwegen. Bitterböse und hundsgemein" // Black comedy from Norway. Bitter and wicked (Germany, poster);
- "Die total skurrile Komödie aus Norwegen. Bitterböse und hundsgemein" // The totally bizarre comedy from Norway. Bitter and wicked (Switzerland, poster);
- "A v ramci moznosti slusny clovek // As far as possible a decent person (Czech Republic, poster);
- "Sometimes gangsters need hugs too" (official tagline on IMDb).

The synopsis and the logline reflect the main character, his/her goal, and the conflict (antagonist) . All of these elements are rarely used together in cinematographic sloganeering: "He is 19. Chances are against him. But Malik is ready to take over the world (*Prophet*, 2009); "Jafar Panahi is banned from making movies by the Iranian government, he poses as a taxi driver and makes a movie about social challenges in Iran" (*Taxi*, 2015).



Mughamarat Antar wa Abla, 1948 (Egypt) | *The Salesman*, 2017 (Iran) | *Battle Royale*, 2000 (Japan) | *Creepy*, 2016 (Japan)

Figure 2. Asian cinema posters with and without taglines

Being associated with an individual, a social group, or a product quality, many taglines are reiterated and reused (so-called "cannibalistic effect"). They have been deliberately taken from one specific context to be put into another. Who remembers that the catchy promoted lines, *i.e.* "The birth of a legend", "Face your demons", "Retribution is coming", "His whole life was …" or "To break the story, he must become the story", are not the original ones and might be applied to most of great cinema works to "reinforce that one iconic image" (Mooallem 2004)?

There are movie titles that require and imply taglines – these names need to be deciphered for the viewer, e.g. *Lantouri*, 2016 – "A Girl is attacked by her lover with Acids" (2016). However, there are some titles that can do without "minor texts" and rely on associations with proper names, framing a film (director,

place names, heortonyms): *Border* (Sahman, 2009) – Armenian documentary, *If I had it my way I would never leave* (2015) – Serbian short about immigrants, *Yalda, a Night for Forgiveness* (2019) – Iranian drama taking place on Yalda, etc.

In addition to the official tagline, the script and teaser may also carry commercial (selling) taglines, not used in the future. Fifty ideas are submitted for each project on average – and cinemagoers "see only the winners". Jon Mooallem (2004) mentions churning out as many as 1 000 tagline ideas for a film setting a strategic direction for marketing campaigns.

Moreover, the translation and "permutation" of a tagline depend on the national conceptual sphere – "spirit expressed in a familiar and favourite mode of thought" in "one particular place, where people talk, watch, and listen" (Stepanov 2007: 63, Gudeleva & Sudarkina 2017).

So, the French film of *Apres mai* (transl.: After May, world-wide: *Something in the Air*, 2012) does not have a tagline and does not need it, since in France May 1968 is associated with student protests, around which the plot of the film develops. However, in the Russian release, the film is accompanied by a line "Секс. Свобода. Рок-н-ролл" // Sex. Freedom. Rock and Roll. The tagline is a cultural linchpin and, despite the fact that it is associated with the 1970s, it characterizes more than one generation of young people from different countries and represents the calque of the phrase "wine, women, songs", which has numerous analogues.

The Czech audience saw the film with the tagline: "Poutavý a výstizný portrét francouzské mladé scény 70. Let, plné politiky, umeni a sexu" (A striking and evocative portrait of the French youth scene of the 70s. Flight, full of politics, art and sex). It is interesting that, in addition to the plot summary, the Czech version, carries a phrase consonant with the Russian version of the line. However, the replacement of words attracts attention.

Instead of the word "politics", the Russian tagline uses the lexeme "freedom". In Russian culture, the concept of freedom is associated with the highest value of human being and is one of the key concepts. "Freedom" is the word that sounds more attractive to the Russian audience, while the concept of politics is associated with empty talk, deception, scandal, danger, that is, characterized by a negative connotation (Cherkasova & Ufimtseva 2014: 171).

The broader meaning of the Czech word "umeni" (art) in the Russian version sounds more specifically – "rock and roll", as this style of music is inextricably linked with rebellion, protest, youth and freedom.

In the German release, the tagline is more restrained: "Die zeit der parolen. Die zeit der trauma. Die zeit der utopian. Die zeit der rebellion" (Time of slogans. Time of dreams. Time of utopias. Time of rebellion). It lacks the slogan that formed the basis for the Russian line, because it would give rise to false associations. The fact is that the phrase is close in meaning to "Deutsche Frauen, deutsche Treue, deutscher Wein und deutscher Sang" (German women, German loyalty, German wine and German song) included in the second stanza of the *Deutschlandlied* (Hoffmann's lyrics). And it is not connected with the protest movement, but with inspiration to noble deeds and with the call to maintain a good reputation.

However, despite the difference in wording and national and cultural specifics, each of the three taglines is associated with youth and its rebellious spirit, which helps the viewer to decode the title of the film and get closer to understanding its message.

2. DATA, METHODS AND STATISTICS

The subject matter of this study is taglines of films from Asian and European countries presented over the past 20 years at the largest international festivals: Cannes, Berlinale, Venice, Sundance, Toronto, Karlovy Vary, Rotterdam, and some others. The material for analysis includes 925 slogans found on posters, in brochures, catalogues, program guides, and announced in trailers of Eurasian films of various genres and quality, screened in 2000–20 (a corpus of 1 780 films was studied).

The data are taken from the Internet Movie Database (IMDb.com), KinoPoisk (kinopoisk.ru), CineMaterial (cinematerial.com), official sites of international film festivals and online movie databases, which contain a vast collection of paratextual elements (taglines, posters, covers, teasers, trailers, reviews). Other taglines used are taken from Кино MailRu (afisha.mail.ru), Iranian Movies (www.iranianmovies. com), Hong Kong and Korean movie databases (hkmdb.com, www.kmdb.or.kr). The collection of data from such different sources has allowed gathering a corpus of contemporary taglines for significant and reliable statements on tagline conventions.

The research methods used are systematisation, classification, description, linguistic, statistical and comparative analyses.

Taglines are found in 925 (51%) out of the 1 780 analyzed films. One title can incorporate up to 12 different variants of tagline on posters from different countries (See Fig. 3). As a rule, newly released films are rarely encircled by lines.



My Journey Through French Cinema, 2016 (France)

The Drummer, 2007 (China)

Figure 3. Taglines on the poster of the French and the Chinese Film

In both European and Asian cinema, taglines are mostly typical of thrillers and dramas, either social or psychological, or films containing elements of crime and action movie.

The taglines of both European and Asian films are unified in structure, vocabulary, and stylistics. The most typical tagline consists of no more than 3-4 words or 2-4 sentence-patterns using rhetorical devices (figures, tropes) to increase attractiveness and give a condensed version of a plot: "Limpide, lumineux, drole" // Clear, bright, funny (*The Woman Who Ran*, 2020); "A Deft, Meticulous Moral Drama" (*The Unknown Drama*, 2016); "The most wtf, nsfw movie at this year's Sundance film festival" (*Wetlands*, 2013); "Gli amore, gli amici, per sempre" // Love, friends, forever (*Saturno contro*, 2007); "Four friends. One mission. Lots of spirit" (*The Angels' Share*, 2012); "A city. A man. A day" (*Oslo, 31. august,* 2012) "1 serial killer. ¥1 billion reward. 48 hours. Trust no one" (*Shield of Straw*, 2012); "Her journey, her choice" (*Never Rarely Sometimes Always*, 2020).

Film trailers often contain very similar, if not the same, lines arranged rhythmically or semantically. For example, in Ukrainian *Додому (Homeward*, 2019) we see a series of taglines in the current of changing shots: "Батько та молодший син // втратили старшого // вони вирушають // в Крим // кому ми будимо потрібні // якщо ни потрібні один одному?" – The father and the younger son // lost the older one // they are going to // the Crimea // Who will need us, // if we don't need each other? The taglines and the words of the characters are superimposed, and the meanings combined. Incorporated into the film text, the taglines create emphatic undertones and help understand the message of the movie.

In the national trailer of experimental Armenian drama *Caucho* (2013), the phrase from William Saroyan's *The Ping-Pong Players* is repeated by the actors in accordance with the rhythm of alternating shots, weaved into the plot, and interpreted as a message: "Դու ուղղակի բարի ես" [transliteration: *Du uhaki bari es*; English: *Because you are too kind*]. The film is about three young artists who are staging Saroyan and decide speaking with dialogues from the play before the premiere; as soon as one of them breaks the rules, the game will be over. The repetition of the same phrase creates the effect of a rehearsal, when the same line is pronounced with different intonation.

3. CLASSIFICATION. "ANNOTATIVE – CHALLENGE" RELATIONS

In *Three Words to Tell a Story: the Movie Poster Tagline* (2015), Johannes Mahlknecht uses Aristotelian rhetoric to analyse the history, semantics, and stylistics of American movie tagline and reveals five dominant appeals, steering the viewer's expectations: story, genre, stardom, quality and technical achievements. Several of these can be combined in one tagline.

This study suggests a broader classification of movie slogans based on the dominant function and discourse strategy; the classification includes and expands the above-stated groups. Most of the groups trace possible connections between the tagline and the title.

Taglines can be divided in annotative and challenge.

3.1. Annotative taglines (idea-driven; summary) give the brief information about the plot, the message, the specifics of the main character, the cast and filming, explain the author's idea. They make up an impressive part of all analysed taglines – 76 %. The essence of summarizing consists in informing and revealing the key ideas of the original source and, in some cases, providing its critical evaluation. Such taglines are aimed at intelligent cinemagoers who know the names of famous people, events, places. Anthroponyms, pronouns and location references are believed to be the most important discourse strategies "hidden in titles" (Lenets 2020). If the movie character is unknown but a typical one, the concretizing word (profession, nationality, etc.) or the personal pronoun "he", "she", "it" "they" is used: "In the heart of terror, they resist everyday life" (*Alone in Berlin*, 2016).

A list of tagline functions expressed in specific annotative appeals which steer our expectations in a certain direction, is presented in Table 1.

Summary taglines can incorporate the film title, making the title part of the tagline, either at its beginning, like *Tai Chi 0's* (2012) – "The birth of a legend", or at the end, like *Melancholia's* (2011) "Enjoy it while it lasts; It will change everything". Sometimes such titles point to the genre: "Based on the true story of the man minutes away from almost killing Adolf Hitler" (*13 minutes*, 2015) – a drama film telling the story of Georg Elser; "*Creepy* is so terrible that your hair stands on end" (*Creepy*, 2016) – a horror film and a thriller presenting the investigation of the mysterious disappearance of a family.

Another type of relations is when a tagline elaborates upon the title by putting questions which the title answers: "How gentle might he be?" (*A Somewhat Gentle Man*, 2010); "How will it end?" (*Outrage Beyond*, 2012). Understanding a name, or any word, always "requires contextual associations" (Smith 2017: 43). Here, the interrogative sentences deserve our attention because they manage the viewer's expectations behind the curtain and make the viewer recollect the title.

However, some taglines paraphrase the plot or the most striking episodes and relate to other framing elements semantically, stylistically or historically: "Every beginning is a path" (*From Ararat to Zion*, 2009); "The reckoning of a father who learned the truth about the murder of a child" (*Chongqing Blues*, 2010); "All She Needs is a Little Faith" (*The Wedding Plan*, 2016). In order to increase attractiveness stylistic techniques are used, *i.e*. rhyme and reiteration: "Wanted dead or dead" for *Slow West* (2015), "One island, one giant grave" for *Potato* (2013), oxymoron and gradation: "The true story about a Swedish filmmaker, a banana corporation, dirty tricks, lawsuits, manipulation and the price of free speech" for *Big Boys Gone Bananas!** (2011), antithesis: "*Love* and *death* are universal" for *Slow West* (2015). The taglines of this group show a tendency to expand the title of the film, highlight the idea, and carry out an evaluative function. For instance, the historical documentary *The Green Prince*

(2014) tells the story of an Israeli secret agent, and the film's tagline on its Russian poster "Свой среди чужих, чужой среди своих" (At home among strangers, a stranger among his own) refers to the title of the Soviet cinema classics – Nikita Mikhalkov's film shot in 1974 and set in Post-Russian Civil War. In *At Home among Strangers* the historical perspective is blurred and a myth of heroic Revolution created.

Function	**Tagline**
incorporating the title	**elaboration upon the title**
	There's always a way in (*In the House*, 2012)
	My secret is hidden in this little house (*The Little House*, 2014)
	One man's journey into his mind (*The Roads Not Taken*, 2020)
	question-answer relationship
	What is a happy family? (*Noriko's Dinner Table*, 2005)
	Who is the most evil? Everybody. Resolved. (*Outrage Beyond*, 2012)
paraphrasing the plot and its elements	The extraordinary life of Edith Piaf (*La Vie En Rose* , 2007)
	Extraordinary days and the days that are strikingly alike (*About the Pink Sky*, 2011)
	A Girl is attacked by her lover with Acids (*Lantouri*, 2016)
	In the heart of terror, they resist everyday life (*Alone in Berlin*, 2016).
explaining the film's message by using wordplay, quotes, idioms	This world is a fake paradise (*Noriko's Dinner Table*, 2005)
	First Love Burns Brightest (*Bright Star*, 2010)
	Ugly truth, sweet lies (*A Separation*, 2011)
	Living is the hardest lesson to learn (*School Life*, 2016)
boasting of the respective film's quality	**contributors**
	500% Kitano – nothing to add! (*Takeshis'*, 2005)
	Winner of the PALME D'OR at the 2006 Cannes Film Festival (*The Wind That Shakes the Barley*, 2006)
	Skolimowski challenges us once again! (*11 Minutes*, 2015)
	From the director of *Wild Reeds* and the writer of *Girlhood* (*Being* 17, 2016)
	high art
	Takes its place among the greatest crime films ever made (*A Prophet* , 2009)
	Subtle feelings in pastel colors (*Renoir*, 2012)
	One of the five best films of the year in the world (*The Cutoff Man*, 2012)
	A soaring masterpiece, a huge and complex work of art, and one for ages (*Stray Dogs*, 2013)
	A film of quiet but profound outrage (*Taxi*, 2015)
	Witty, intelligent and sensuous (*Pain and Glory*, 2019)

	cinematic language and style
	Based on the sensational novel of the 21st century (*Battle Royale*, 2000)
	Inspired by a true story (*Kush*, 2013)
	The perfect cross between Dogtooth and Michael Haneke (*Borgman*, 2013)
	It could easily be an HBO series (*Scarecrow*, 2020)
	technical achievements
	A breathtaking sound of the drum ... terrifying scenery! (*The Drummer*, 2007)
	Unflinching ... strikingly photographed (*Sivas*, 2014)
	One girl. One city. One night. One take. (*Victoria*, 2015)
	A feature documentary in production (*Chuck Norris vs. Communism*, 2015)

Table 1. Annotative taglines

The taglines, that explain the message of the film through proverbs, idioms and quotes, evoke a rich flow of associations and require decryption. "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first" (*Samaritan Girl*, 2004), "The unwanted will have their day" (*White God*, 2014) – recognizable quotes from the Bible (Gospel of John 8:7, and paraphrased Beatitudes from Matthew 5:3–12). "The world is a wonderful stage, but the casting is deplorable" (Decorado, *2016);* "Before Time rushes forward, measure carefully the essentials of love once again *(In the Mood for Love*, 2000*)* – quotes taken from Shakespeare's plays *As You Like It (*"All the world's a stage") and *Hamlet* ("The Time is out of joint"). In the examples, the first tagline is a literal quote while the next ones are based on word play, *i.e.*, conversion of precedent statements and manipulating the semantics of the word.

Wordplay, *or* play-on-words is a form of verbal behaviour based on deliberately violating the systemic relations in language (shifts, distortions, phonetic mix-ups, reinforcing meaning of set phrases, etc.) in order to expand the semantic scope of the structure of language, cause an allusion and create a fresh, new image. To understand the wordplay in *Standing Tall's* (2015) tagline "We take the hand we are given", one should know idiomatic expressions of offering help: "give someone a hand", "bear/give/lend somebody a helping hand" (Kunin 1984), that go back to the biblical idiom about helping others which never impoverishes you, "He that giveth shall not lack" (Proverbs 28:27).

Ken Loach's story about a political activist Jimmy Gralton, who comes back home in the times of the Depression and re-opens the dance hall in his native Irish village, has a witty tagline "Where anything goes and Everyone Belongs" (*Jimmy's Hall*, 2014). It combines two famous sayings contradictory in their meanings: "anything goes" and "every one belongs to everyone else". The idiom about "anything goes" signifies that all things are acceptable, nothing is off-limits, but the quote "every one belongs to everyone else" comes from Huxley's *Brave New World* where futuristic society coined the phrase in an effort to eradicate individualism. Thus, the tagline reveals the main theme and gives the topical issue of oppression long before the viewer starts reading reviews and seeing the movie.

As a rule, proverbs and sayings express morality and evaluate the message the film carries. Take, for example, "The family that eats together stays together" (*Noriko's Dinner Table*, 2005), a Japanese horror film telling a story of a teenage girl Noriko who feels unhappy with her family, runs away and joins the suspicious Kumiko's "family circle program"; "There are two sides to every lie" *(The Imposter,* 2012*)*, a British-American documentary centered on a young man who pretends to be a lost son of a grieving family in Texas. Because the nominative (semantic) density of socially significant concepts always implies "a multiple variable designation of a fragment of reality, represented by a number of linguistic"

tools and "behavioural stereotypes" (Karasik, 2004: 112), proverbs help make the film recognisable and closer to the viewer, and convey positive emotions.

The largest group of annotative taglines circle around boasting of the respective film's quality.

In 40 % of the films shot over the past 20 years the name of the director, actors, producer or award, and the reference to successes of the cinematographic past were included in the tagline, e.g., "The definite Brando. In his own words" (*Listen to Me Marlon*, 2015), "Adèle Haenel is Mesmerising!"(*The Unknown Girl*, 2016), "There's no denying that Wasilewski is one of cinema's most promising new voices" (*United States of Love*, 2016), "Based on the book nominated for Naoki Prize" (*Traces of Sin*, 2016), "Ken Loach delivers one of his best films" (*Sorry We Missed You*, 2019). In this group, the informing and contributing components could be combined: "The new film of the grande dame of Iranian cinema. An authentic film about life and love in Iran" (*Tales*, 2014). The merits of the past, promising talent, and suggestive content become a measure of uniqueness.

It must be noted that the praise from critics (verdict of reviewers, writing for a famous newspaper or magazine), which is written on the poster or included into the title sequences, more often becomes a measure of uniqueness and artistic quality of the film than of its contributors: "Takes great pleasure in beautifully re-creating the past. *Renoir* is classic French filmmaking" – a quote from *L.A. Times* on the British poster of *Renoir* (2012); "Mysterious and terrifying. It's brilliance and passion are compelling" – Richard Bradshaw's response in the *The Guardian* about Zvyagintsev's film of *Loveless* (2017), "Mesmerizing. Rich artistry and slow-burning moral anger" – Justin Chang's words in *L.A. Times* about the same film. Websites, posters, covers often list sentence fragments of such influential quotes along with other types of lines. Nowadays "praising" sloganeering is acceptable only because a prominent critic "credited on the poster" writing for famous media has "officially reviewed the film" (Mahlknecht 2015: 419). In addition to Mahlknecht's statement, the authors of this article conceive the "feedback effect" which testifies that people always follow the customers who share their experience firsthand, who hit the Like button. Taglines sell impressive images, not films or their story, action and characters. You cannot get the "Like" image out of your head and this makes you think about the movie.

Many taglines touch upon the poetics of the film – the sum of special linguistic and formal properties that distinguish high-art pieces of cinema from non-artistic ones. Lines can indicate the generic and genre affiliation, the contributor's intention and its implementation, the features of the conflict in the film, the specifics of author's style. It is also popular to make taglines indicating the source of information upon which the plot is based ("adapted" screenplay or "real story"). For example, take *We Are the Best!* (2013) - "Based on the graphic novel Never Goodnight by Coco Woodisson", and *The Geographer Drank His Globe Away* (2013) – "Based on the novel of the same name by Alexei Ivanov". Sometimes the source of information in the tagline underlying storyline renames the film in national cinemas as it was done to *Adele's Life* (2013). *Adele's Life* (French: *La Vie d'Adèl*) became famous by its tagline "Blue Is the Warmest Colour" – the name of the 2010 graphic novel by Jul Maroh *Le Bleu est une couleur chaude* which premised the film and promoted its recognition. Emma's blue hair implicates the power of the main character's attraction and signifies rebellion, freedom, creativity, and eroticism and comes as a vivid allusion to *Blue Movie* by Andy Warhol (1969).

Modernity is primarily perceived through the concepts of speed and change – it leads to a surprisingly small number of taglines boasting of technical innovations in the era of visual effects and smart technologies. So-called "blip culture" (Alvin Toffler's term) marked by brief communication, clip thinking, and information overload urges the generation immersed in data smog to long for digital detox. Walter W. Hoelbling (2015) observes general changes in filmic subject matters and describes present-day audiences as creating virtual global "interpretative communities". Therefore, the contemporary viewer whose free time is screen time accepts only lines on technological achievements which demonstrate breathtaking scenery, *e.g.* "Unflinching ... strikingly photographed" (*Sivas*, 2014), or help expose unique content, *e.g.* "A feature documentary in production" and "Video killed the red star" (*Chuck Norris vs. Communism*, 2015). The latter two taglines reaffirm the power of memories of the past: the decline of Ceausescu's dictatorship in Romania, VHS tapes, monophonic "awkward" dubbing as the main elements of the film. "The six-day war, uncut" for *Censored Voices* (2015) presents

uncensored voices of Israeli soldiers 50 years past the "Six-Day" war, when the filmmaker Mor Loushy gets access to the tapes.

Several of annotative aspects can be combined in one single tagline: "A delicate balance of drama and humor, shaped by interpersonal conflicts as in a Jane Austen story" (*Fill the Void*, 2012), "An Engrossing Character Study and Thrilling Family Drama" (*Child's Pose*, 2013), "A genuine, hand-made epic... has great intensity, beauty and sweeping grandeur" (*The Cut*, 2014), "If the Coen brothers were Romanian, they might have made The Whistlers" (*The Whistlers*, 2019). A certain semantic, metaphorical field is formed around these combinations and allows the viewer to reveal cultural references.

The tagline of *The Event* (2015), a documentary by Sergei Loznitsa, ("Three days that shook the world or much ado about nothing?") alludes to literature and mass media discourse and contains a wordplay of famous titles and names. Clear allusions are made to a comedy by Shakespeare *Much Ado About Nothing* and to different works of art on significant historic events: a book by John Reed about the October Revolution (*Ten Days that Shook the World*, 1919), a chapter from the book by Leo Cooper about the complete collapse of central authority in the USSR (*Power and Politics in the Soviet Union*, 1992), numerous titles of news broadcasts about perestroika, and British documentary TV-series on important worldwide events (*Days That Shook the World*, 2003). So, long before watching the film of *The Event* we understand that the documentary casts an eye on the 1991 reaction and provides analysis based on the mixture of humour and tragedy, superficiality and seriousness.

On the one hand, idioms and phraseological calque are combined "to reveal carefully hidden certain ideological purposes, the subtext of new words and expressions, and switch them" (Naumova 2012: 239) into a new mood and style. On the other hand, combined lines are too difficult to perceive. After all, the unified concept is easier to remember than a combination of intricate elements. Too much data and technical effects impede even making out the information clearly, let alone evaluate and act on tit.

Despite the fact that annotative sloganeering informs the viewer, it encourage an active response rather than a contemplative response. Strong annotative taglines can often distract the audience from less appealing aspects of a film.

3.2. Challenge taglines (stimulating, manipulating, thought- and action-provoking) are aimed to engage potential viewers in communication (Table 2).

The word "slogan", as mentioned earlier, has several meanings, but it goes back to the 16th century Scottish Gaelic *sluagh-ghairm: sluagh* "army" + *gairm* "cry" (Lexico). Based on this, we distinguish "challenge" taglines, which make up approximately 24% of the total number of analysed units. The relatively small amount stems from the fact that such lines are created according to the psychology of person perception.

Aimed at including potential viewers in communication, challenge lines, in contrast to annotative, contain dialogisation techniques. These include the use of the pronouns "you", "we", "I", and their possessive forms: "You can't escape fate" (*11 Minutes*, 2015), "Do we really know our loved ones? (*45 years*, 2015), "Fire is my child" (*Pari*, 2020); imperatives: "Let's kill each other today" (*Battle Royale*, 2000); interrogative sentences: "Let's think of a name for the baby… - What baby?" (*Viktoria*, 2014), "What are you hungry for?" (*Grave*, 2016). The listed techniques make the line targeting and personalized, provoking the viewer into acting or thinking and motivating them to turn to their own thoughts, feelings, and experiences.

Function	Tagline
motivation for an action	Break the secret of Rembrandt's masterpiece (*Nightwatching*, 2007) See the extraordinary life of founder of the Yang style Tai Chi (*Tai Chi 0*, 2012) When the rules don't fit, find the courage to follow your own (*Wadjda*, 2012) Don't play if you don't want to win (*Caucho*, 2013)
personal question	Who are you? (*Superstar*, 2012) What happens when your enemies become your friends?(*Putin's Kiss,* 2011) Do you really know your neighbour? (*Creepy*, 2016)
playing with emotions (fear, interest, suspense, etc.)	Feel the heat, keep the feeling burning, let the sensation explode (*In the Mood for Love*, 2000) You can close your eyes. You can turn away. But you will never forget Sorstalanság (*Fateless*, 2005) It's absurd not to trust me (*L*, 2011) Time to Meet The Devil (*Only God forgives*, 2012) Do we really know our loved ones? (*45 years*, 2015) What are you hungry for? (*Raw*, 2016)
changing places with the main character	Everybody wants information. What if you don't get them? (*Remains Quiet*, 2013) You either win or lose, it depends on half a step (*Weeds on Fire*, 2016) The younger sister has a secret. Three discoveries are waiting for you ... (*Traces of Sin*, 2016) Fire is my child (*Pari*, 2020)

Table 2. Challenge taglines

The main strategy in such taglines is to indirectly emphasise the storyline and the main idea. In this case, the line is made up as an interrogative sentence addressed to the viewer. This technique allows the viewer to put himself in the character's shoes and find the answer to the question asked in the film. The tagline-question is aimed at the viewer's reflection, as it gives food for thought. Take, for example, "Have you really loved someone?" (*Oasis*, 2002), a South Korean melodrama centered on the love of two disabled people in the world of indifference and complicated social attitudes. Another example is the way the issue of true love is addressed in "What will lighten our adark night? An untimely love?!" (*Tales*, 2014), an Iranian drama centered on women's stories. The viewer is not only shown national images and realities but also made to think about social and family problems. The taglines of this type are aimed to draw attention to universal human values and assess the significance of the action, event, or deed used as the underline concept of the tagline.

Taglines made up as questions often address a moral dilemma: take, for example, "What would you do to save the life of your terminally ill grandson?" (*Irina Palm*, 2007); "In a world gone blind, what could you see?" (*Blindness*, 2008), "Who are you when no one is watching?" (*Out of Nature*, 2014). It is worth mentioning that the question can contain two parts, one of which indicates the purpose or condition of performing the action stated in the question. The tagline allows the viewers to turn to their life experience and compare it with what they see on the screen. The question in the line is always intriguing. It creates the feeling of expectation, anticipation, and involvement.

However, non-interrogative sentences can also be intriguing. In this case, authors often attract attention by referring to the motives (Maklakov 2018) guiding the person[4]. Some of these taglines contain imperatives. Authors appeal to feelings and emotions by using:

- fear-based motivation: "What you don't know WILL hurt you" (*Tom at the Farm*, 2013), "There's only one way to end bad blood" (*Black Souls*, 2014), "Le pire danger dans la brousse c ' est lui" // The deadliest lurker in the bushes is he" (*Safari*, 2016). A line may contain a warning about the danger: "A beast sleeps in everyone. Don't wake it up"(*Wild Tales*, 2014).
- love and friendship-based motivation: "Love Can Take Your Breath Away" (*Breath*, 2007), "Si tienes algo bueno que decir a alguien, no dejes de hacerlo" // If you have something pleasant to say to someone, do not stop doing it (*Still Life*, 2012), "God may forgive you, but she never will"(*Penance*, 2012). A line can have both, positive and negative connotations.
- expectancy-based motivation: "Get prepared to meet Helen" (*Wetlands*, 2013), "The girl behind the name" (*Amy*, 2015), "Turn on all your senses" (*Light After Darkness*, 2012), "Cover your ears and open your heart "(*Marguerite*, 2015) – these lines sound like a promise to feel or learn something new.
- aspiration for freedom: "Неважно, чего от тебя ждут люди. Ищи своё счастье по-своему" // It doesn't matter what people expect from you. Look for your happiness in your own way (*The Happiest Day in the Life of Olli Maki*, 2016).

The challenge tagline can be viewed as flirting with the viewers, since the intrigue behind it may imply omission or a hint: "Nothing of what you see is what it seems" (*Miss Violence*, 2013); "This is only the beginning" (*Exit Point*, 2014), a contradictory, often paradoxical thought. "The war of drug has never been about drugs" (*The House I Live In*, 2012); "Nothing is everything" (*The Zero Theorem*, 2013); "Sometimes hope begins with sacrifice" (*Glassland*, 2014). All the examples of this group are non-interrogative sentences but their communicative message provokes us to ask questions on our own. Thus, it forms an attitude to the film by creating a context.

As seen from the above, challenge taglines are motivating by nature, provoke the viewer into certain actions, and, therefore, use manipulative techniques. Despite the fact that the taglines of this group usually contain no elements of wordplay and rarely contain expressive means of language, they are more expressive. Expression is created by setting the focus directly on the person's inner world.

4. CONCLUSION

The taglines of both European and Asian films are unified in vocabulary and stylistics; this permits reviewing them in general, without differentiating linguistic world-images.

The tagline is a strong selling text and invisible marketing factor with a major impact on the consumption and reception by cinephiles and casual viewers, fans and critics. As shown by the study, the dominant function of taglines is information; however, they are also used for advertising. This can be seen in the amount of annotative lines (74%) that is considerably more than challenge lines (26%). Furthermore, this is proved by the fact that even challenge taglines refer the viewer, in one way or another, to the content of the film and are thus informing. The block of discourse strategies is represented by three universal types. The informing itself is associated with the fulfillment of the dictal strategy, the impact and manipulation – the regulatory strategy, the reflection of the author's idea and the target setting – the modal strategy.

Most taglines are aimed at the pre- and post-watching meditation about the film. They prepare the viewers for perception, who correlate their own life experience with what is shown on the screen. Challenge taglines can play on one's emotions, give food for thought, ask personal questions, make the

[4] According to Maklakov (2018), the motive is "often understood as the reason underlying the choice of actions and deeds, the totality of external and internal factors that cause the activity of the subject" (ibid, p. 513).

recipient feel himself in the shoes of the protagonist. One the one hand, the negative or positive connotation of lexical units included in the line depends, on the film's genre, on the other hand, it depends on the bodacious attempt to impress.

Since "identity can be constructed discursively" (Lenets, 2020: 884), one tries to assimilate taglines considering the specifics of national perception, ethnic mentality and traditions. In this regard, the taglines for one and the same film in different countries can be radically different.

Annotative taglines, born together with Early Cinema, have not changed much in the course of history. They have been compressed into patterns only gradually and made use of rhetorical devices and techniques to the full. Summary lines help to fit the film into a cultural and historical context by the use of wordplay, quotes and idiomatic expressions.

Challenge taglines, for example, interrogative sentences with a personal pronoun, appeared much later than annotative, and are used quite rarely nowadays. However, challenge taglines are an excellent means of playing with feelings and emotions and give the viewer food for deeper thought.

The proposed classification helps to trace the relationship between the tagline and the other elements of the filmatic paratext. They deserve our attention because they have a distinct structure and invisibly guide the way the paratext works. Taglines are an essential part of the cinematic body and connect the inside and outside, and the economic reality of a film with its storyworld.

The article has shown that film taglines may contain lots of cues which can be used as efficient marketing means and make the film easier graspable and desirable to the experienced viewer, whose leisure time is screen time.

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