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A Comparative Analysis between Walt Disney and DreamWorks Based on the Theory of Semantic Roles of Argument Nominals

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ABSTRACT

Anchored on Yule's categories of semantic roles, the present study examined the language of cartoon scripts with Chinese characters in Walt Disney's *Mulan 1 and 2* and DreamWorks's *Kung Fu Panda 1 and 2*. Specifically it described the: (1) semantic features of the scripts in terms of semantic roles; and (2) similarities and differences in the language of the scripts semantically. Data analyzed were limited to 800 sentences which were randomly selected from the scripts of *Mulan 1 and 2* and *Kung Fu Panda 1 and 2*. More specifically, 200 lines per film were analyzed by taxonomizing the utterances in terms of identifying the semantic roles of argument nominals in each utterance. Results revealed the roles of agent and experiencer in the subject positions are dominant in contrast with the frequency of occurrences of theme, goal, location and source. In conclusion, the language of animated film is relatively simpler, literal and direct to suit the level of the target audience who are generally children. Finally, this research suggests that more linguistic levels should be conducted to explore the language features on cartoon movies in the future.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Language which is the most significant medium of human activities in daily life is used as a means to communicate with others. Whether it be spoken or written, language works to convey human thoughts, ideas and emotion through sounds, gestures and signals. Therefore, language is irreplaceable.

Everyone has his or her own features in expressing thoughts. It is easier for the addressee to understand the addresser's idea if he or she is familiar with the addresser's language features. With the value placed on Seman-

tic analysis and cartoons' language development, some researchers are beginning to realize the need for more attention that the producers of cartoons can make more befitting and splendid cartoons for children.

Referring to semantic analysis, which is considered the study of semantics, or the structures and meanings of the speech. What's more, emphasizing to the semantic analysis in cartoon movies, it comes to the theory of semantic roles.

Semantic roles generally refer to the roles of participants in events or activities described by predicates, both in syntactic and semantic research, this actor role has been given many different names, such as Thematic Relations

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(Jackendoff, 1972),^[10] Participant Roles (Allan, 1986),^[11] Semantic Roles (Givone, 1990),^[8] Thematic Roles (Dowty, 1986),^[6] Thematic theory (Goldberg, 1995),^[7] etc. Semantic role is more popular in recent research, especially in the field of generative grammar, and is more common in the corpus annotation, semantic role in view of this research corpus annotation study for children. For example, semantic roles labeling identifies the semantic relationships filled by constituents of a sentence within a semantic frame (Gildea & Jurafsky, 2002).^[9] It is a process to assign WHO did WHAT to WHOM, WHEN, WHERE, WHY, HOW, etc. structures to sentences. It has been used in many applications, such as information extraction, question answering, and summarization. And for FrameNet (Baker, Fillmore & Lowe, 1998),^[3] PropBank (Palmer, Gildea & Kingsbury, 2005),^[17] and NomBank (Meyers, Reeves & Macleod, 2004),^[16] we have seen considerable achievements in Semantic Roles Labeling tasks in the last decade. Pradhan (2004) improved the performance using an algorithm based on support vector machines. Semantic roles are also well known to be helpful in improving translation accuracy, because they tend to agree better between two languages than syntactic structures and constitute the skeleton of a sentence (Liu & Gildea, 2010).^[13] There is also a significant difference caused by the roles of the noun phrase (NP) between different languages such as English and Chinese (Liu & Gildea, 2008).^[14]

In recent years, the movie, a special form of drama, has been developing faster and faster, because of its great profits. In the meantime, scholars began to pay much attention to one of its main functions: entertaining. Therefore, there are some scholars who study filmic texts from the linguistic points of view. For example, Salt (2004)^[18] applies the methods of statistical style analysis for the dimensions of average shot length, shot scale, camera movement, reverse angles, point of view and inserts, then made the conclusion that contemporary American films are made according to an increasingly restricted stylistic norm, characterized mainly by faster cutting and closer shooting. McIntyre (2008)^[15] worked for integrating multi-modal analysis and the stylistics of drama from a multi-modal perspective on Ian McKellen's *Richard III*. He suggested that the multi-modal elements of the production contribute to the interpretation of the play as much as the linguistic elements of the dramatic text.

Accordingly, the study on cartoon movies seems not enough, especially those on linguistic study or even more specifically on semantic analysis. Cartoon movies are ones in which individual drawings, paintings, or illustrations are photographed frame by frame (stop-frame cinematography). The producer uses the film technique and it often

contains genre-like elements rather than a strictly-defined genre category. Hence, cartoon has aroused much interest among researchers. Nevertheless, the recent study of cartoon was focused on the cartoon scripts and explanation of the humorous language. In other words, few studies focus on semantic analysis of the cartoon movie. Consequently, it is deemed relevant to conduct semantic analysis to fill the gap.

In China, Walt Disney and DreamWorks hold the important position in the field of cartoon movie. As the representative companies in the field of cartoon, both of them have brought a huge economic benefits and cultural dissemination. For example, in 2016, the growth of the global film markets was not satisfactory, but the 90-year-old Walt Disney performance was still eye-catching, winning nearly 6 billion dollars in the world. *Zootopia*, *Hansel and Gretel* and other works have achieved a good harvest with a good reputation and economic benefits. In the recent years, Walt Disney has owned Pixar and Marvel through a series of mergers and acquisitions. It is even more remarkable that the audience is no longer the little girl at the beginning, but a solid fan of an adult fan who loves anime. Around the world, Walt Disney has more than 3,000 licensees and sells more than 100,000 cultural and creative derivatives related to Walt Disney cartoons. At the same time, DreamWorks and Walt Disney have been in a parallel competition, but over time, DreamWorks suffered some setbacks. However, DreamWorks animation has always had a place in the animation industry and still brought a great economic benefits.

Nevertheless, the comparison between Walt Disney cartoon and DreamWorks cartoon is seldom explored in academic sector. Therefore, this study is designed to make a comparative analysis of the scripts of cartoon movie with Chinese elements between Walt Disney and DreamWorks semantically.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The study generally aimed to describe semantic features of Walt Disney and Dream Work scripts with Chinese elements. Specifically, it sought answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the semantic features of the cartoon scripts from Walt Disney and DreamWorks based on the theory of semantic roles of argument nominals?
2. What are the similarities and differences between Mulan and Kung Fu Panda in terms of semantic features?

1.3 Theoretical Framework

To determine the language characteristics of the scripts

from semantic level, the study was anchored on the theory of semantic roles of nominals.

Semantic Roles

Semantic study in stylistics concerns itself with “linguistic effects involving something odd in the cognitive meaning of a certain linguistic unit, e.g., a word or phrase” (Leech, 1969).^[11] More specifically, semantic roles refer to the roles fulfilled within the situation as described by a sentence when the situation is a simple event and the verb describes an action. The noun, pronoun and noun phrase in any given sentence may perform different thematic roles as dictated by the verbs used in the sentence.

According to the theory, the nominals may perform the following roles: (1) Agent, the individual initiating the action; (2) Goal, the recipient of the object of the action; (3) theme, the thing which is affected or moved by the action; (4) Instrument, the thing used to perform an action; (5) Experiencers, the noun phrase used to designate an entity as the person who has feeling, perception or state; (6) Location, the role designated to an entity where an event took place; and (7) Source, the entity where an object moves from.

For instance, in the sentence, *The man killed the cat*, the verb “kill” assigns the man the semantic role of AGENT, and the cat has the semantic role of theme. On the other hand, in the sentence, *Liz gave Mary an apple.*, “Mary” bears the semantic role of GOAL projected by the verb gave, and an apple act as THEME.

In the given two sample sentences, “kill” and “gave” are predicates describing the relationship between “the man” and “the cat,” and “Liz,” “Mary” and “an apple” are saying something about the entities. “The man”, “the cat,” “Liz,” “Mary,” and “an apple” are known as arguments which entities are concerned.

Semantic Criterion

According to Chomsky (1981),^[4] arguments have one-to-one relationship. This means that one argument can have one and only one semantic role assigned to it.

The semantic criterion forms one part of semantic theory. Another part of semantic theory concerns the process of how semantic roles get from the lexical entry of a predicate to the arguments that bear them. The process of semantic roles transferring from a predicate to the arguments is known as 0-marking. According to Barriers, Chomsky (1986)^[5] proposed that semantic roles are assigned by predicate to their sisters. There is a sisterhood condition on the assignment of semantic roles. Complements are sisters to heads to the principle of X-bar.

The semantic role assigned to constituents within the VP are called internal semantic role where the constituents are called internal arguments. The semantic role assigned

to the subject is called the external role, and the subject of a sentence is called the external argument, on the assumption that subjects is external to VP, and their role in the syntax is called argument structure.

The lexical entry of a verb contains only information that is not predictable from general principles. Certainly, the meaning of a verb, and, in particular, the semantic roles assigned to the arguments, is not predictable.

2. Research Design

2.1 Objects

The study followed the qualitative research design since it aims to explore the semantic features of the scripts of four cartoon movies from Walt Disney and DreamWorks through semantic level. Moreover, the study provided a comparative analysis between Walt Disney and Dream Works according to the observed features.

2.2 Methodology

The study is data-driven and theory-driven. Descriptive method is a way to use different qualitative methodologies to collect and analyze the data (Lichtman, 2012).^[12] The study explored the language of cartoon movies both on the semantic levels to identify the similarities and differences of the scripts of four cartoons between Walt Disney and DreamWorks.

2.3 Corpus of the Study

The corpus of this study is four cartoon movies from Walt Disney and DreamWorks. From Walt Disney, *Mulan I* and *II* were chosen. From Dream Works, *Kung Fu Panda I* and *II* were selected.

Mulan I was released in 1998. Based on the traditional Chinese folk tale in the North Dynasty, the film tells a story of a brave and smart girl *Mulan*, who disguised herself as a man and takes her ailing father’s place in the emperor’s army. *Mulan* is Americanized implicitly with individual spirit and American humor.

Similarly, *Mulan II* which is a 2004 American direct-to-video Walt Disney animated is a film directed by Darrell Rooney and Lynne Southerland. It is a sequel to the 1998 animated film *Mulan*. Much of the cast from the first film returned, excluding *Mushu*, the *Matchmaker*, *little brother* and so on. This film mainly tells that when *Hua Mulan* and *Li Xiang* are ready to marry, they suddenly receive a secret purpose to escort the three princesses to marry the minority affiliated countries to maintain peace in the frontier. So they immediately set off for departure. But on the way, *Mulan* found that the princesses were not

willing to marry and had a loved one. Mulan, who has always advocated the free will of women, helped the princesses to escape. The occurrence of this incident and the provocation of Musu caused a quarrel between them. On the road, Li Xiang had an accident. In order to save Mulan and fall into the deep valley, Mulan thought that Li Xiang was dead. She was so painful that she decided to replace the princess to complete the task. On the day of the wedding, Mulan wore a dress to prepare and complete the mission. At this moment, Musu in the body of the gods pretend to be gods and the leaders of the country. At the same time, Li Xiang also appeared in the crowd to save Mulan. Although the pro-task was not completed, the two countries are still as good as ever. Mulan and Li Xiang, as well as the princesses and Musu have lived a happy life.

On the other hand, Kung Fu Panda was released in 2008 in America. It is an American action comedy movie featuring Chinese Kung Fu. The film is based on ancient China. Its landscape, scenery, clothing and even food are full of Chinese elements. The film tells the story of a clumsy panda who is determined to become a master of martial arts.

In addition, Kung Fu Panda 2 is a 2011 American 3D animated film, a sequel to the 2008 animated film Kung Fu Panda. It was released in North America on May 26, 2011. The story mainly tells that Kung Fu Panda has become a dragon Warrior together with the masters of Kung Fu and the five heroes of the world to protect the Peace Valley and live a quiet life. However, the good times are not long, the evil villain Shen is planning to conquer China with unguarded secret weapons and destroy Kung Fu. Kung Fu Panda faces a new challenge. The key point for him is to look back and uncover the mystery of his life before he can find the enemy and he got the success finally.

2.3 Data Collection

The data chosen for the analysis was from the scripts of four cartoon movies offered by the Internet website <http://www.en580.com/>. With the help of internet, a total of four scripts were gathered in the public website.

Due to the large number of texts, the study selected 200 sentences from each script of the animated film at random by choosing every fifth sentence. This means that a total of 800 sentences from the four movies were included in the study.

2.4 Data Analysis

The semantic analysis was done by identifying the semantic roles assigned by the verbs to the argument nominals used in each of the 800 sentences. Hence, arguments

were coded as agent, goal, theme, instrument, experiencer, location and source. Coding was guided by the framework of Yule, which were deemed the similarities of the authors in preparing the scripts.

Finally, after coding the data semantically, simple frequency and percentage count was done to identify the patterns and then Walt Disney and Dream Works film were compared and contrasted for the similarities and differences.

3. Results

According to a comprehensive and rigorous reading, watching and analyzing the selected sentences from the four scripts of Mulan 1, Mulan 2, Kung Fu Panda 1 and Kung Fu Panda 2, the study identified *the features and search for the similarities and differences of cartoon scripts from Walt Disney and DreamWorks for the semantic level.*

Semantic features of the cartoon scripts from Walt Disney and DreamWorks were analyzed by identifying the semantic roles of argumental nominals.

The Cartoons from Mulan

Table 1 *Semantic Roles Used of Nouns, Noun Phrases and Pronouns in the Script of Mulan 1*

Type	Number in S	Number in O	Total	Frequency(%)
Agent	53	0	53	40.77
Theme	1	53	54	41.54
Instrument	0	4	4	3.08
Experiencer	9	0	9	6.92
Location	0	5	5	3.85
Source	0	2	2	1.54
Goal	0	3	3	2.31
Total			130	100

Table 1 shows that in Mulan 1, the semantic roles performed by nouns, noun phrases and pronouns are theme and agent. The least role performed by the nominals is source.

Table 2 *Semantic Roles Used of Nouns, Noun Phrases and Pronouns in the Script of Mulan 2*

Type	Number in S	Number in O	Total	Frequency(%)
Agent	71	0	71	40.80
Theme	0	63	63	36.21
Instrument	0	3	3	1.72
Experiencer	25	0	25	14.37
Location	0	7	7	4.02
Source	0	2	2	1.15
Goal	0	3	3	1.72
Total			174	100

Table 2 shows that in the Disney cartoon Mulan 2, the noun or noun phrase dominantly performed the semantic role of Agent, followed by Experiencer, and the rest is 0.

The Cartoons from Kung Fu Panda

Table 3 *Semantic Roles of Nouns, Noun Phrases and Pronouns in the Script of Kung Fu Panda 1*

Type	Number in S	Number in O	Total	Frequency(%)
Agent	49	0	49	42.61
Theme	1	41	42	36.52
Instrument	0	3	3	2.61
Experiencer	13	0	13	11.30
Location	0	1	1	0.87
Source	0	1	1	0.87
Goal	0	6	6	5.22
Total			115	100

Table 3 shows that the semantic roles performed by nouns, noun phrases and pronouns are dominantly Agent, followed by Experiencer and Theme. Other semantic roles are not evident. In the object part, the frequency of Theme is the most, the frequency of Goal is the second, then ranked Instrument, Location and Source, and the rest do not appear. In general, Agent is used most frequently, followed by Theme, Experiencer, Goal, Instrument, Location and Source. Goal is used more frequently than the last few, which indicates that DreamWorks focuses on the Goal expression in cartoon language.

Table 4 *Semantic Roles Nouns, Noun Phrases and Pronouns in the Script of Kung Fu Panda 2*

Type	Number in S	Number in O	Total	Frequency(%)
Agent	36	0	36	40.91
Theme	0	27	27	30.68
Instrument	0	0	0	0
Experiencer	14	0	14	15.91
Location	0	4	4	4.55
Source	0	1	1	1.14
Goal	0	6	6	6.82
Total			88	100

Table 4 shows that in the selected data of Kung Fu Panda 2, the semantic roles of noun, noun phrases and pronouns in the subject part are Agent followed by Experiencer. Other semantic roles are not evident. In terms of the use of semantic roles for the object part, the number of Theme is the largest, followed by Goal, Location and Source, and the remaining semantic roles are not present. On the whole, Agent is the most used, followed by Theme, and Instrument does not appear.

Scripts of cartoon movies with Chinese characters of Mulan and Kung Fu Panda were compared based on semantic features.

Similarities and Differences in the Scripts of Mulan and Kung Fu Panda on the Semantic Level

Figure 1 shows the similarities and differences in the scripts of Mulan and Kung Fu Panda in terms of semantic roles.

As shown in Figure 1, nouns, noun phrases and pronouns perform the semantic roles of Agent and Theme both in Mulan and Kung Fu Panda. In contrast, the semantic roles of nominals as instrument are evident in Kung Fu Panda but not in Mulan. Likewise, the frequency of nominals performing the roles of experiencer, location, source and goal are more evident in Kung Fu Panda than in Mulan.

4. Discussion

According to Arnheim, Teng and Zhu (1998),^[2] the foundation of any art form is the ability to convey a certain meaning, and any form should convey a meaning beyond the form itself. Cartoon as an expression of art form, different cartoon output has its inherent characteristics.

4.1 Limitation of the Study

Though this study has, to some extent, analyzed data

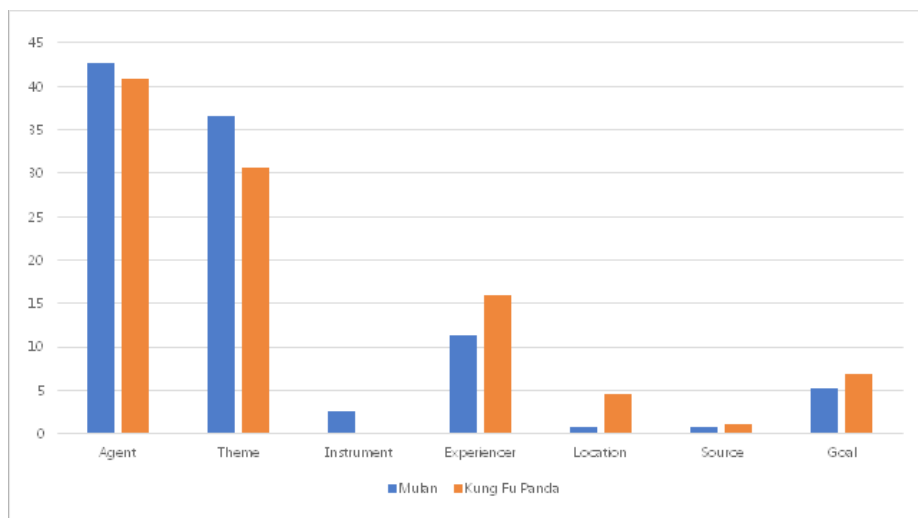


Figure 1. Semantic roles nouns, noun phrases and pronouns in the scripts of Mulan and Kung Fu Panda.

from Walt Disney and DreamWorks, major findings of the study are very tentative and preliminary. Limitations of the study lie mainly in terms of data, linguistic features, theoretical underpinnings and use of ellipsis.

Firstly, only four movie cartoons were used as data. The quantity of the sentences chosen from these four cartoons was too limited to produce a more accurate analysis of the data.

Secondly, the linguistic features analyzed are limited to the theory of semantic roles which cannot give a relatively comprehensive linguistic description of the cartoon movies. On semantic levels, sounds and image were not included.

Thirdly, the semantic analysis of cartoons has not drawn enough attention from researchers in the past decades; hence, relevant theory has not been well established yet. Consequently, very few theoretical references were included in analyzing the data analysis. In addition, due to the limitation of theoretical reference, the analysis results may be partial, unable to fully express the meaning of the analysis results.

Lastly, oral language always use ellipsis which result in the absence of the literal meaning of the sentence, thus affecting the full semantic expression. Because of the particularity of animation language, most of them are presented in a colloquial form. As a result, during the analysis of animation text, the meaning of animation language were lost and the characteristics of animation language were not expressed more accurately.

4.2 Semantic Features of Cartoon Scripts of Mulan and Kung Fu Panda

Semantic roles are the roles performed by the argument nominals as dictated by the verb. They can be categorized as agent, theme, instrument, experiencer, location, source and goal. They may be in the subject or object positions in the sentence.

Both in *Mulan* and *Kung Fu Panda*, agent, experiencer and theme would appear in subject part. On the other hand, nominals which perform the semantic roles of and theme, instrument, location, source and goal are positioned in the object part.

In *Mulan*, the frequency of agent is 40.79%, theme is 38.49%, instrument is 2.30%, experiencer is 11.18%, location is 3.95%, source is 1.32% and goal is 1.97%. The researcher will discuss them by some examples.

Example 1. Shan-Yu is leading them.

Here the verb *leading* is an action in present progressive. The noun, *Shan-Yu*, which is the Mongolian name for tribal leader, performs the role of an agent. The pronoun, *them*, which is influenced by the action performer performs the semantic role of theme.

Example 2. Forgive me, Your Majesty, but I believe my troops can stop him.

The verb, *forgive*, is a word with personal feeling. Therefore, the noun phrase, *your Majesty*, performs the role of experiencer considering that it shows emotion. The pronoun *I*, likewise, performs the role of experiencer as assigned by the verb "believe." *My troops*, the action performer, acts as agent while the pronoun *him* performs the role of theme having been affected by the action.

Example 3. Let me hear you say "aaah"!

The sensory verb, *hear*, emphasizes the feelings of *me* which is offered as experiencer. *You* who is the person affected by *me* and *hear* acts as theme.

Example 4. We will become united through marriage.

The verb *become* assigns the semantic role of agent to *we*. The noun *marriage* performs the semantic role of instrument because of the use of *through*.

Example 5. We're needed at the front.

Needed is in the passive voice; therefore, *we* is the entity influenced by the action. *The front* refers to direction in the sentence; hence, it played the role of location as suggested by the prepositions *at*.

Example 6. Yeah, just enough time to stop Mulan from making the biggest mistake of my...

Mulan, who is the protagonist, is affected by the action *stop*. Therefore, *Mulan* played the semantic role of theme. The use of *from* suggests that the entity after it is the source. Hence, the noun phrase *the biggest mistakes of my ...* played the role of source.

Example 7. I put my heart and soul into busting them up.

Put is an action verb which assigns the semantic role of agent to I. *My heart and soul* both perform the roles of theme having been influenced by the verb *busting*.

The examples cited show that in the scripts of *Mulan*, nouns, noun phrases and pronouns are frequently used as agent. On the contrary, their semantic roles as source were the least. Results suggest the simplicity of the language of animation language. Colloquial language tends to make the plot more life-like.

In *Kung Fu Panda*, the frequency of agent is 41.87%, theme is 33.99%, instrument is 1.48%, experiencer is 13.30%, location is 2.46%, source is 0.99% and goal is 5.91%. Several examples will be discussed as follows.

Example 8. I was dreaming about noodles.

I which is the action performer and does the action *dreaming* acts performs the role of agent. The entity which the person is dreaming about is noodles; hence, *noodles* as the affected entity plays the role of theme.

Example 9. One of the Five is gonna get the Dragon Scroll!

The noun phrase, *one of the five*, acts as the executor of the action. It performs the role of agent in the sentence.

On the other hand, *the Dragon Scroll* performs the role of goal as assigned by the verb *get*.

Example 10. And believe me, citizens, you have not seen anything yet.

Believe is a verb which shows emotion. Hence, the pronoun *me* which is affected by this movement performs the role of experiencer. The noun *citizens* and the pronoun *you*, likewise, perform the role of experiencer. *Anything* is a pronoun which is assigned the role of theme as suggested by the verb *seen*.

Example 11. I see you have found the Sacred Peach Tree of Heavenly Wisdom.

I performs the role of experiencer as assigned by the verb *see*. The noun phrase, *the Sacred Peach Tree of Heavenly Wisdom* is the affected entity.

Example 12. Well, you see, son, baby geese come from a little egg.

See is a sensuous verb which assigns the role of experiencer to the pronoun *you*. The nouns, *son and baby geese*, as the entities performing the actions played the role of agent in this sentence. On the other hand, the expression *a little egg* acts as source because of the using of the expression *come from*.

Example 13. I think...

The expression is an ellipsis where the mental verb *think*. Hence, the pronoun *I* acts as an experiencer.

Example 14. *We're coming for you, Shen!*

We is an entity performing the action; hence, it plays the semantic role of agent.

Based on the data the language used in the animated Kung Fu Panda, the semantic roles of nouns, noun phrases and pronouns are polarized with the highest use frequency of agent and the lowest use frequency of source. Results, likewise, indicate that DreamWorks use a single semantic character to make the script easy to understand.

4.3 The Similarities and Differences between Mulan and Kung Fu Panda

In terms of semantic features, the semantic roles of

agent and experiencer dominated the scripts of both Mulan and Kung Fu Panda. Agents and experiencer are evidently used in the subject position rather than object apparently to make the film easy to understand and to follow.

On the other hand, nouns, noun phrases and pronouns which perform the roles of instrument, location, source and goal are evidently placed in Object position of the sentence. Likewise, the said semantic roles were rarely used in the scripts possibly to avoid complexities. In some cases, however, they were used to supplement the amount of information or to provide details like methods, places and origins of each character.

On the semantic level, the use of nouns, noun phrases and pronouns as agent placed in the subject position is more evident in Kung Fu Panda. It suggests that the scripts in Kung Fu Panda paid more attention to the description of characters.

On the other hand, most of themes are placed in the Object position both in Mulan and Kung Fu Panda, though higher frequency was found in Mulan than in Kung Fu Panda. The semantic role of experiencer are more often used in Kung Fu Panda than in Mulan. This suggests that the scripts of Kung Fu Panda pay more attention to the description of character details or attached great importance to the characterization of the character to impress the audience.

4.4 Contribution of the Study

Because of the very limited studies exploring the semantic analysis of cartoon language, the present study which is deemed exploratory may humbly contribute to semantic analysis of the scripts of cartoons. Likewise, the study may be contributory in the description of language used in Walt Disney and DreamWorks which may provide preliminary view on the language of media intended for the young viewers.

Consequently, the study proposes the very tentative framework of analysis of cartoon language as presented below:

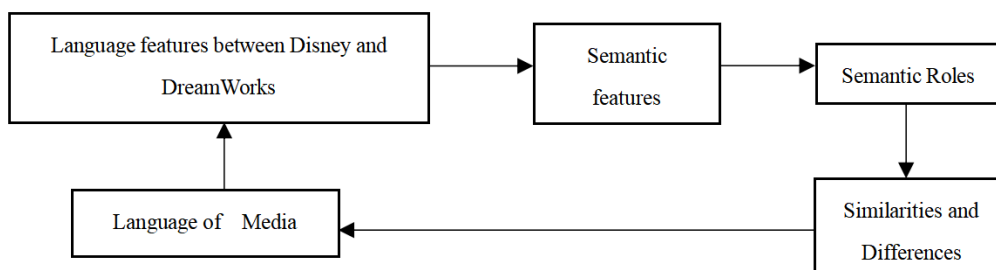


Figure 2. semantic analysis of cartoon scripts with Chinese characters

The framework shows that the language of cartoon scripts may be analyzed semantically, the language of cartoon scripts may be analyzed by focusing on the semantic roles. Any given scripts may be compared or contrasted linguistically to describe the language of media evident in the scripts.

5 Conclusion

On the semantic level, nominals are generally performing the semantic roles of agent and experiencer to ensure actions which are easier to follow and to express emotions which shall have affective appeal to the audience. The roles of instrument, goal, location and source are rarely used because children at their young age might not be ready to understand the flow of events.

Obviously, regardless of the film company, the simplicity of the language of the scripts is evidently a matter of style for cartoon movies.

Considering the limitations of the study, the following are recommended:

Firstly, in order to give a relatively comprehensive linguistic description of the selected cartoons, a multi-modal analysis of cartoon films is recommended. This means paying attention to other levels of language like phonology, morphology and syntax which may display other important linguistic features not spotted due to the time limitation and lack of necessary analytical tools. In addition, other paralinguistic elements like gestures, lights, sound effects, movements and colors may be included in the analysis.

Secondly, since the semantic analysis of cartoons has not drawn enough attention from the researchers in the past decades, relevant theory has not been well established yet. The present study would be more theoretically sound if the theory of cartoons had been fully developed. Methods used in Corpus Linguistics are worthy of attention and more contrastive studies may be necessary if peculiar features are targeted at.

Lastly, since the data selected in the study is quite small to represent the deterministic animation language characteristics of the two companies, the inclusion of more animation films from different companies is recommended.

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