

# Case Study on Movie Poster Title's Chinese Characters Typography Categories: Focused on 2000-2021 Drama Movie Produced by Emperor Motion Pictures

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**Abstract:** The purpose of a movie poster is to convey information about a movie to the general public. It is essential that the title conveys the message of the movies. Due to the increasing globalization of the movie industry, many movie posters are promoted in domestic and foreign markets. As a result, the typography design of movie posters will also incorporate Chinese character elements to promote the movie internationally. It should be noted, however, that there is insufficient literature and theory on Chinese character typography design. Therefore, this study examines the characteristics of Chinese typography elements used in poster titles of total of 41 drama movie posters produced by Emperor Motion Pictures, a leading and influential Chinese-language movie studio, from 2000 to 2021. The analysis started by carrying out a classification of the posters of the plot movie by genre, then conduct specific analysis and research. The content of the analysis combines seven Chinese character typography genres and three typography styles, typography colors, and typography visuals to analyze the characteristics of the typography elements in the poster title. The Chinese characters are divided into seven genres: embodying type(具象型), common type(共用型), curved type(曲线型), elongated type(拉长型), rigid type(刚直型), amputation type(断肢型), and slim type(纤细型). The research results show that the title Chinese character genres and typography style of each type on the plot movie poster has different characteristics. In addition, the visual effects design mainly uses flat, and the colors are designed according to the characteristics of different plot types. Through this research, the researcher have reorganized and interpreted the design characteristics of poster titles of various plot types. In the premise of designing titles and promoting movie poster titles under localization strategy in the international market, the conclusion discussed in this study can be refer to create a more excellent posters containing Chinese character elements to achive better publicity effects.

**Keywords:** Typography Element, Chinese, Drama Movie Poster, Movie Title

## 1. Introduction

Movies from different countries and regions are spreading and influencing each other on the international stage these days Every time a movie is released, the movie producer will release movie posters in advance as promotional materials. While, posters are one of the most important means of publicity for movies. The posters convey the message and feel of a movie, and they are the main source of interest for those who wish to watch the movie[1]. Moreover, because the movie is in the publicity stage, it is necessary to utilize the localization marketing strategy to convert the language in the poster to achieve practical publicity effects. For example, the movie "Thor" is promoted in various countries

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using local languages, as shown in [Fig. 1(a)], [Fig. 1(b)],and [Fig. 1(c)].

Comscore, an American media research and analysis company, estimates that China will surpass North America as the world's largest movie market by 2020[2]. Due to the Localization Marketing Strategy and the trend of internationalization, the use of Chinese characters is becoming more prevalent[3]. As a result, Chinese characters will be used more frequently in movie posters. The average time taken for a poster to enter the public eye is 1.5 seconds, while the longest takes 2 to 3 seconds[4]. Therefore, the typography design on the movie poster plays an important role in conveying information and attracting attention[5]. The title of the movie poster is one of the most prominent parts, and it is the part where the public can receive information most quickly. To summarize the above, the purpose and necessity of this research are as follows. First, the researcher use case analysis of movie titles in posters to illustrate the differences of typography in terms of genres, styles, visual effects, and color design used for movie titles in different contexts. Second, with the trend of internationalization, it is necessary to study the elements of Chinese characters in the design of movie posters. Therefore, this study aims to sort out the design characteristics of Chinese characters in movie poster titles under different circumstances. Third, provide reasonable assistance for a poster design for international and domestic market promotion, and demonstrate design value.



[Fig.1(a)] Movie Poster  
Title Of "Thor" in  
Korean Language



[Fig.1(b)] Movie Poster  
Title Of "Thor" in  
Chinese Language



[Fig.1(c)] Movie Poster  
Title Of "Thor" in  
English

## 2. Theoretical Investigation of Movie Poster Typography

### 2.1 Concept of Movie Poster

In 1895, the first movie poster with title of "Cinematographe Lumiere" was born. The French Lumiere brothers screened short movies such as "The Arrival Of A Train" in a restaurant in Paris with 35 audiences as the targeted movie poster[6]. Through this kind of publicity, it has been proved that a successful movie poster can promote and guarantee the box office and reflect the core concept that the movie wants to convey.



[Fig. 2] The Arrival Of A Train

The first research related to movie poster promotion, "Research on Typography Design in Chinese Movie Posters," sorts out the evolution process of typography design in Chinese movie posters in the 20th century. It describes the different Chinese character genres and, after what factors are affected, the changes between typography, typography styles, and typography layout[7]. In addition, there is an "intertextuality" relationship between the poster and the movie content. "Intertextuality" refers to the property that, in a given text, other texts are explicitly revealed through citations or references. In a broad sense, it refers to "text and text, or the totality of all knowledge that occurs between subjects"[8]. Moreover, the design level and production level of movie posters can also become the standard for judging the level of the national movie industry. Therefore, a successful movie poster can positively influence the industry, allowing the audience to understand the work's genre and the story's theme at the moment they see the poster. The typography in the title of the poster strengthens the audience's understanding of the poster picture and, at the same time, achieves a practical movie promotion effect.

## 2.2 Chinese Character Typography Design Elements

### 2.2.1 Chinese Character Type Genres

There is no difference in the content of the posters, but there is a difference in the Chinese character genres and styles of representation. Despite the fact that the text in the posters is the same, the types and styles of representation vary. A Chinese character typography design is characterized by the structure of the typography form and the expression of emotion. As a result of the characteristics of Chinese character structure and the relationship between strokes, typography conveys visual emotion[9].

With the development of the times, the shape of typography has diversified. The typography styles in movie posters are roughly divided into three types: Serif, San-serif, and Calligraphy[10]. The Chinese character genres are divided into seven genres: embodying type, common type, curved type, elongated type, rigid type, amputation type, and slim type[11].

**Concrete type (具象型):** Concrete type is based on the text's meaning, using a certain image to replace a specific part or a particular stroke of the typography. It is characterized by imagery, realism, and exaggeration, which adds an artistic sense to the typography.

**Common type (共用型):** A technique widely used in typography design. Designers can see the similarities and differences between strokes from the composition perspective, find the internal relationship between strokes and the conditions that can be used together, and extract and merge them.

**Curved type (曲线型):** This typography has more obvious features and lines, and curves are often used to express an elegant feeling. Curved typography is suitable for expressing female themes, and soft curves are more likely to touch people's emotions.

**Elongated type (拉长型):** This Chinese character genres is relatively simple to operate, the effect is also pronounced, and the typography's characteristics are easier to achieve. When designing, the researcher usually make the characters thinner and stretch them up and down to make them look like barcodes.

**Straight type (刚直型):** This typography looks rough, tough, and complete, giving people a sense of power and strong persuasiveness.

**Amputation type (断肢型):** It breaks some strokes or cuts off a small part of a stroke. If the design is not well grasped, the recognition of the characters will be weakened, so the designer should think carefully about breaking the pen.

**Slim type (纤细型):** It has apparent characteristics, with thin strokes, delicate and neat typography, a well-proportioned structure, and a softer, more feminine feel.

[Table 1] Examples of 7 Type Genres

Embodying	Common	Curved	Elongated	Rigid	Amputation	Slim

### 2.2.2 Chinese Character Color and Visual Effect

Attention should be paid to the color and visual effects of the poster design in order to convey the movie's general information and feel quicker and more accurately. Attention, clarity, and association are taken into account in the poster design, and they are expressed through color and visual effects, as well as combined and coordinated with other visual elements of the poster. A typography color analysis of movie titles is performed using the six primary colors of NCS (Natural Color System)[12]. And this paper classifies visual effects into two-dimensional plane performance and three-dimensional performance for spatial analysis and arrangement.



[Fig. 3] 6 Elementary Color



[Fig. 4] NCS Color Circle and Triangle

## 3. Research Scope and Methodology

### 3.1 Research Scope

The survey scope selected for this study is the title of all drama movie posters produced by Emperor Motion Pictures from 2000 to 2021. The choice of the Hong Kong market because of its dynamic, large-scale, and internationally renowned movie and television entertainment industry. Hong Kong is a movie and television production center with a large market share in Asia, especially mainland China[13]. Among them, the business scope of Hong Kong Emperor Motion Pictures includes investment, manufacturing, sales, and distribution of high-quality movies. So far, it has occupied a leading position in the Chinese movie production and distribution industry and is the most active movie producer[14]. Therefore, the researcher chose this company's movie posters for our research. In addition, most of the audience in the movie market at this stage are young or middle-aged people, and real life is closely related to drama themes, which can resonate, [15] and drama movies occupy a large market share.

### 3.2 Research Methodology

The research method of this paper is as follows.

First, through the relevant prior research, the concept of movie posters and Chinese character

typography design is investigated in part of the theorist's investigation.

Next, the analyzation of the typography elements of the Chinese character titles of the movie posters of various feature movies that Emperor Motion Pictures participated in production from 2000 to 2021 is carried out. Then, according to the box office ranking in IMDB Box Office[16], establish the top 8 for example analysis.

In the next step, it will be necessary to examine the interpretability of elements such as typography size, typography, and typography color, as mentioned in "Modern Common Sense Theory"[17]. Our analysis of the typography of the Chinese typography of poster titles is based on Chinese character genres, style, visual effect, and color.

Finally, the application of typography in different plot movie titles is obtained through analysis. The data are organized with tables and figures. In the concluding section, a summary of the design characteristics of typography with visual effects and find the similarities and differences in the design and use of title typography for different genres of movie posters is interpreted.

## 4. Analysis On Typography Elements Of Different Drama Movie Poster Title

### 4.1 Categories of Research Target

All feature movies produced by Emperor Motion Pictures between 2000 and 2021 are analyzed in this study. After classifying the types of drama movies, a study is carried out regarding the typography element of the title of drama movies. Among them, there are twenty-five action movies, sixteen romance movies, seven comedy movies, four family movies, four science fiction movies, three crime movies, two multi-part movies, two war movies, one kung fu movie, and one thriller movie, one historical movie, one ethical movie, one martial art movie, one sports drama, one suspense drama. Due to the limited resources, in-depth research on a relatively small number of movie types is not able to be continued. The purpose of this research is to analyze the typography elements of 41 posters of action drama and drama romance movies. [Table 2] illustrates the organization of the content. Based on the benchmark data from IMDB Box Office, this paper examines the top 8 box office movie posters of various plot movies in detail.

[Table 2] List of Drama Movie of Emperor Motion Pictures between 2000-2021

Drama Movie Genres	Movie's Title	Established Year	Box Office (USD,\$)
Drama Action	The Twins Effect (千机变)	2003	3,804,916
	The Medallion (飞龙再生)	2003	34,268,701
	6 AM (大无谓)	2004	262,265
	Enter the Phoenix (大佬爱美丽)	2004	1,344,920
	The Twins Effect II (千机变2花都大战)	2004	2,481,929
	New Police Story (新警察故事)	2004	8,712,057
	House of Fury (精武家庭)	2005	2,896,536
	The Myth (神话)	2005	6,669,097
	Twins Mission (双子神偷)	2007	793,102
	Beast Stalker (证人)	2008	3,721,332
	Connected (保持通话)	2008	10,365,850
	Kung Fu Dunk (功夫灌篮)	2008	22,994,406
	Shinjuku Incident (新宿事件)	2009	5,461,200
	Triple Tap (枪王之王)	2010	1,533,527

	The Stool Pigeon (线人)	2010	9,783,637
	Shaolin (新少林寺)	2011	42,982,973
	Assault Fire (逆战)	2012	5,712,014
	The Last Supper (王的盛宴)	2013	48,502
	As the Light Goes Out (救火英雄)	2014	15,973,348
	Kung Fu Killer (一个人的武林)	2014	24,070,765
	Gone with the Bullets (一步之遥)	2015	81,387,479
	Cook Up a Storm (决战食神)	2017	17,677,325
	Hidden Man (邪不压正)	2018	85,170,581
	Cliff Walkers (悬崖之上)	2021	181,325,565
Drama Romance	Heroes in Love (恋爱起义)	2001	297,566
	Funeral March (常在我心)	2001	15,224,286
	Time 4 Hope (二人三足)	2002	1,983,846
	Demi-Haunted (魂魄唔齐)	2002	718,933
	Bug Me Not (虫不知)	2005	322,488
	Everlasting Regret (长恨歌)	2005	1,674,307
	The Knot (云水谣)	2006	12,118,896
	The Drummer (战鼓)	2007	9,645,732
	Forever Enthralled (梅兰芳)	2009	14,153,680
	Ex (前度)	2010	634,580
	Diva (华丽之后)	2012	777,542
	Never Said Goodbye (谎言西西里)	2016	10,098,935
	Love in Late Autumn (爱在深秋)	2016	160,854
	Heaven In The Dark (暗色天堂)	2016	416,649
	The Lady Improper (非分熟女)	2019	859,289
	Only Cloud Knows (只有云知道)	2020	698,367

#### 4.2 Analysis on Movie Poster's Title of Drama Action Movie

A majority of movie posters with curved typography are found in drama action movies, which account for 32% of the total. Most movie posters with curved typography are found in drama action movies, which account for 32% of the total. According to the sample, 60% of the typography styles were san-serif, while 20% were serif and calligraphy. W (white) is the most commonly used color in movie titles. Due to the fact that this is an drama action movie, the typography color conveys a sense of grandiosity and solemnity. The analysis of movie titles indicates that flat visual effects account for more than 60% of the visual effects. For example, [Table 3] shows the analysis content of the top 8 drama action movie posters.













#### 4.3 Analysis on Movie Poster's Title of Drama Romance Movie

Based on the classification results of movie poster Chinese character genres, drama romance movies are the most common, accounting for 25% of the total. 18.75% of the samples were slim types. In addition, the embodying type, curved type, rigid type, and amputation type accounted for 12.5%, while the elongated type accounted for 4%. There were 43.75% serifs, 31.25% calligraphy, and 25% san-serifs among the typography styles. R (Red) is the most commonly used color in movie titles. This is because

it is a romance drama, so the color of the typography conveys a romantic feeling to the audience. It has been determined that flat visual effects accounted for 68.75% of the visual effects in movie titles. Based on the top eight box office drama romance movie posters as an example, [Table 4] presents the results of our analysis.

[Table 3] Case Study on Poster's Title of Drama Action Movie

Poster and Title	Movie's Title	
 Cliff Walkers (悬崖之上)		
	Type Genres	Type Style
	Curved(曲线型)	Calligraphy
	Visual Effect	Color (NCS)
Flat	 S1040-R80B(B)	
Poster and Title	Movie's Title	
 Hidden Man (邪不压正)		
	Type Genres	Type Style
	Rigid(刚直型)	San-serif
	Visual Effect	Color (NCS)
Flat	 S0300-N(W)	
Poster and Title	Movie's Title	
 Gone with the Bullets (一步之遥)		
	Type Genres	Type Style
	Curved(曲线型)	Serif
	Visual Effect	Color (NCS)
Stereoscopic	 S0570-Y10R(Y)	
Poster and Title	Movie's Title	
 Shaolin (新少林寺)		
	Type Genres	Type Style
	Curved(曲线型)	Calligraphy
	Visual Effect	Color (NCS)
Flat	 S0300-N(W)	
Poster and Title	Movie's Title	
		
	Type Genres	Type Style

 The Medallion (飞龙再生)	Rigid(刚直型)	San-serif
	Visual Effect	Color (NCS)
	Stereoscopic	 S0505-R(R)
Poster and Title	Movie's Title	
 Kung Fu Killer (一个人的武林)		
	Type Genres	Type Style
	Amputatin(断肢型)	San-serif
	Visual Effect	Color (NCS)
	Flat	 S2060-Y50R(R)  S2070-Y90R(R)
Poster and Title	Movie's Title	
 Kung Fu Dunk (功夫灌篮)		
	Type Genres	Type Style
	Common(共用型)	San-serif
	Visual Effect	Color (NCS)
	Flat	 S0300-N(W)
Poster and Title	Movie's Title	
 Cook Up a Storm (决战食神)		
	Type Genres	Type Style
	Curved(曲线型)	Serif
	Visual Effect	Color (NCS)
	Stereoscopic	 S1030-Y(Y)

[Table 4] Case Study on Poster's Title of Drama Romance Movie

 Funeral March (常在我心)	Movie's Title	
		
	Type Genres	Type Style
	Common(共用型)	San-serif
	Visual Effect	Color (NCS)
 Forever Enthralled (梅兰芳)		
	Type Genres	Type Style
	Slim(纤细型)	Calligraphy
	Visual Effect	Color (NCS)
	Stereoscopic	 S1515-Y30R(Y)



	Visual Effect	Color (NCS)
	Flat	 S1085-Y80R(R)
Poster and Title	Movie's Title	
		
The Knot (云水谣)	Type Genres	Type Style
	Curved(曲线型)	Serif
	Visual Effect	Color (NCS)
	Stereoscopic	 S2005-Y60R(R)
Poster and Title	Movie's Title	
		
Never Said Goodbye (谎言西里)	Type Genres	Type Style
	Common(共用型)	San-serif
	Visual Effect	Color (NCS)
	Flat	S0300-N(W)
Poster and Title	Movie's Title	
		
The Drummer (战鼓)	Type Genres	Type Style
	Slim (纤细型)	Calligraphy
	Visual Effect	Color (NCS)
	Flat	 S1080-Y80R(R)
Poster and Title	Movie's Title	
		
Time 4 Hope (二人三足)	Type Genres	Type Style
	Common(共用型)	San-serif
	Visual Effect	Color (NCS)
	Stereoscopic	 S1030-G60Y(Y)
Poster and Title	Movie's Title	
		
Everlasting Regret (长恨歌)	Type Genres	Type Style
	Slim (纤细型)	Calligraphy
	Visual Effect	Color (NCS)
	Flat	 S1085-Y80R(R)
Poster and Title	Movie's Title	
		
The Lady Improper (非诚勿扰)	Type Genres	Type Style
	Common(共用型)	Calligraphy
	Visual Effect	Color (NCS)
	Flat	S0300-N(W)

#### 4.4 Comprehensive Analytic Results

Based on the content of the above analysis, the following results are obtained.

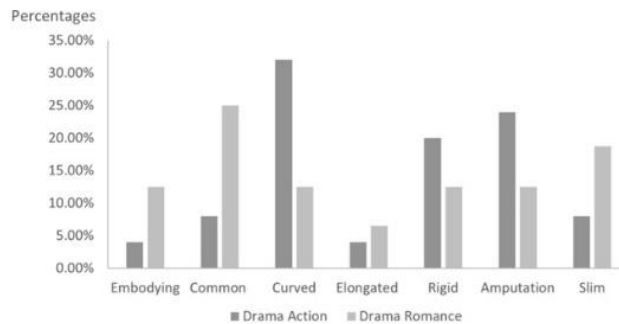
[Table 5] Analysis of Chinese Character Type Genres of Drama Movie

Movie Genres/ Type Genres	Drama Action		Drama Romance	
	Quantity(EA)	Percentages	Quantity(EA)	Percentages
Embodying	1	4%	2	12.5%
Common	2	8%	4	25%
Curved	8	32%	2	12.5%
Elongated	1	4%	1	6.25%
Rigid	5	20%	2	12.5%
Amputatin	6	24%	2	12.5%
Slim	2	8%	3	18.75%

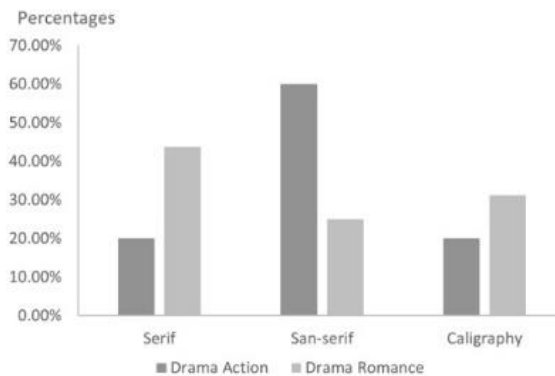
[Table 6] Analysis of Chinese Character Type Styles of Drama Movie

Movie Genres/ Type Style	Drama Action		Drama Romance	
	Quantity(EA)	Percentages	Quantity(EA)	Percentages
Serif	5	20%	7	43.75%
San-serif	15	60%	4	25%
Calligraphy	5	20%	5	31.25%

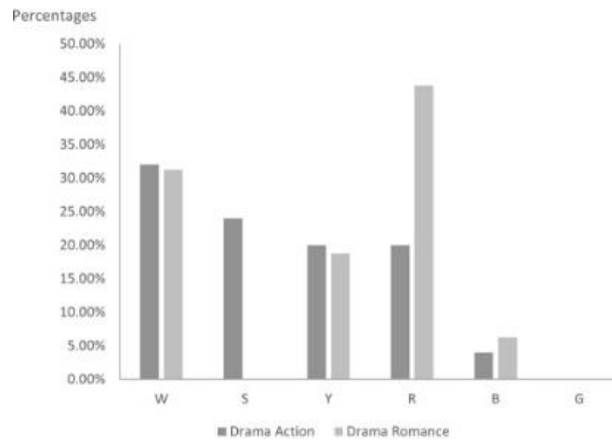
Below are the results of the analysis of the two plot types. In drama action movie poster titles, curved and san-serif typography is most commonly used, while serif and common typography are most commonly used in drama romance movie poster titles. The related content can be seen in [Fig. 5] and [Fig.6]. Based on the color analysis of movie titles shown in [Fig. 7], W (white) is most commonly used in drama action movie posters, and R (red) is most commonly used in drama romance movie posters. The primary colors used in these two plot movie poster titles are W (white) and R (red). These two types of movies do not use the color G (green) in their posters.



[Fig. 5] Comprehensive Analysis of Chinese Character Type Genres of Drama Movie



[Fig. 6] Comprehensive Analysis of Chinese Character Type Style of Drama Movie



[Fig. 7] Comprehensive Analysis of Chinese Character Type Color of Drama Movie

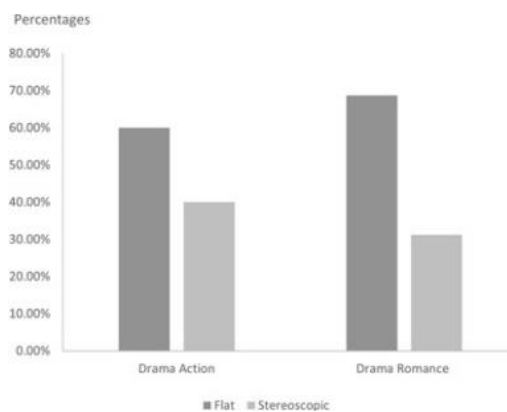
[Table 7] Analysis of Chinese Character Type Color of Drama Movie

	Drama Action	Drama Romance
W	32%	43.75%
S	24%	-
Y	20%	18.75%
R	20%	31.25%
B	4%	6.25%
G	-	-

Judging from the visual effect analysis results of movie poster titles, 60% of drama action movie posters use flat visual effects, and the remaining 40% use stereoscopic visual effects. Among drama romance movie posters, 68.75% of the titles used flat visual effects, and 31.25% used stereoscopic visual effects. In [Table 8], collation of the results of the visual analysis of the titles of feature movie posters is stated. The results show that the planar visual effect design proportion is higher than the stereoscopic design.

[Table 8] Analysis of Chinese Character Type Visual Effect of Drama Movie

	Drama Action	Drama Romance
Flat	60%	68.75%
Stereo	40%	31.25%



[Fig. 8] Comprehensive Analysis of Chinese Character Type Visual Effect of Drama Movie

## 5. Conclusion

This study analyzed the Chinese character genres, typography style, typography color, and visual effects of the poster titles of two types, drama action and drama romance movies, and obtained the following results.

First, the most commonly used Chinese typography for titles in plot movie posters is a combination of curved type and san-serif characters. The visual effects are flatter. It is designed in the form of curves, combined with san-serif mechanical fonts, to convey the dynamic and majestic feeling of drama action movies to the audience. In addition, white is used in this movie genre since it is an action drama, which gives the viewer a sense of solemnity. The combination of these designs conveys the movie's main message. The overall design can be more appealing as well as enriching the poster's content. The additional benefit of using such designs for poster promotion is that they convey information effectively, provide visual effects, and improve publicity quality.

Second, in drama romance movie posters, the most frequently used Chinese character typography elements in titles combine common type and serif typography. The visual effect design of the title is based on flat visual effects. The most used color is red. Because it is a plot movie related to romance, the overall typography of the movie poster title uses the design method of typography strokes connected, combined with the elegance of the serif typography, which can make the audience feel the attachment and beauty of romance. At the same time, the designer used red to make the audience feel the romantic atmosphere. Through these designs, the drama romance movie posters are endowed with a stronger and more beautiful feeling, allowing the audience to associate the plot and achieve the purpose of leaving a more profound impression on them.

From the total point of view of the analysis results, this paper summarizes the application characteristics of the typography of the titles in the plot movie posters produced by the famous Emperor Motion Pictures in the past 20 years. However, the limitation of this study is that it only studies the titles of drama movie posters produced in Hong Kong in regions where the usage rate of Chinese characters is relatively high in the international market. Nowadays, most movie posters' titles are still designed with flat visual effects. It will be more interesting if the design is transformed into a three-dimensional effect in the future. Therefore, it is hoped that in future plot movie posters, more research on typography elements can be carried out, not only on the movie titles in the posters but also on the typography used in other content in the posters. Under the current trend of internationalization, the usage rate of Chinese characters is also increasing.

Furthermore, as far as the country is concerned, it has a high status in the international movie market, so this paper can also be referred to in the promotional design of posters in various languages. The design of typesetting elements in the design of industry-related poster titles can also be referred to this article. In the future, the poster design will be more diversified, and the promotion of movies will be more effective. Moreover, scholars can conduct additional correlation research on the characteristics of the Chinese character typography elements applied to the plot movie poster titles to give full play to the value of Chinese character typography in design.

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