

"One trailer to bring them all and in the darkness bind them?" – *The Lord of the Rings* Trailers and their Communicative Functions

Abstract

Within film marketing, trailers have developed as the most effective way of advertising new films since the first days of cinema (Hediger, "Gedächtnis" 112). Setting out from a marketing perspective on film trailers, this paper combines a multimodal analysis of *The Lord of the Rings* trailers with Roman Jakobson's functions of language (*On Language*), using the latter as a framework to describe the trailers' communicative functions on their micro levels, i.e. concerning certain modes like image, speech, writing etc. as well as the interrelations of these modes.

A first comparison between twelve different film trailers shows a clear development from the very first trailer, aimed at advertising the whole trilogy, to the different trailers of the single films and the ones advertising the Blu-ray and extended edition of the trilogy. All of them must be seen in close connection to the well planned marketing strategy of the trilogy, which aimed at readers of the literary original and simultaneously needed to attract new spectators. For both purposes, certain (multi)modal patterns are used, which can be assigned to certain communicative functions.

Finally, the question of the communicative functions of trailers is considered within the contemporary context of media convergence, which has been essential for the economic success of *The Lord of the Rings* film trilogy.

1 Introduction and objectives: film trailers within the film marketing strategy

Setting out from Vinzenz Hediger's claim that film trailers are "the key element of every film advertising campaign" (*Verführung* 13, my translation, see also "Gedächtnis" 112),¹ this paper takes into scrutiny the functions that trailers can and do develop on various (textual) levels. With *The Lord of the Rings*² trilogy being not only a blockbuster movie (Mikos et al. 19), but also a very effectively marketed film franchise, it is a special case in several aspects,

1 "Der Kinotrailer ist das Schlüsselement jeder Filmwerbekampagne."

2 Henceforth referred to as *LotR*.

which is why a closer look at two important aspects of its commercial context will be taken so to provide a frame of reference for the following trailer analysis. Both, I claim, are not only relevant for the marketing of the trilogy, but will also be discernible within modally constructed trailer functions.

Firstly, as a film adaptation of a world-famous work of fantasy literature (although not intended or labelled as such by Tolkien himself), the films and their marketing could seize the opportunity that *LotR* was considered pre-sold property (Mikos et al. 56): The literary classic by J.R.R. Tolkien being well-known, it created a high number of readers potentially interested in a film adaptation as well as a pre-existing community of fans the producers could count on (Mikos et al. 56, 65). Consequently, the *LotR* marketing strategy explicitly included leaking background information about the production of the films, giving interviews etc. for the potential audience and embraced the possibility of an independent fan culture (Shefrin 262, 266, Thompson 140-141). The fan factor had an effect not only on the films themselves, which had to comply with rather high standards of authenticity if the production was not to put off this highly lucrative fan base. Also, the producers had a tentative idea about the film audience quite early and could adapt their ways of advertising the film.

Secondly, as a film franchise,³ *LotR* comprises not only one but three films that were released in three consecutive years. It also included other media products, from accompanying books to DVDs and video games. At the same time, the *LotR* trilogy can be assigned blockbuster status because of its economic success,⁴ which in turn relies on strategic choices within production and marketing. Mikos et al. (74) attribute the success of *LotR* mainly to the well-timed utilization of pre-sold property and cross-media marketing,⁵ all contributing to the aim of keeping (potential) viewers interested:

3 Janet Wasko and Govind Shanadi consider the *LotR* trilogy a “nearly ideal franchise” (24) for “its already established popularity”, “its appeal across demographic groups” and “its merchandise potential” (ibid.). Contrary to reducing a franchise to “mean simply sequels” (ibid. 23), or arguing against this classification because the trilogy was shot in one go (Hedling 226), which is another untypical factor from a production perspective (Mikos et al. 57), I follow Wasko and Shanadi in their definition of franchise as “a property or concept that is repeatable in multiple media platforms or outlets with merchandising and tie-in potentials” (23).

4 For example, Iversen classifies *The Return of the King* as a blockbuster for its market share of about 60 percent (178).

5 For a detailed list of characteristics of blockbusters see Lewis 66-68, summed up by Mikos et al. 20-21.

Letting the fans find out enough to keep them intrigued without allowing them to divulge too much is a balancing act that Hollywood has still not fully mastered. Peter Jackson's clever handling of the problem provides a model that will surely be taken up by others (Thompson 134).

Within film advertising, trailers as well as posters and advertisements in magazines etc. count as rather classical i.e. conventional devices (Mikos et al. 70). But, considering the auditory and visual complexity of trailers, two questions arise: What can be learned from a micro analysis of trailers and how do they tie in with the macro strategy of the franchise? For an answer to either of these two questions, two aspects shall be elaborated upon in this explorative study of twelve *LotR* trailers: Applying Jakobson's functions of speech, as outlined in his *On Language*, to the functions of a trailer, (1) I argue that there are certain patterns of modes for certain communicative functions. (2) Moreover, I hypothesize that, due to the early publication of the first trailer in 2000 (Mikos et al. 70), a development from this first trailer to the final one for the extended edition Blu-ray (2011)⁶ can be observed in that the multimodal structures and the functions arising from them change over time. Although different situations of watching a trailer (for example in the cinema, or on a website) can be considered, my main focus lies on the trailers themselves, i.e. their structure and functions. So, before elaborating on relevant issues of multimodality and Jakobson's model, the selection of the corpus shall be explained.

2 The Corpus: Trailers for *The Lord of the Rings*

Not only for independent movies, as Iversen has shown (188-190), but also for blockbuster movies, word-of-mouth advertising is an essential factor for the decision to see a certain film (Prommer 222). Considering the importance of pre-existing *LotR* readers, fan cultures and the fact that a satisfying film adaptation of the books had been regarded as impossible for a long time (Mikos et al. 56), the producers had to be careful not to put off their most precious target audience, but instead take their expectations into account from the very beginning (ibid. 65):

6 www.engadget.com

Many fans were also extremely skeptical [*sic*] about the movie. The studio and filmmakers tried to reassure these people via the Internet. Like the film itself, the Internet campaign had to both appeal to the built-in fan base and create a new, larger audience. Given that more than three years passed between New Line's acquisition of the project and the premiere of *Fellowship*, the wooing of these two publics was lengthy and convoluted. (Thompson 140)

Despite the seemingly large diversity of the examined *LotR* trailers, of which an overview is given in Table 1, they can all be assigned the main economic function of attracting viewers for the advertised film (Maier 160). Considering that the economic exploitation of filmic material does not stop after its screening in the cinemas, as marketing explicitly counts on the sale of ancillary products like DVDs and other merchandise to keep up the interest in the whole trilogy, pitching the trilogy effectively from the start seemed especially important.

	Name	Time m:ss	Source/ YouTube Channel	Release Date
Released before the trilogy				
0-1	<i>The Lord of the Rings</i> (first trailer 2000)	1:43	Alex Nuñez	7-04-2000
0-2	<i>The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring</i> – Trailer	1:42	Warner Movies On Demand	12-01-2001
Released prior to <i>The Fellowship of the Ring</i> (FotR)				
1-1	<i>The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring</i> (2001) Official Trailer #1 – Ian McKellen Movie HD	2:04	Warner Movies On Demand	25-06-2002
1-2	<i>The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring</i> (2001) Official Trailer #2 – Elijah Wood Movie HD	2:54	Movieclips Trailer Vault	24-09-2001
Released prior to <i>The Two Towers</i> (TTT)				
2-1	<i>The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers</i> – Trailer	2:04	Warner Movies On Demand	25-06-2002

	Name	Time m:ss	Source/ YouTube Channel	Release Date
2-2	<i>The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers</i> (2002) Official Trailer #2 – Orlando Bloom Movie HD	3:07	Movieclips Trailer Vault	30 September 2002
Released prior to <i>The Return of the King</i> (RotK)				
3-1	<i>The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King</i> (2003) – Theatrical Trailer #2	1:03	Forever Cinematic Trailers	30 July 2003
3-2	<i>The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King</i> (2003) Official Trailer – Sean Astin Movie HD	3:00	Movieclips Trailer Vault	27 September 2003
Released after the trilogy				
4-1	<i>The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring</i> -Special Extended DVD Edition Trailer [HD]	3:04	Movies Fan	2002
4-2	<i>The Lord of the Rings</i> Trilogy (2001-2003) Official Blu-ray Trailer LOTR Movie HD	2:01	Movieclips Trailer Vault	March 2010
4-3	<i>The Lord of the Rings</i> Motion Picture Trilogy: Extended Edition – Trailer	2:13	Warner Bros. Home Enter- tainment	2011
4-4	<i>The Lord of the Rings</i> Motion Picture Trilogy: Extended Edition – Trailer 2	1:01	Warner Bros. Home Enter- tainment	2011

Table 1: Corpus of *LotR* trailers⁷⁷ Henceforth, trailer references are given by stating the number of the trailer and the time, using min:sec.

As will be shown, trailers played a central part in the marketing of *LotR* as they could appeal to different audiences with different background knowledge of the literary original. However, research on the respective trailers has been wanting, with only a few exceptions.⁸ This is especially striking as two trailers were even awarded a “Golden Trailer Award” (www.goldentrailer.com), which can be considered a confirmation of their quality.⁹ Therefore, this study aims at incorporating a variety of trailers, from teaser trailers, that is short trailer versions, to (full) trailers of the special editions, which were released after the screenings in the cinema. With this spectrum, I hope to give a generalizable overview of the role of trailers for the *LotR* trilogy.

For this explorative study, those twelve trailers described in Table 1 will be compared: namely two trailers for the whole trilogy, and two trailers each per the three films respectively. After elaborating on emerging (multi)modal patterns within trailers and their relation to Jakobsonian functions in 3.3, in section 3.4 I will analyse the diachronic development of trailers. Considering the large time span covered (2000-2011), I hypothesize that the trailers will differ not only in their functions, but also in their form, that is modal structure. This tentative development might be especially interesting regarding a comparison with the four trailers that appeared after the films, one for the special extended edition of *The Fellowship of the Ring*¹⁰ on DVD, one for a HD version of the trilogy on Blu-ray, and two for the extended edition on Blu-ray. All trailers were retrieved from YouTube, where they were available during the analysis (October/November 2016).

According to several sources, the first trailer (referred to as “0-1” in my analysis) was published in 2000 on the official website of the trilogy, www.lordoftherings.net, reaching 1.7 million downloads in the first 24 hours (Thompson 141, 346;¹¹ Mikos et al. 67, 70; www.theonering.net). As a film version of a well-known literary work, *LotR* could target a more specific audience than other trailers of

⁸ See for example Hedling, Prommer, and Thompson (133-165).

⁹ In 2003, a trailer for *The Two Towers* won an award for “Best Action”, in 2004, a trailer for *The Return of the King* was awarded “Best Drama”. There is no information as to which of the several trailers are referred to.

¹⁰ Henceforth referred to as *FotR*.

¹¹ According to Thompson’s note, and also to other sources, she must be referring to 7 April 2000 in the text (141).

new films, and was thus, at least partly, directly aimed at fans. This might be the reason for (untypically) including footage from the production of the films, especially in this first trailer, which was part of the internet campaign (Thompson 140). The second trailer for the whole trilogy ("0-2") featured more common trailer elements, like film scenes, and was released in 2001 (Mikos et al. 70). Later that year, the teaser ("1-1") and full trailer ("1-2") for *The Fellowship of the Ring* were published in May and September, respectively (www.theonering.net). A similar timeline was followed for the trailers of *The Two Towers*,¹² and *The Return of the King*,¹³ each being announced by a teaser in the preceding summer and a full trailer in September. Finally, the release dates of the trailers for the trilogy editions were harder to find out as they could only be tracked online (see Table 1). On that basis, I assume the given chronological order of the trailers, beginning with the one for the DVD of *FotR* ("4-1"), then the HD Blu-ray version of the trilogy ("4-2"),¹⁴ and finally the two trailers for the Blu-ray extended edition ("4-3" and "4-4").

3 A multimodal trailer analysis

Taking the larger frame of marketing as a starting point, this chapter seeks to shed light on the micro-level of trailers and the question of how emerging (multi)modal patterns may contribute to certain communicative functions of trailers within the marketing strategy of the whole franchise. To this aim, it is first necessary to define the concept of *multimodality*, which my analysis builds upon (3.1), in order to then apply Jakobson's six functions of language (*On Language*) in a multimodal analysis of film trailers (3.2). Jakobson's pragmatic view of language as a tool of communication (*Language* 49) and his interdisciplinary interests in music and film (Pomorska and Rudy 409) and influences, e.g. on semiotics (Waugh and Monville-Burston 41), make an adaption seem especially promising for multimodal analyses.

¹² Henceforth referred to as *TTT*.

¹³ Henceforth referred to as *RotK*.

¹⁴ Although this Blu-ray set has been "distributed exclusively in Canada by Alliance Films" (4-2, 1:57), I explicitly include this trailer for reasons of comparability.

3.1 Multimodality and film trailers

According to Carmen Maier, one of the few researchers of film trailers,¹⁵ “film trailers are multimodal texts in which several semiotic modes are combined [...] to attain a promotional purpose” (160). Thus, compared with a purely linguistic analysis, a multimodal focus provides a much more complex perspective, which not only examines one mode (e.g. language), but also the interrelation between different modes (e.g. speech, moving image and music). An agreement on the definition of mode proves difficult, however, considering that since the first appearance of the term *multimodality* in the 1990s (Jewitt, Bezemer and O’Halloran 2), at least three approaches to *multimodality* can be named, each with their own focus and methods: these are Systemic Functional Linguistics, Social Semiotics, and Conversation Analysis (ibid. 8-13).¹⁶ Considering their differences, it becomes clear that reaching a consensus about a definition of multimodality is not easy. On the contrary,

there are several sources of difficulty in providing definitions capable of serving as the foundation for further, more precise investigations into multimodal artefacts and how such artefacts manifest and manipulate the modes they deploy. One that is particularly tenacious has been the common linking of ‘mode’ with *sensory* modalities [...]. (Bateman 77)

This is the case when the classification of modes relies on the sensory channel of perception, leading to a core distinction of visual, auditory, and other, e.g. haptic or olfactory modes. John Bateman criticises that this link may lead to rash categorisations of modes, as “too often it is presumed that one knows which particular modes are operative in an artefact even prior to investigation” (ibid.). Maier (161) solves this difficulty by providing concrete elements or resources to her otherwise sensory selection of verbal, visual, and aural modes,¹⁷ e.g. a differentiation of the verbal mode into written and oral, and further distinctions as to the source of the utterance, e.g. (non-)diegetic voice-over narrator or scenes from the film. For my purpose, I will primarily rely on Gunther Kress’ widely acknowledged definition, whose degree of abstraction lies between Maier’s modes and their elements:

¹⁵ See also Maier as well as the monographs by Lisa Kernan (*Coming Attractions*), Keith M. Johnston (*Coming Soon*) and Vinzenz Hediger (*Verführung*).

¹⁶ For further details on the difficulties of definition see Bateman 75-77.

¹⁷ She elaborates “verbal elements”, “visual resources” and “auditory elements” (161).

Mode is a socially shaped and culturally given resource for making meaning. *Image, writing, layout, music, gesture, speech, moving image, soundtrack* are examples of modes used in representation and communication. (60)

In my multimodal trailer analysis, I will focus on a selection of Kress' modes, viz. moving image, writing, speech, music and soundtrack (Figure 1). On the basis of a tabular transcription of the trailers like in Table 3, the employed modes will be assigned to Jakobson's functions and discussed accordingly. Following Hartmut Stöckl's arrangement of modes in a "hierarchically structured and networked system" (12-13), I will distinguish between modes from visual (moving image) channels on the one hand, and such from auditory channels (music and sound) on the other. This distinction in visual and auditory channels describes the sensory origin of the modes, without equating the channel with the mode itself. Channels as an additional level are a helpful way of explaining special cases like that of language, which becomes visible in Figure 1.

	STÖCKL		KRESS	C. MAIER
SENSORY CHANNEL	CORE MODES	MEDIAL VARIANTS	MODES	MODES
VISUAL	image	static dynamic	image	visual mode
	language	static writing animated writing speech	writing	
				verbal mode
AUDITORY	sound		speech	aural mode
	music	performed music score/sheet music	sound music	

Figure 1: Classification of modes according to Stöckl (13), Kress (60) and Maier (161)

"The overlapping mode on both levels [channels in Stöckl's words] is that of language, which is available in written form on the visual level and as speech

on the auditory levels” (Wildfeuer 34). Keeping in mind Kress’ claim of the “implausibility of a mode called ‘language’” (64), I will bisect language into writing and speech. A sixth mode of filmic aspects mainly describes editing, while other filmic factors like lighting, *mise-en-scène* or shot size are subsumed under the mode images.

3.2 Jakobson’s functions of language in *The Lord of the Rings* trailers

While language in spoken and written form is an essential, albeit not exclusive element of meaning-making, Roman Jakobson’s functions of language contribute a model that is applicable to complex multimodal structures like trailers. As I have stated elsewhere (Krebs 19-20), this is mainly because of Jakobson’s interdisciplinary and functional approach to language. He focused on speech events and specified the functions of language in six “factors of the speech event” instead of describing general “factors of language” (*On Language* 72-73). Analogously, I will refer to the communication situation of watching a trailer as “trailer event”. Within a speech, or trailer, event, Jakobson furthermore pointed out that language usually contains more than one function, which I assume especially relevant for trailers, too. He

did not see the functions as absolute or exclusive but stressed that a verbal message usually fulfils several functions, which are hierarchically ordered and whose predominant function is responsible for its verbal structure (*On Language* 73, see also Waugh 58). This relative nature can also be applied to the factors themselves, so that e.g. the addresser does not necessarily have to consist of one unit, but can be subdivided further, for example in author and narrator, and even further speakers (Waugh 57-58). (Krebs 21)

This assumption of simultaneously occurring but differently weighted functions and factors of speech can be found in a trailer event, too. As mentioned above, the main function of a trailer is to advertise its film, which may be understood as a predominant *conative* function that seeks to address the recipient(s) of the message. But at the same time, trailers – or rather the producers of the film and the trailer(s) – will wish to inform the viewers about the date of the theatrical release or, sometimes, simply entertain the audience, which make up other, subordinated functions, which are constructed multimodally.

3.2.1 Factors of the trailer event

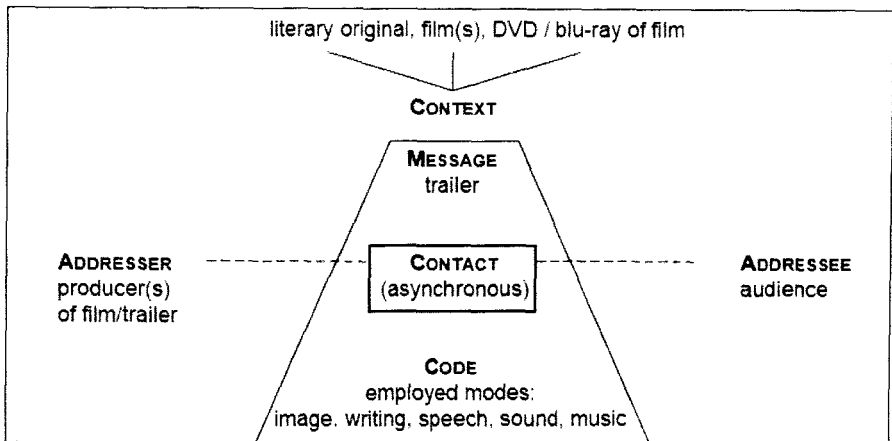


Figure 2: Factors of the trailer event, adapted version from Roman Jakobson (*On Language 77*)

The main factors in a trailer event based on Jakobson's speech event (*On Language 77*) are the *addresser*, who stands for the producers of trailer and/or film and the *addressee*, i.e. the audience of a trailer. Although film producers usually engage independent trailer production companies, Ant Farm in case of *LotR* (www.goldentrailer.com), these normally rely on the filmic material of the production company of the film, for *LotR* New Line Cinema (Internet Movie Database). This, additionally to the fact that the trailer is not created by one single person, makes the question of the addresser hard to pinpoint. The advertised film functions as the *context* which the trailer (*message*) refers to. As a film adaptation, *LotR* offers the original literary narrative as an additional dimension of context. Thus, in order to appeal to readers and non-readers alike, using films and books as *context* of the trailers was a prerequisite for an effective marketing strategy of the film, which is why, in my model of the trailer event, I divide context into film and book context. The further differentiation of the film context in film(s) and DVD / Blu-ray of film will be focussed on in 3.4.

The definition of *contact* is more complex, as the trailer event is, unlike face to face communication, asynchronous, in that addresser and addressee do not share

the same time frame. Instead, the expression of the message clearly precedes its perception, offering no possibility of direct feedback by the addressee. In figure 2, the broken line between addresser and addressee signals this indirect contact. The connecting element is the message, i.e. trailer, itself. Jakobson defines *contact* as “a physical channel and psychological connection between the addresser and the addressee, enabling both of them to enter and stay in communication” (*On Language* 73, *Selected Writings* 113). While the conduit metaphor (cf. Reddy) of a physical channel underlying this idea should be considered, the (physical) comprehension of a trailer can in fact be supported or impaired by e.g. technical influences of the sound or projection system, or, when watching the trailer online, the quality of one’s internet connection. Still, the relevance of the psychological connection and the aim of its extension seems more important than the physical connection, e.g. when it comes to the audience’s attention. The psychological connection is foregrounded when the addresser is speaking for the sake of speaking, that is, mainly in order to stay in contact with their addressee, e.g. by prolonging the conversation. In this respect, I propose that Jakobson’s idea of contact (*On Language* 73, *Selected Writings* 113) can be widened for trailer events. An attempt of the addressers to stay in touch with their addressees in case of trailers can be the presentation of the website address of the advertised film. This encourages the audience to visit the website of the film, maybe watch the trailer again, or even literally get in touch with the producers, for example by using a comment function.

Finally, “whenever the addresser or the addressee needs to check up whether they use the same code, speech is focused on the CODE” (*On Language* 75-76), entailing the use of metalanguage. Metalanguage, that is language about language, is thus often used for explanatory or comprehension purposes. In trailers, which do not dispose of language as their only code, this factor can be realised via other modes, too, which refer to any other mode on the meta level. Because of the close connection between the message and the code, both are visualised within the same trapezium (Figure 2).

3.2.2 Functions of trailers

The factors of Jakobson’s communicative model fulfil certain functions, which will be described in the following by means of using examples from *LotR* trail-

ers. After that, general modal preferences of communicative functions in *LotR* trailers will be identified.

Linguistically, the conative function “finds its purest grammatical expression in the vocative and imperative” (*On Language* 74). In the *LotR* trailers, such a direct appeal is only used for the promotion of the Blu-ray editions (4-2, 1:56; 4-3, 2:08, see Figure 3; 4-4, 0:56). The audience is rather addressed indirectly by e.g. indicating the release date of the films in writing (Figure 4), which can count as a request or an invitation for watching this film. The use of second person singular pronouns can have a similar effect (Figure 5).



Figure 3: 4-3, 2:08, Look for it on Blu-ray

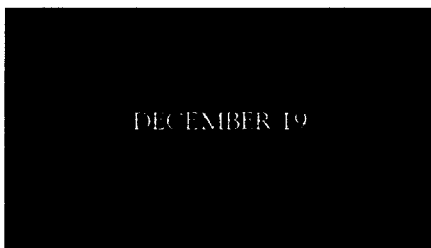


Figure 4: 1-2, 2:44, release date as indirect invitation

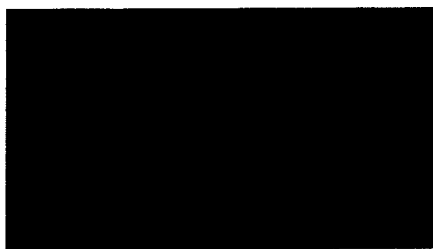


Figure 5: 0-2, 1:33, “You will find adventure or adventure will find you”

The *emotive* or *expressive* function is a „direct expression of the speaker’s attitudes toward what he is speaking about” (*On Language* 73). This function can, for example, add another layer of meaning to an utterance by a certain intonation, pitch, or stress, which can even contradict the lexical meaning. In film trailers, the emotive function can be incorporated orally, for instance in rather explicit

manners by superlatives like “the most extraordinary tale” (0-2, 0:39) or by other positively connotated keywords like “legend” (0-1, 0:31) or “wonder” (4-1, 1:31). In writing, the logo of the production company, here *New Line Cinema*, as well as the logos of the used sound systems (Dolby Digital, SDDS, dts) will serve as a guarantee for a certain quality (Grainge 85, 89). Visually, a positive attitude towards the advertised film is sought to be conveyed by presenting impressions of fascinating landscapes and special effects, from tracking shots of a mountain peak (0-2, 0:39) to highly dynamic fight scenes (e.g. Legolas fighting in the Battle of Helm’s Deep, 2-1, 1:26).

The *referential* (also denotative or cognitive) function refers to the context of the trailer, i.e. the film that the trailer advertises. Thus, this function is carried out by the presentation of information about the plot, producers, director(s), cast or the release date of the film, be it in speech, writing, or via images. Furthermore, as *LotR* is a film adaptation, its trailers do not only refer to the upcoming films, but also back to the literary original, creating a context of another level, for example when elements of Tolkien’s fantastic world are visualized for the first time, e.g. characters or fantastic creatures like “wargs” (2-2, 2:26, Figure 6)¹⁸ or “oliphaunts” (2-2, 2:40, Figure 7).¹⁹ Due to the connection and reference to the famous literary work, it seems plausible that, additionally to the promoted films, the first trailers also refer to Tolkien’s work, whereas later trailers, which can build on knowledge of the prior films within the trilogy, also relate to the latter. This will be examined in chapter 3.4.



Figure 6: 2-2, 2:26, warg riders



Figure 7: 2-2, 2:40, oliphaunt

¹⁸ http://lotr.wikia.com/wiki/Warg_riders

¹⁹ <http://lotr.wikia.com/wiki/M%C3%BBmakil>

The form of the message itself is described by Jakobson's *poetic* function of language. Within trailers, a dominance of the poetic function can be assumed when there is a focus on the form of the message, which can be the case for modes like music, as far as it is used as a melodic background without denoting something. Linguistically, the poetic function in *LotR* trailers is represented by parallelisms and repetitions: these can be exclusive to the trailer such as the written messages "ALL WILL BE SACRIFICED [*sic*]" (2-2, 1:52, Figure 8), "ALL WILL BE LOST [*sic*]" (2-2, 2:02, Figure 9) or stem from the original book and film elements like the ring verse (0-1, 0:45-1:09, Figure 10; 0-2, 0:08-0:24, Figure 11), which appears in both writing and speech in the first trailer and, unless referring to the Elvish script, only orally in the trilogy. Another, non-linguistic, focus on the form of the message is conceivable in the case of the soft-lens filter used for the depiction of Arwen (2-1, 1:20, Figure 12) or other graphical elements like the red cloudy background of the Ring in the trilogy trailer with flashes of lightning (0-2, 0:08-0:24, Figure 13).

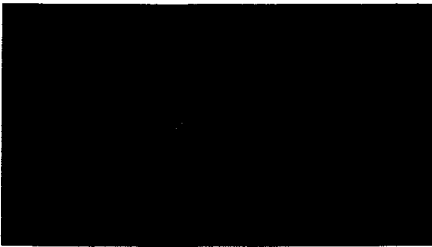


Figure 8: 2-2, 1:52



Figure 9: 2-2, 2:02

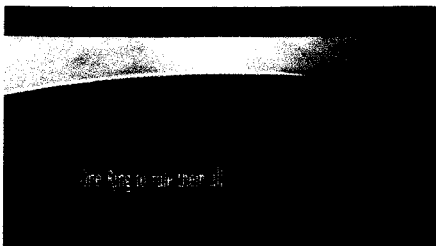


Figure 10: 0-1, 0:45, Ring verse

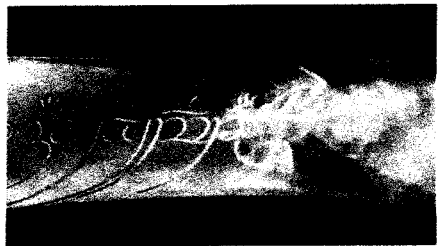


Figure 11: 0-2, 0:08, Ring verse



Figure 12: 2-1, 1:20, soft-lense filter



Figure 13: 0-2, 0:08-0:24

The *phatic* function is concerned with the contact between addresser and addressee. Because of the asynchronous communication situation of trailers, contact signals of face-to-face communication such as hesitation markers do not apply. Instead, there is a predominating phatic function when trailers offer a link to the official film website, www.lordoftherings.net (e.g. 0-2, 1:37, Figure 14), that is a “message [...] primarily serving to establish [or] prolong [...] communication” (*On Language* 75). The information about the website implies an extension of the communication situation of trailers by the offer to stay in touch online, which is plausible, considering that the marketing of *LotR* included online interaction with fans as a prospective audience from the beginning, for instance by providing exclusive information from the film (Shefrin 266, 274).



Figure 14: 0-2, 1:37 website of the film trilogy

As mentioned already, the phatic function is also executed by physical aspects like the volume of the soundtrack or single sounds which can “attract the at-

tion of the interlocutor or [...] confirm his continued attention” (ibid.).²⁰ Consequently, the phatic function tends to sustain other functions. To this aim, a sound appearing simultaneously with the titles and release dates of the trilogy (0-2, 0:58-1:20) can for instance ensure attention for the successful communication of the referential and conative function of the writing.

Lastly, the *metalingual* function applies when Jakobson’s factor “code” itself is referred to by taking up what was said, e.g. if the addresser wants to make sure they are understood or if the addressee is not sure if their perceived meaning was correct (*On Language* 76). This function can, for instance, be found when the trailer is watched online and the audience uses the commentary function in YouTube, through which viewers can discuss the use and interpretation of certain modes, suggesting the term *metamodel* function for the purpose of trailers.²¹

On the level of the trailer itself, the *metalingual* function can be further adapted to the multimodal structure of the trailer. To this aim, as an extension to Jakobson’s model, I have proposed to re-label this function *intermodal*, as it relies on the interaction between different modes and, through the combination of modes, serves comprehension purposes (cf. Krebs 21-22), under which I will subsume the subfunctions of identification, narration, illustration, emphasis, and cohesion (see Table 2).

20 These two aspects belong to the “psychological connection” (Mathior and Garvin 150) between addresser and addressee, which is also included in this factor.

21 See for example the discussion around the origin of the music for the trailer of *The Two Towers* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LbfMDwc4azU>) and the implications of its use.

Functions	Modes					Example	Possible Sub-functions
	Image	Writing	Speech	Sound	Music		
Conative		X*	X*			“Look for it on Blu-ray”	
		X				release date	
Phatic		X				URL to the website of <i>LotR</i>	contact
	X*			X*		image appearing with sound	attention
		X*		X*		release date appearing with sound	
Inter-modal	X		X			introduction of names	identification, narrative function, illustration
	X	X				intertitle + following scene (elaboration)	
	X(*)			X(*)			
		X*		X*		release date appearing with sound	
		X*	X*			titles of films in Blu-ray	
					X		background music
Poetic	X					graphical elements	
					X	melody	
	X				X	editing creating rhythm	

Functions	Modes					Example	Possible Sub-functions
	Image	Writing	Speech	Sound	Music		
Emotive			X			positive judgements about film	
		X				list of Academy Awards	
	X					landscapes	
	X*				X*	solemn orchestral music	
Referential	X					showing protagonists or fantastic animals from the books	
		X				reference to books or films (e.g. to actors as part of production)	
			X			reference to books or films	
					X	<i>ForR</i> track in trailer of <i>TTT</i>	
	X*	X*	X			interview	

Table 2, [* appearing simultaneously]

Other than in the example above, a focus on the intermodal function is primarily used on the part of the addresser. This addition to Jakobson's model seems plausible with respect to the existence of redundant signs that, according to Linda Waugh, "are those signs which inform about other signs in the text and thus cannot be said to provide independent information; they are used in a sense to ensure that the given information is provided" (*On Language* 73). In trailers, this function often includes the combination of visual and auditory modes by the oral introduction of names or characters that are subsequently

presented visually (e.g. Barad-dûr in Figure 15-16, Orthanc and Saruman in 2-1, 0:30-0:35, Figure 17-18) or by two visuals (writing and image), whereas usually the writing serves as a summary that is explicated or exemplified visually by the images in the following scenes, as the example of 1-2 shows (see Table 3).



Figure 15: 2-1, 0:30, Barad-dûr



Figure 16: 2-1, 0:30, Barad-dûr



Figure 17: 2-1, 0:32, Orthanc



Figure 18: 2-1, 0:33, Saruman

In 1-2, Frodo's utterance "I cannot do this alone" (1:02) is followed by the intertitle "A FELLOWSHIP WILL PROTECT HIM". Then, three protagonists of the Fellowship – Aragorn, Legolas and Gimli – are shown, each emphasizing their commitment orally ("You have my sword", "And you have my bow", "And my axe", 1:06-1:13).









time	(moving) image / screenshot	speech	writing	music	sound
1:01					
1:02		Frodo: I cannot do this alone.			...
1:03					
1:03			A FELLOW-SHIP WILL PROTECT HIM	Drums and orchestral music	
1:05					
1:06		Aragorn: You have my sword			
1:07		Legolas: And you have my bow			
1:08		Gimli: And my axe			

Table 3: transcription of 2-1, 1:01-1:08

There are several similar examples, e.g. “THE BATTLE OF MIDDLE EARTH BEGINS” (2-1, 1:09, in writing), followed by several fighting scenes, or when after “THE FELLOWSHIP IS BROKEN” (2-2, 0:38) Frodo and Sam are shown having lost their way and, in another scene, Gandalf’s defeat in his fight against the Balrog (0:41-0:48).

In contrast, the double coding by co-occurring speech and writing is not as common in the examined trailers, in fact, it only appears once for the Ring verse in 0-2 (0:08-0:24, Figure 11), when the appearance on Blu-ray (4-2, 0:19, Figure 19) or the quality of the trilogy is mentioned (“Winner of 17 Academy Awards”, 4-2, 1:40, Figure 20), and for the titles of the films in the Blu-ray editions (4-2, 4-3, 4-4), given mostly at the end.



Figure 19: 4-2, 0:19

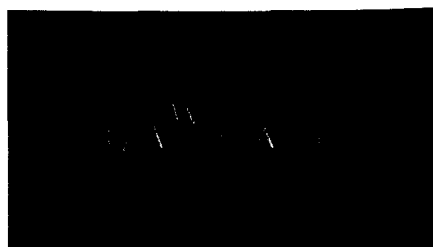


Figure 20: 4-2, 1:40

3.3 Emerging (multi)modal patterns within the functions of trailers

Before I will move on to a diachronic comparison of *LotR* trailers from a multimodal perspective in chapter 3.4, a closer look at emerging (multi)modal patterns in the communicative functions is called for. As multimodal pattern, I define the combination of certain modes in the analysed trailers. With respect to the underlying function, modal pattern refers to single recurring modes used for certain functions. Most surprisingly, the conative function is hardly tangible modally. Only in the trailers for the trilogy that appeared after the cinema screenings (4-2 to 4-4) can a direct appeal be found in writing and speech (“Look for it on Blu-ray”, e.g. Figure 3). In 4-2, the direct request is given orally, accompanied by written “now available everywhere on Blu-ray” (1:56), while the modes are reversed in 4-4, a narrator commenting “available

June 28th” (0:56). Apart from that, the conative function is represented only indirectly by written elements of film titles and release dates or by additional written information like its declaration as “THE MUST SEE COMPANION [*sic*]” (4-1, 2:42, Figure 21).



Figure 21: 4-1, 2:42

Similarly, the phatic function also only draws upon two modes, one being a written link to the film website (see Figure 14, also in 0-2, 1-1, 2-1, 2-2, 3-1, 3-2) and the other one, sound, serving to attract and direct the audience’s attention to a simultaneously employed mode (writing, image). Here, the parallels to the following intermodal function are obvious.

The intermodal function per se entails a combination of different modes. As to the preferred multimodal patterns, a comparison of assigned functions shows that most intermodal functions apply a combination of speech or writing with images. In combination with continuity editing, which aims at cohesion between different shots (Bordwell and Thompson 231), this can create narrative meaning in the trailer, e.g. when Frodo’s question “No one knows it [the Ring]’s here, do they? [...] Do they Gandalf?” is followed by an image of the Ring wraiths tearing down and riding through a gate (1-1, 0:58-1:07).

However, combinations with the purpose of giving emphasis or ensuring comprehension are more typical. The former is often achieved by the connection of sound and image or writing, as explained already. The latter is mainly represented by combining language with images, supporting comprehension in various ways: Speech is often used to introduce new names or characters thus helping to identify them by linking them to the visual stimulus, as mentioned earlier. In trailers, which are extremely dense and usually present multimodal

contents in a quick succession, these modal chains also present a useful support for the cognitive processing of information, for example when an off-screen voice announces the subsequent appearance of the respective character. The use of written language for such an identification is rather rare and only exists in the interviews in two of the trilogy trailers (0-1, Figure 22 and 4-1, Figure 23).

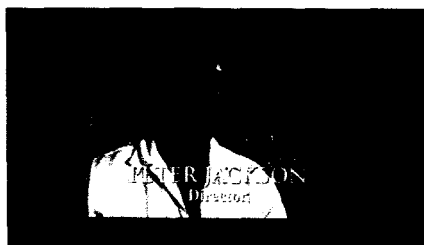


Figure 22: 0-1, 0:13, interview
Peter Jackson / director



Figure 23: 4-1, 0:45, interview Peter
Jackson, director/co-writer/producer

More frequently, images function as an elaboration or illustration of written intertitles, for instance when the writing “THE BATTLE FOR MIDDLE-EARTH BEGINS” (2-1, 1:09) is followed by Aragorn giving the order to fire. In 3-2, several intertitles are illustrated in this fashion: The fact that “THERE CAN BE NO TRIUMPH WITHOUT LOSS” (2:00) is illustrated by Gandalf walking over the battlefield after the battle, “NO VICTORY WITHOUT SUFFERING” (2:13) is depicted by a clearly suffering Arwen, who “gave away [her] life’s grace” according to Elrond’s off-screen voice (2:24) and “NO FREEDOM WITHOUT SACRIFICE”, a more complex case, firstly by Eomer’s statement “we cannot achieve victory through strength of arms”, which is visualised by riders fighting an unequal battle against oliphants. The latter example additionally makes use of a visual submode: the low camera angle used for the depiction of the oliphants stresses the hopelessness of the situation, i.e. the high probability of sacrifice. Lastly, the combination of modes within the intermodal function serves the purpose of cohesion, which also adds to a better comprehension on the part of the addressee²² and often involves the use of music joined with other modes.

²² An analysis of cohesive ties is not possible within the scope of this article. For detailed information see Tseng.

The poetic function is most clearly fulfilled by linguistic means, i.e. oral and written modes, e.g. the Ring verse or other poetic devices such as parallelisms (“Is it secret? Is it safe?” 1-1, 0:33; “ALL WILL BE SACRIFICED [...] ALL WILL BE LOST” 2-2, 1:51, 2:01, Figures 8-9). Still, also visual and auditory modes like graphical elements or a coordinated rhythm of music, sound and images (1-1, 1:50-2:05; *On Language* 76-79) can support the poetic function.

In order to convey a positive attitude towards the films, subsumed by the emotive function, the three main modes of speech, writing and images use different ways of representation.²³ While speech and writing can state benevolent opinions about a film, logos of technological systems (Dolby etc.) can be used as a promise for an exceptional sound (Grainge 89), it is the images that have the real potential of convincing the audience of the film’s quality by showing spectacular landscapes (Conrich 119), e.g. the Fellowship walking in the snowy mountains (0-2, 0:39), or thrilling fight scenes and special effects (2-2, 2:16-2:26), usually supported by music. As a film adaptation of a fantasy story that had been considered impossible to picturize, I assume that images have at least the same importance for the emotive function as the linguistic modes (that is writing and speech), if not even more – despite speech and writing being potentially more explicit.

Finally, the subdivisions made in the trailers with regard to book and film are also reflected in the modes of the referential function. Before using this complex function as an example for the depiction of the trailer development throughout the parts of the trilogy in the next chapter, the special case of music must be mentioned. Apart from the use of writing, speech and images, which are all used to refer to Tolkien’s work and the film advertised in the trailer, music is exclusive to the films and trailers and as such functions only in the filmic universe. Interestingly, however, in the trailers of *TTT*, music in the form of the theme music is used as an intertextual reference within the trilogy: To this aim, in both *TTT* trailers, the use of the track “The Ring Goes South” (Shore), which is known to the audience from *FotR*, can refer to *FotR*, thus creating the context of another film within the trilogy. This can create an effect of

²³ Using the active voice for modes or functions is due to the complex situation of production (see 3.2.1). In fact, the application of modes obviously lies in the addresser’s responsibility.

recognition for the viewers, which not only ties the trailer of the second film narratively in with the content of the first, but even more so reminds the audience of the positive experience of watching *FotR*, creating an emotive function of a second degree in turn.

3.4 *The Lord of the Rings* trailers in comparison

While the (multi)modal preferences within the communicative functions of the *LotR* trailers might be generalizable, a closer look at the referential function seems especially suitable to explain the special case of the *LotR* trilogy franchise. Thus, the connection of the micro-level of modes to the macro-level of the marketing strategy as described by various researchers can be rendered explicit.²⁴

A first distinction can be made between the trailers advertising the films to be screened in the cinema and those announcing the DVDs or Blu-rays as ancillary products. In addition to the book and films, the DVDs and Blu-rays thus form a third context that trailers may refer to and which will be traced back to the employed modes in this subchapter.

Taking these three contexts as a starting point, the twelve trailers under investigation can be clustered into three groups that also correspond with slightly different target groups: The first four trailers, including both trailers for *FotR*, use the literary original as well as the films as their context, albeit with different emphases. Secondly, the trailers for *TTT* and *RotK* mostly refer to the films of the trilogy and thirdly, as mentioned already, the trailers advertising the DVD and Blu-ray editions add another context layer in that they refer explicitly to the disc versions of the films.

²⁴ Most substantially, Barker and Mathijs; Mathijs; Mikos et al., and Thompson have contributed to research on the success of the franchise.

	context		
	literary original	films within trilogy	DVD / Blu-ray
trailers	0-1, 0-2, 1-1, 1-2	2-1, 2-2, 3-1, 3-2	4-1, 4-2, 4-3, 4-4
target group	special target group: readers of the books, Tolkien fans	audience of <i>FotR</i> , including fans	audience of trilogy, especially fans
special (multi)modal pattern	speech (referring to the book) speech + writing + image (interview) image of box set	music	speech + writing + image (interview),

Table 4: Different contexts of *LotR* trailers

Due to *LotR* being a film adaptation, the first trailers of the trilogy could target an already existing concrete audience group consisting of people who had read the books and were intrigued by the fantastic stories set in Tolkien's fictional world. Those who would even consider themselves fans were especially important because they should function as the main hubs of word-of-mouth advertising (Thompson 134-135, Mikos et al. 67). Therefore, it was not only their attention that was needed for advertising of the trilogy, but they also had to be convinced of the quality of Peter Jackson's adaptation as soon as possible so to overcome their initial scepticism (Thompson 140) towards the films, which could have had extremely negative consequences for the trilogy (Iversen 183).

This becomes apparent from the very first trailer: it starts with an off-screen male narrator saying "It has been named the greatest and most popular book of the twentieth century" (0-1, 0:02), directly followed by another voice stating that "the responsibility of bringing this world to the screen visually is obviously enormous" (0-1, 0:10). Simultaneously, the trailer uses footage from the film shoot (Figure 24). After three seconds, the second voice can be attributed to the image of Peter Jackson, who is not only shown but also identified by a written

caption, as at the time, he was still quite unknown (Figure 22). After another comment by the narrator (“It introduced us to the world of fantasy”, 0-1, 0:15), which is accompanied by a computer-generated image of a red ring, an on-screen testimonial by the main actor Elijah Wood draws a further explicit connection between books and films: “The thing about these books and what we’re doing with the movies, it’s [*sic*] they’re so real you believe it really existed” (0-1, 0:22). Finally, the narrator explains that “it wasn’t until now that the legend could finally come to life” (0-1, 0:29), while, in the visual mode, a flame produces the Elvish signs of the Ring verse on the Ring (Figure 25). These explicit references to the books show a clear dominance of speech directed at the prospective audience of readers in order to announce the adaptation (“Now in production”, 0-1, 1:36) and raise their interest in the film. At the same time, potential viewers lacking a profound knowledge of the book are presented with information about the films’ genre mostly visually, e.g. by footage of the special effects promising a thrilling experience, and orally (“fantasy” 0-1, 0:15). Furthermore, details about production information like the most famous members of the cast (0-1, 1:17) are provided in written form.



Figure 24: 0-1, 0:10, Applying make-up at the set Figure 25: 0-1, 0:29, Elvish ring verse

The subsequent trailers use similar methods to attract their audience: There are further spoken references to the books, like in “the most extraordinary tale ever told comes to life” (0-2, 0:39), as well as written ones, such as “The Legend comes to life” (1-2, 2:23). Meanwhile, visual modes present the advertised films as attractive to both readers and non-readers: On the one hand, they introduce the books’ protagonists (0-2, 1:02) and generate potential interest in the visualization of Tolkien’s fantastic creatures and scenery; on the other hand,

the trailers depict the trilogy as belonging to a genre of fantasy and adventure films.²⁵ Thus, the trailers further emphasize the suspense of the advertised films and, not least, promise philosophical and romantic moments as referenced by Galadriel's words (e.g. 0-2, 0:49; 1-2, 1:14) and a kiss between Arwen and Aragorn (e.g. 1-2, 2:24; Hedling 232).

The trailers for the *FotR* are less oriented towards the context of the books. From 1-1 on, the voice-over narrator disappears, and the narrative content is provided by film characters instead, regularly aided by written intertitles, that is graphic written elements connecting scenes (Kernan 32)²⁶, which serve as a more or less abstract plot summary (Maier 167). More importantly, the mode of writing refers to the films' cinema screenings by giving their titles and release dates at the end of the trailers. As in the first trailers of the marketing campaign, images are still essential for the introduction of new characters and settings. Therefore, for instance, 2-1 starts with Éowyn standing in front of Meduseld right at the beginning of the trailer (Figure 26). 2-2, too, presents the Rohirrim in one of the first shots of the trailer (0:16, Figure 27).

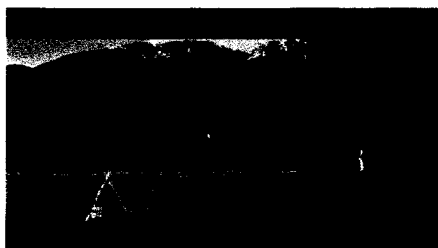


Figure 26: 2-1, 0:08, Éowyn



Figure 27: 2-2, 0:16, Rohirrim

Starting with the trailers for *TTT*, the book context can be considered less important, as with *FotR*, a new context was created. Apart from presenting new information, which is central for keeping the audience interested in the new films, the trailers now also use modal means as cohesive ties to the

25 Giseline Kuipers' and Jeroen de Kloet's study showed that the international audience of *LotR* ascribed diverse genres or "types of story" (137-139) to *RotK*, e.g. "Epic", "SFX film", "Fantasy" or "War" (139).

26 Historically, intertitles were used in silent film for a connection of scenes (ibid.).

other films within the trilogy. This is especially obvious when Gandalf's quote from *FotR*, "All you have to decide is what to do with the time that is given to you", is literally repeated in the *RotK* trailers (3-1, 0:50; 3-2, 2:04). A partial quote is provided by the intertitles "THE JOURNEY CONTINUES" in the *TTT* trailers, which are taken up in both trailers of *RotK* as "THE JOURNEY ENDS".

Finally, also the mode of music serves a cohesive purpose, when the trailers of *TTT* use a theme that is known from *FotR*, "The Ring Goes South", thus specifically addressing those who have seen the first film of the trilogy and conjuring up the positive memory of watching it.

In general, the modal means explained so far are also used in a similar way in the third group of trailers. But the trailers that appeared after the cinema phase of *LotR* employ additional strategies to guarantee the sale of further products such as DVDs and Blu-rays. These ancillary products make up a third context the *LotR* trailers refer to and thus foreground the referential function, strikingly presented by the recurrent image of the DVD or Blu-ray box (4-2, 4-3, 4-4). Most interestingly, the trailer for the extended version of *FotR* again uses the triple combination of speech, writing and image in the form of interviews to advertise the DVD set. Besides Elijah Wood and Howard Shore, the composer of *LotR*, Peter Jackson praises this product: "I'm a huge fan of special edition DVDs and I really think it's a great opportunity to be able to now restore material from the movie, about 30 minutes' worth of extra footage" (4-1, 0:45). John Gilbert, the editor, adds that "there's a lot of little things from the book" (4-1, 1:05), clearly addressing the readers who had been addressed directly from the beginning. Using speech when referring to the book context also functions as a personal promise for the quality of the product and as such entails a strong emotive function, even if spoken by a voice-over narrator: "Now, the power of Blu-ray lets you experience the wonder of *LotR* the way it was meant to be seen" (4-2, 1:27). Additionally, the emotive function is emphasized by the mode of writing, which underlines not only the quality of the films, e.g. by listing the Academy Awards won by the trilogy (4-3, 1:40), but also the quality of the individual products, e.g. as "THE MOST COMPLETE THE LORD OF THE RINGS TRILOGY" (4-3, 0:19) or stating "the brilliance of Blu-ray" (4-3, 1:23).

This comparison of trailers furthermore shows the close connection among the trailer functions that have been laid out in the beginning, as for example in the trailers that appeared after the cinema screenings, the emotive function refers to both the context of the film and the new context of the DVD and Blu-ray editions. In terms of (multi)modal patterns and their relation to Jakobson's functions, it is hard to present a clear-cut result, as the trailers use a variety of modes and multimodal combinations for the different trailer functions. However, this diversity of modes seems especially remarkable within the referential function, which is at the same time the most elaborate one, hinting at the special case of *LotR* as a filmic adaptation and film franchise.

4 Conclusion: The role of media convergence?

Since the first announcement of the film project was published in 2000 (www.theonering.net, Thompson 346), *LotR* has continued to be present on various levels, further enforced by the production of the prequel *The Hobbit*. The producers carefully embellished the franchise with not only the films, but also other media offering further contents such as the official website, books, board- and video-game adaptations and spin-offs,²⁷ as well as extended editions of the films, which all want to keep up the audience's interest. Certainly, the media conglomerate Time Warner Inc. as producer and distributor of the trilogy – and at the time “the world's largest media company” (Wasko and Shanadi 26) – is another piece of this franchise puzzle as it additionally opened further ways of addressing an audience via media coverage on television, in magazines etc. (ibid.).²⁸ Additionally, large numbers of merchandise articles (Wasko and Shanadi 28-32) from bags and books to jewellery, phone-cases and watches (WB Shop) were sold. While the latter will mostly serve to raise the revenue of the franchise, content relevant media products have wider implications considering the concept of transmedia storytelling, i.e. they contribute to and make up “stories that unfold across multiple media platforms, with each medium

27 For an overview of games see Young (346). Brookey and Booth examine the *RotK* video game adaptation.

28 Another example was the full trailer of *TTT* “exclusive” to AOL users according to the fan website www.theonering.net. Thinking of AOL as part of Time Warner Inc., this could count a strategic move.

making distinctive contributions to our understanding of the world” (Jenkins 334). The possibility and existence of these different stories can explain why the films reached such a broad audience (Barker and Mathijs).

As I have shown, the film trailers contributed to the advertising of the trilogy by orienting themselves towards the potential audience groups of fans, readers, and others, who were offered different stories respectively: An audience acquainted with the books could be presented with background information about the film production, while a mainstream audience was happy with the visual impressions of an adventure story that promised an entertaining film experience.

Moreover, this explorative study transfers Jakobson’s claim that “a verbal message fulfils several functions, which are hierarchically ordered and whose predominant function is responsible for its verbal structure” (*On Language* 73; Waugh 58) to the realm of trailers: Regarding the complexity of trailers, there is no one-to-one relationship between a function and its modal structure, but the study indeed showed that there are reoccurring patterns and preferences within certain communicative functions. In the analysed *LotR* trailers, the conative function is almost exclusively executed by speech and writing. However, this explicit verbal address to the audience is backed multimodally by other functions. For example, the emotive function shows the positive stance towards the promoted films more diversely, via speech and writing, but also via images and orchestral music. The poetic function can be seen as the artistic focus on the trailer itself, for example in the use of graphical elements and music. Moreover, the trailer offers further contact to the audience by providing the website of the films in written form. Apart from that, the phatic function also tries to maintain the contact with the audience of the trailer by using sound in combination with other modes to attract and guide the audience’s attention. The complementary combination of sound with other modes is typical of the intermodal function, too. This newly coined function proves to be the most complex one, as its definition includes several combinations of modes. As could be suspected from the filmic scenes used in the trailers, there is a frequent combination of speech and images; however, also writing is used, often in the form of intertitles that are followed by film scenes. Given the diversity of multimodal patterns, the analysis resulted in the classification into five intermodal subfunctions that are aimed at a better comprehension, that is cognitive processing of the trailer:

identification, narration, emphasis, illustration and cohesion. The latter is mainly attained by the musical score. Finally, music, as well as images, writing, and speech are used for a referential function, which plays a central role for *LotR* trailers. In terms of multimodal patterns, it is especially interesting to notice the use of interviews in two trailers, with the combination of speech, writing, and image. It can be attributed to the special case of the trilogy being a film adaptation and the attempt of the producers to assure their target audience of the conscientious handling of the literary material, thus serving as a source for further word-of-mouth advertising within pre-existing fan structures.

The diachronic comparison of the trailers finally mirrors the long-term marketing strategy of the franchise and reveals a subdivision of the referential function in the three contexts of Tolkien's original work, the films of the trilogy, and the DVD/Blu-ray versions. As the trilogy was designed as a film franchise, it was necessary to not only appeal to a prospective audience as early as possible for having gained enough momentum at the launch of the trilogy. Also, the specific prospective audience consisting of readers and fans of Tolkien's works had to be convinced of the quality of the films, which was only possible by assuring them of the close connection between films and books (Shefrin 267), both orally and by showing them (visual) impressions of the films. During the trilogy, the producers had to keep the mainstream audience interested to be able to rely on them as future viewers and buyers of merchandise. This was done by referring to the other films within the trilogy, thus creating a new target audience of film fans (see also Mikos et al. 204-207). Finally, considering and addressing both film and book fans in the marketing of ancillary products like DVDs and Blu-rays, for example by using interviews again, can therefore be seen as a clever move to draw the connection back to Tolkien's underlying story of Middle-earth. Trailers, as I have shown, have been indeed an effective way to bind enthusiastic audiences in the darkness of the movie theatre, even though there could (luckily?) never be only one trailer to rule them all.

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Filmography and trailers

	Name	Source / Channel	URL (last access 18 Feb. 2017)
0-1	Lord of the Rings (first trailer 2000)	Alex Nuñez	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2UDTbQrOGa0
0-2	Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring – Trailer	Warner Movies On Demand	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z_WZxJpHzEE
1-1	The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship Of The Ring (2001) Official Trailer #1 – Ian McKellen Movie HD	Movieclips Trailer Vault	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_e8QGuG50ro
1-2	The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship Of The Ring (2001) Official Trailer #2 – Elijah Wood Movie HD	Movieclips Trailer Vault	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cKEGZ-CvWHk
<i>The Fellowship of the Ring</i> . Dir. by Peter Jackson. New Line Cinema, 2001.			
2-1	Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers – Trailer	Warner Movies On Demand	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cvCktPUwkW0
2-2	The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers (2002) Official Trailer #2 – Orlando Bloom Movie HD	Movieclips Trailer Vault	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LbfMDwc4azU
<i>The Two Towers</i> . Dir. by Peter Jackson. New Line Cinema, 2002.			
3-1	The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King (2003) Theatrical Trailer #2	Forever Cinematic Trailers	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5jWYWOFvO9o
3-2	The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King (2003) Official Trailer – Sean Astin Movie HD	Movieclips Trailer Vault	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y2rYRu8UW8M

	Name	Source / Channel	URL (last access 18 Feb. 2017)
<i>The Return of the King</i> . Dir. by Peter Jackson. New Line Cinema, 2003.			
4-1	The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring – Special Extended DVD Edition Trailer [HD]	Movies Fan	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bd5ZRJUhras
4-2	The Lord of the Rings Trilogy (2001-2003) Official Blu-ray Trailer LOTR Movie HD	Movieclips Trailer Vault	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xPblyMf2tOY
4-3	The Lord of the Rings Motion Picture Trilogy: Extended Edition – Trailer	Warner Bros. Home Entertainment	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bzfSb25Vtqs
4-4	The Lord of the Rings Motion Picture Trilogy: Extended Edition – Trailer 2	Warner Bros. Home Entertainment	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lkOSXG1JEx0