

## Film Reediting and Youth Subculture: A Study on the Narrative Reconstruction of Five-Minute Speaking Films Postprint

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### Abstract

The reediting reconstruction format of “Five-Minute Movies” integrates them more deeply into youth subculture, transforms original films into a new cinematic narrative mode, captures the attention of netizens, and gradually constitutes a novel film and television culture. Through audience research and narrative analysis, this study theorizes the narrative reconstruction of Five-Minute Movies and attempts to address the impact of their popularity on audiences. The findings reveal that individuals who watch Five-Minute Movies more frequently exhibit stronger identification with youth subculture and youth identity, yet concurrently maintain a negative attitude toward original films. Furthermore, following exposure to a Five-Minute Movie, audiences’ interest in the original film is primarily determined by the engaging nature of the short video and their personal interests. This study’s proposition of film reediting and youth subculture reflects the evolution of film commentary and the linguistic symbols of youth subculture, while simultaneously providing a broader platform for short-video film interpretation within the context of China’s fast-paced modern era.

### Full Text

## Film Reediting and Youth Subculture: A Study on the Narrative Reconstruction of Five-Minute Movies

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## Abstract

The “five-minute movie” represents a form of film reediting and reconstruction that integrates deeply with youth subculture, transforming original films into a new narrative mode that captures internet users’ attention and gradually cultivates a novel film and television culture. This study theorizes the narrative reconstruction of five-minute movies through audience research and narrative analysis to examine their impact on viewers. The findings reveal that increased consumption of five-minute movies correlates with stronger identification with youth subculture and youth identity, but also generates more negative attitudes toward the original films. Additionally, viewers’ interest in watching the original movie after seeing a five-minute version depends primarily on the short video’s appeal and their personal interests. This study introduces the framework of film reediting and youth subculture, which both reflects the evolution of film commentary and youth subcultural linguistic symbols, and provides a broader platform for short video film interpretation within the context of fast-paced modern China.

**Keywords:** Five-Minute Movie; narrative reconstruction; youth subcultures; new film and television culture

## 1 Introduction

With the development of the pandemic, large numbers of young people have been unable to participate in outdoor activities, making film and television drama editing a new pastime. Within this context, the “five-minute movie” format has flourished. We observed that five-minute movies deconstruct and reconstruct the scenes and narrative structure of original films, accelerate narrative pacing, incorporate original commentary, and blend film commentary with youth subcultural linguistic symbols. This integration allows five-minute movies to merge more fully with youth subculture, transforming original films into a new narrative mode that garners internet users’ attention and gradually forms a new film and television culture. In light of these observations, we ask: How does the original film influence the distinctive phenomenon of five-minute movies? What impact does the editor’s interpretation have in five-minute movies? And what other factors enhance the effect of watching a five-minute movie on the desire to watch the original film?

### 2.1 Film Commentary

Domestic scholar Chen Bohong analyzed and discussed the communication strategies of film commentary short videos through the theoretical framework of uses and gratifications combined with basic communication elements. His research indicates that film commentary short videos should expand their material scope and experiment with diverse content, establish copyright awareness and proceed prudently, and balance commercial and artistic considerations without forgetting their original purpose. Domestic scholar Yang Yahan

analyzed film and television commentary short videos from the perspective of remediation, finding that they reconstruct traditional film and television dramas through disintermediation and hyper-intermediation, becoming remediated products in the short video era. Domestic scholar Fang Yujie investigated influencing factors of film commentary short video content and continuous viewing intention, revealing that audience willingness to continue watching is primarily affected by the intrinsic value of the video content, its entertainment value, and the satisfaction of “viewing” needs.

## 2.2 Propp’s Narrative Structure Theory

Since Propp proposed his narrative structure theory, it has attracted significant attention from scholars domestically and internationally, yielding numerous research achievements. Foreign scholar Barthes applied Propp’s formalism to narrative structure analysis, dividing narrative structure into three levels: function, action, and narrative. The function level is further divided into the function itself and indices, with the function itself decomposed into nuclei and catalyzers, and indices decomposed into indices proper and informants, all forming the narrative text based on the nucleus. In 1966, foreign scholar Greimas developed Propp’s functional theory in his seminal work *Structural Semantics* and established the actantial theory. Foreign scholar Lévi-Strauss was also influenced by this approach, attempting to introduce this structure into anthropology in his 1958 book *Structural Anthropology*. Domestic scholar Chen Ping successfully applied Propp’s research on “behavior patterns” to the study of Chinese martial arts novels, creating *The Dream of Ancient Literati and Warriors—A Study on the Types of Wuxia Novels*, which summarizes the narrative language of martial arts novels into categories such as “sword walker,” “happy revenge,” “wandering the world,” and “smiling rivers and lakes,” analyzing the literary and cultural significance contained in each narrative grammar.

## 2.3 Jenkins’ Participatory Culture Theory

Since Henry Jenkins proposed participatory culture theory, it has attracted considerable attention from scholars at home and abroad, generating substantial research outcomes. Foreign scholar James Pamment combined participatory culture theory with international advocacy campaigns, analyzing the application of cross-media storytelling, cross-media participation, and surveillance theories to the recent case study of the Campaign to End Sexual Violence in Conflict. He argued that co-creation and co-selection of shared values through cross-media engagement techniques function as a disciplinary effect for stakeholders, potentially relating to surveillance and biopolitical theory. Domestic scholars Gao Fei and Ji Wenliang, in their work *Reflection and Innovation of Interactive Drama from the Perspective of Weak Interaction and Strong Experience: Participatory Culture*, pointed out that the theoretical framework of participatory culture begins with analyzing media consumption behavior and studies how audiences influence media and their communication content through their own emotions,

cognition, and values. However, these studies do not examine the narrative reconstruction of five-minute movies from the perspective of film reediting and youth subculture, leaving these questions unanswered. Therefore, this article draws on Propp's narrative structure theory and Jenkins' participatory culture theory to address the following questions: How do five-minute movies reconstruct new narrative modes? What role does the editor's interpretation play in this process? And does watching a five-minute movie reduce the desire to watch the original film?

### 3 Research Methods and Data Analysis

This study employs questionnaire surveys and narrative analysis to address the aforementioned questions.

#### 3.1.1 Hypothesis Establishment

Based on the research questions, we propose the following hypotheses:

**H1:** For viewers, the more they watch five-minute movies, the more likely they are to develop a negative attitude toward the original film.

**H2:** For viewers, the more they watch five-minute movies, the stronger their identification with youth subculture and youth identity.

To test these hypotheses, this study used a questionnaire method to sample the population.

#### 3.1.2 Sampling Methods

This hypothesis corresponds to a study of college students. First, we conducted representative sampling by selecting students from the same university as the research population. Second, we compiled a general sampling frame based on students from different majors and grades. Third, we performed stratified multi-level sampling of the sampling frame with a 95% confidence interval and a 3% sampling error, selecting a sample of 600 students. If access was denied, we proceeded to the next class in order.

### 3.2 Narrative Analysis

Five-minute short video content producers provide corresponding explanations and evaluations of film and television works, completing their short video productions through pre-scripting, video recording, editing, and post-production packaging, resulting in content with a strong aesthetic style. Taking "Poisonous Tongue Movie" as an example, we analyze the narrative components of its commentary on *Send You a Little Red Flower* as follows:

The commentary on the entire movie consists of three short videos whose covers connect to form a movie poster, with the film's title *Send You a Little Red Flower* marked in the upper right corner, creating a concise and clear cover that

explicitly indicates the theme of the five-minute movie. The film *Send You a Little Red Flower* uses the actor Wei Yihang as a narrative thread to summarize two truths about life and interpersonal relationships. Its commentary focuses on expressing the film's overall theme but deletes depictions and interpretations of the emotions between Wei Yihang and Ma Xiaoyuan, Wei Yihang and his parents, and the characters of cancer patients from the original film. The grand narrative background of the original film becomes micro-narrative content compressed by time and space in the film review short video, representing an inevitable trend for short videos under the fragmented concept of time.

Additionally, five-minute movies possess characteristics of secondary creation, and the works themselves demonstrate originality. One artistic feature of film is its “thousands of faces for thousands of people” quality; creators adopt a single audience perspective when watching the original film and are subjectively influenced during the short video production process. Therefore, the quality of a five-minute movie also depends on the editor's understanding and editing skills.

#### 4.1 Sample Characterization

A total of 607 questionnaires were collected. From the perspective of gender, men accounted for 17.9% and women for 83.1%, indicating that women comprise the vast majority of the five-minute movie audience. From the perspective of age, 86.6% of respondents were aged 18–25, demonstrating that five-minute movies are popular among young people.

#### 4.2 Content Analysis Result Description

Descriptive analysis reveals that 46.8% of respondents “watch occasionally,” representing the highest proportion, while only 2.5% reported having “never seen” such content, indicating that five-minute movies maintain organic influence and have reached some ordinary respondents. Regarding viewing channels, “TikTok and Kuaishou short video apps” accounted for the highest proportion, followed by “Weibo, Bilibili, and Xiaohongshu.” This suggests that we should focus on distributing five-minute movies through TikTok and Kuaishou to maximize viewership, while other platforms such as Weibo, Bilibili, and Xiaohongshu show great potential that should be seized and developed effectively.

Most people watch relatively frequently, with 41.3% watching 3–4 times per week and 45.3% watching occasionally. Regarding viewing purposes, interest and entertainment represent the most important motivations, indicating that five-minute movies have begun to subtly enter our lives and can be leveraged to generate greater interest in films.

In measuring impact, 40.8% of respondents reported learning about multiple viewing experiences through short video explanations. After watching a movie clip, 34.8% of people would still want to watch the full film, and nearly 70% said

that watching edited videos changed their opinion of the original film. Therefore, five-minute movies impose certain requirements on the editor's editing methods and narrative structure construction, as the vast majority of people will alter their views on the original film based on the five-minute version.

### 4.3 Description of Structural Analysis Results

To test the influence of five-minute movie viewing on attitudes toward the original film and youth subculture, we converted these factors into corresponding constants and variables for observational analysis, obtaining the following results.

#### 1. Correlation Analysis of Five-Minute Movie Viewing Frequency and Attitude Toward the Original Film

Pearson correlation analysis reveals that audience viewing frequency and attitude toward edited videos are correlated, with a correlation coefficient of 0.307\*\* and  $p=0.000$ , indicating significant correlation. This supports the null hypothesis that H1 is true: five-minute video viewing frequency is significantly correlated with attitude, with higher viewing frequency associated with more negative attitudes.

#### 2. Correlation Analysis of Five-Minute Movie Viewing Frequency and Youth Subculture

Pearson correlation analysis reveals that audience viewing frequency and identity are correlated, with a correlation coefficient of 0.175\* and  $p=0.00$ , indicating significant correlation. This supports the null hypothesis that H2 is true: the more five-minute movies are watched, the stronger the identification with youth subculture and youth identity.

### 5.1 Narrative Reconstruction in Five-Minute Movies

This study theorizes the narrative reconstruction of five-minute movies through audience surveys and narrative analysis to examine their impact on viewers. The findings indicate that audiences develop negative attitudes toward original films after watching five-minute versions, but their interest in the original film depends primarily on the short video's excitement and their personal interests. Editors re-edit the original film from their own perspective, shortening the film's duration, blurring its details, and presenting their own out-of-context interpretations. In Propp's narrative theory, the unit above the function is the "round," and the development and changes in the original movie's plot consist of several rounds. However, the narrative reconstruction of five-minute movies blurs the transitions between these rounds, preventing careful analysis of functions and rounds, which inevitably leads audiences to develop negative attitudes toward the original film through the narrative mode of the five-minute movie.

## 5.2 Youth Subculture's Narrative Reconstruction of Five-Minute Stories

After watching five-minute movies, audiences demonstrate stronger identification with youth subculture and youth identity. Five-minute movies reset the narrative structure of films, accelerate the narrative rhythm of the original, and simultaneously intensify the narrative tension. Therefore, cleverly combining youth subculture with five-minute movies offers an optimal solution for fast-paced times. Youth subculture, created by young people, represents a mode of emotional expression and interest appeal constructed around their social relationships. Whether expressing emotions or appealing to interests, these elements indicate their social existence. Integrating youth subculture with five-minute movies can further promote young people's subcultural identity while helping five-minute movies discover more popular narrative modes that enable films to be understood by broader audiences. The youth subcultural linguistic symbols blended into film commentary also help five-minute movies integrate more fully into youth subculture and gradually form a new film and television culture.

## 5.3 Epilogue

This study introduces the framework of film reediting and youth subculture, which both reflects the development of film commentary and youth subcultural linguistic symbols and provides a broader stage for short video film interpretation in the context of fast-paced modern China. The five-minute narrative film serves as both a means of film promotion and a product of leisure in the fast-food era. It has gradually become a new film and television culture that integrates well with youth subculture. However, it warrants vigilance and reflection that these films may cause people to blindly pursue speed and plot while neglecting the original movie's intrinsic brilliance. No matter how wonderful the editing, a complete movie cannot be fully captured in a five-minute commentary, and to truly appreciate a film's charm, one must return to the original. Meanwhile, this study has certain limitations due to the current pandemic environment. Future research by scholars in film and short video editing should pay greater attention to phenomena of film re-editing and youth subculture, as well as expand research and practice in film interpretation.

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