

MOVEMENT AS THE FOCUS? MUSIC VIDEOS FOR TOURISTIC PURPOSES

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Abstract

This paper analyses two songs with lyrics and music video. The analysis is based on the fact that these songs were created by the Hungarian National Tourist Office in order to promote Hungarian landscapes and cities.

Each song of this type is supposed to show the beauty of the selected Hungarian landscape, but the two songs presented in this paper seem to fail in this aim. Since the name of the project for which these songs were created is Road Movie, the lyrics were examined from the perspective of the film genres of American and European road movies. By matching the focus of these genres to the focus of the lyrics, verbs were analysed to understand more about verbs that express movement or mental states/changes.

The results show that verbs can be associated with visible or mental movement. Furthermore, the music videos show some elements of these film genres, although there may be some discrepancies with the lyrics. The paper attempts to merge cognitive semantics research and film studies.

Keywords: American road movie, European road movie, mental movement film, cognitive semantics, Hungarian lyrics, music videos

1. Introduction

The Hungarian National Tourist Office's Road Movie project was launched in 2019 (for further details see: <https://roadmovie.hu>), with the aim of making Hungarian tourist landscapes and cities more attractive to Hungarian citizens. A total of fifteen bands, well known among contemporary Hungarian musicians and their audiences, took part in the project, which also included two co-productions. Alongside music, accompanying music videos were also produced as the main focus of the project was to highlight the visual beauty of Hungary.

The fifteen music videos were mostly able to achieve this focus, e.g. we can see the landscapes and the touristically relevant parts of a city or countryside. However, this article will highlight two that seem not to achieve the goal just mentioned. One of them is a song by Blahalouisiana called *Éjjel a főutcán* ('At night on the high street'), written by Gábor Jancsó, László Móznér, András Szajkó, Barbara Schoblocher and Ádám Juhász. The other one is a song by Ivan and the Parazol called *Mást vártam* ('I expected something else'), written by Máté Balla, Bálint Simon, Márton Springer, Iván Vitáris, and András Weil. Each title has a subtitle to help the listeners identify the cities and landscapes. The song by Blahalouisiana is set in Székesfehérvár, the regional capital of Fejér County, while the song by Ivan and the Parazol is set in Budapest, the capital of Hungary.

Furthermore, as the Hungarian National Tourist Office chose Road Movie as the name of the project, this choice had the effect that travel became the focus of each piece of music. For the analysis of both the texts and the clips, it is therefore worthwhile to take into account the relevant film types. Just as we can see that there are attempts to apply Langacker's Cognitive Grammar to

cinematic movements (cf. Deaca 2018), the reverse can also be fruitful: to broaden the cognitive linguistics discipline with the relevant insights of film studies.

This paper aims to find answers to the following questions:

- (1) Does the name Road Movie have any influence on the lyrics?
- (2) Is the aim of the Hungarian National Tourist Office prominent in the texts of the songs?
- (3) Can the clips be linked to film genres?
- (4) Do the music videos comply with the Tourist Office's guidelines?

To answer these questions, the paper includes an analysis of the texts and then an analysis of the clips. Due to the brevity of the paper, just a few examples are given from each text, and some of the relevant parts of the music videos are shown in picture format.

Overall, the aim of the complex analysis of the text and the clips is to find answers to the questions posed above and detailed in the sections that follow. The following section presents the relevant literature background.

2. The phenomena of attention in texts and films

The film industry has two main categories for the travel genre: the American ROAD MOVIE and the European road movie. The latter is also referred to in Hungarian film studies as a MENTAL MOVEMENT FILM or MIND FILM (Szabolcsi 2021), and this paper will stick to the MENTAL MOVEMENT FILM definition. While the American ROAD MOVIE emphasises that the road is the place where one can escape reality, the MENTAL MOVEMENT FILM offers no opportunity for doing so because of the territorial structures of Europe. Instead, it focuses more on social issues such as migration or one's emotions, usually expressed by mixed images of real-life events and memories (Heller 2024). Furthermore, the main journey of Hungarian MENTAL MOVEMENT FILMS takes place within the memories and the imagination of the protagonist in connection with the actual screenplay time of the film (Gelencsér 2016, Lénárd-Bella 2019).

Such a difference can be seen when salience is taken into account, as the foreground and background are different in these film types (these notions are adopted here on the basis of Langacker 2008). In the ROAD MOVIE, the protagonist reflects on his or her actions, and on changes in his or her mental state that occur as the journey progresses. Therefore, the road functions as a background, and salience comes from the experience of being on the road. In the MENTAL MOVEMENT FILM, the journey between the protagonist's memories functions as a background to the actions and feelings of the protagonist in the actual screenplay time. To transfer the above statements to the text, it is considered that language mainly expresses movement with verbs, and this paper will only be concerned with verbs. Verbs that express a change of place and position, such as so-called MOVEMENT VERBS (cf. Tolcsvai Nagy 2016), can be linked to the strategies of being on the road as seen in ROAD MOVIES. On the other hand, MENTAL VERBS represent cognition, emotion, or perception (Croft 1993) and therefore, can be associated with strategies of travelling between memory and actual time, as in MENTAL MOVEMENT FILMS. For the purposes of the study, I have collected only the so-called ABSOLUTE MENTAL VERBS¹ in Hungarian (see Vincze-László 2006), such as *know*, *remember*, and *believe*.

In order to see what can be considered as relative salience (cf. Talmy 2007) in the clips and how the foregrounded and backgrounded elements can be related to the film categories, this paper used excerpts from the clips. The reason for this was to be able to identify elements such as angles

¹ Absolute mental verbs are defined as those "which themselves carry the mental quality" (Vincze-László 2006: 340)

or distances (based on the work of Kress – van Leeuwen 2006). However, instead of looking at the clips as still images, I also examined the typical camera movement strategies used in ROAD MOVIES (Hurault-Paupe 2014), thus revealing the complexity of the music video.

3. Lyrics on the ground of Road Movie

This section presents the analysis of the texts. First, an analysis of the verbs in the two texts is presented, to accentuate the interdisciplinary link between film studies and cognitive semantics. To this effect, the verbs are grouped into MOVEMENT VERBS, as this category is presumed to be linked with ROAD MOVIES, and ABSOLUTE MENTAL VERBS, to be linked with MENTAL MOVEMENT FILMS. The texts are then be evaluated according to whether or not they contain elements that are in line with the objectives of the Hungarian National Tourist Office. Parts from three other texts will be shown to illustrate successful solutions to the Tourist Office's call to promote rural and urban areas. The provided English translations are not intended to be aesthetically pleasing, but rather merely to be as close as possible to the original Hungarian texts.

3.1. Identifying road movie and mental movement film in the texts

To detect movement in the texts, only verbs were selected and analysed, excluding copula and substantive verbs. The verbs were collected and grouped, and the total number was compared with those that could be grouped into MOVEMENT and ABSOLUTE MENTAL VERBS. This allowed the texts to be compared with the film types. The Hungarian language has not only verbs but also verbs with prefixes, which are either linked and written together or written separately. These have been analysed together. Since the texts contain repeating choruses, verbs that appear there were not counted more than once.

Blahalouisiana's song *Éjjel a főutcán* ('At night on the high street') contains a total of fourteen verbs, but only thirteen were analysed. The verb *change* seems to be part of FICTIVE MOTION² (cf. Talmy 2000), therefore, it was excluded from this analysis. First, the MOVEMENT VERBS were collected.

- (1) Elbújni, felmászhatok sok panelház falán
'To hide, you can **climb** the walls of many panel houses'

The verb *climb* indicates a real movement, with the trajector making a change of place and position.

- (2) El se ballagtunk még, innen tovább szöktem
Menekülök vissza, túl nagy a világ mögöttem
'We haven't even *left* school yet, I have already **flown** away
I am **running** back, the world is too big behind me'

In these lines, the trajector, either plural or singular, makes a change of place and position as described with the verbs *leave*, *fly* and *run*: leaving the hometown and then returning.

Secondly, ABSOLUTE MENTAL VERBS were collected.

- (3) Tudom, tele van gonddal mind a két kezem
'I **know**, that you have both your hands full of worries'

The verb *know* does not express any actual movement but rather a mental change and knowledge. In the next line the same verb occurs, but with a different meaning, referring to the process of gaining knowledge of something:

² "Fictive motion refers to figurative expressions of motion attributed to immobile material objects, states, or abstract concepts where motion verbs semantically extend their meanings to express relations that neither involve the motion itself nor state change" (Bien–Weijer 2021).

- (4) Szokatlan még a bolygó, a többit nem ismerem
 'The planet is still unusual and I don't **know** the rest'

Of the thirteen verbs, only two could be categorised as ABSOLUTE MENTAL VERBS, the rest expressing actual movement. For this reason, the song is associated with the ROAD MOVIE genre, with moving events taking place throughout the song, despite the fact that it switches between past and present tense.

The song by Ivan and the Parazol, *Mást vártam* ('I expected something else'), contains a total of eighteen verbs, not counting the duplums, and only twelve were analysed. In this song, verbs such as *know* or *believe* are repeated in different lines but with the same meaning, so they were not counted.

- (5) Ti nem adtatok, csak ígértetek
 Ami közel van csak abból vehetek
 'You have **given** [us/me] nothing, only a promise
 I can only **take** from what is close to me'

There are two object manipulation verbs that express movement in these two lines: *give* and *take*. The movement is not made by the trajector itself, but an object (supposedly) has been moved by someone. Because of this, there may be a change of place and position, so that these were counted as MOVEMENT VERBS.

On the other hand, there are many examples of ABSOLUTE MENTAL VERBS in this text, although they are repeated more than once.

- (6) Megszegtük mi is az ígéretet
 Pedig elhittem sosem tévedhetek
 De hittünk és tudod így volt szép
 'We also **broke** the promise
 Though I **believed** I could never err
 But we **believed**, and you **know**, that is how it was fair'

There are two occurrences of the word *believe* in these lines, but in Hungarian they have different meanings. The first expresses that the process of believing aims to an object in what the trajector believes. In the second case, the trajector is generally capable of belief. The expression *break a promise*, which is expressed in Hungarian with the verb *megszeg*, causes a change in the mental state of the trajector, so it is also counted as an ABSOLUTE MENTAL VERB. The refrain contains verbs that could not be counted for this analysis, as they are more likely to express FICTIVE MOTION:

- (7) Mást vártam
 A lent után a fent jön úgy láttam
 'I **expected** something else (2x)
 Being at the bottom **follows** being at the top as, I saw' (2x)

Of the twelve verbs analysed, two expressed movement, a movement that was not made by the trajector, but an object was moved. The remaining six verbs, which were not considered in this paper, usually fall into the case of FICTIVE MOTION. According to the results, the song is closer to the category of MENTAL MOVEMENT FILMS, as the chain of events takes place in the protagonist's memory and imagination.

All in all, we can see that *At night on the high street* may have been influenced by the name of the Tourist Office's Road Movie project, associated with the film genre, but the same cannot be stated for *Mást vártam*. As a result, the Road Movie genre had little to no influence on these texts.

3.2. Identifying landmarks in the texts

As the main aim of the Tourist Office was to promote Hungarian tourist attractions, it is expected that this will be reflected in the lyrics. Although the songs convey a feeling about the chosen city or landscape from the eyes of the songwriters, in order to recognise them, some clues should be found in the texts to make them more salient. This goal appears, with different solutions, in three other songs made for the project, such as:

- (8) Lajbim zsebében makuka-szívem
'In the pocket of my waistcoat is my sunflower seed heart'

The Bohemian Betyars *Makuka* song uses dialectal words from the Borsod region of north-eastern Hungary. Owing to the presence of such words are *lajbi* (a Hungarian dialectal word for 'waistcoat') and *makuka* (a Hungarian dialectal word for 'sunflower seed'), listeners can identify the region after a little research, so it is salient.

- (9) Miklóson nem játék a medve
'In Miklós the bear is not a toy'

The song of The Bagossy Brothers Company *Visszajövök* ('I will return') uses items that are recognisable if the listeners know some facts. The band is from Gyergyószentmiklós, a town in Transylvania, and bears are very common in this area. The songwriters use the listener's presumed knowledge and highlight a typical landmark.

- (10) Dunakanyar volt nekem az óceán
'the Danube Bend was the ocean for me'

Kelemen Kabátban's song *Végtelen* ('Infinity') explicitly specifies the region where the protagonist is, the Danube Bend in the northern part of Hungary. It is the closest to the Tourist Office's aim.

However, the two songs that are analysed in this paper do not, or only partially, meet these objectives. The song *At night on the high street* mentions places that could be part of any Hungarian town:

- (11) Elbújni felmászhatok sok panelház falán
Éjjel a főutcán kozmikus a magány
A tinik a tópartra járnak
[...]
Félig kész hasonlat az üres vidámpark

'To hide, you can climb the walls of many panel houses
Loneliness is cosmic at night on the high street
The teenagers go to the lake
[...]
The empty theme park is a half-made simile'

The songwriters refer to a specific place in the last lines of the song, drawing on the listener's historical knowledge: Székesfehérvár was once the capital of Hungary. This is conveyed by the appearance of one of Hungary's regalia, the apple (pomum):

- (12) Az ország almafáját így kell nevelgetni
'This is how the apple tree of the country must be raised'

The song *I expected something else* is not in line with the main goal, there is no mention of the exact location, only a general one:

- (13) Együtt álltunk kint helyeknél
'We stood together in front of places'

As we have seen, bands used different techniques to emphasise the landscapes or the cities, the last two are not in line with the Tourist Office's objective: for the listener, it is not salient where the story takes place.

4. Music videos and Road Movie

This section first explores typical elements of music videos in order to find out whether or not these videos can be associated with film genres. The most important elements are then displayed to show whether the products can meet the advertising objective: to direct attention to the beauties of Hungary. Images are shown from the music videos in both parts as it is not possible to show the whole video.

4.1. *Éjjel a főutcán* 'At night on the high street'

The video was shot in the autumn and is set entirely in one city. As the music starts, we can see the singer from above and close to the ground. During the line *The planet is still unusual*, the camera pans around the singer, but the shot is still taken close to the ground. At the phrase *To hide, you can climb the walls of many panel houses*, the previous near-ground images shift, and the camera begins to move upwards with the singer.

In terms of distance, the hitherto intimate approach (showing the head) is transformed into a social and public space (cf. Kress – van Leeuwen 2006: 148; Virág 2013: 499), and the camera's perspective is from below upwards. At the beginning, only floating movement appears, on a level with the walls of the houses, which then changes into full flight. The symphonic bars are also visually linked to the sight of a symphony orchestra on the roof of a panel house.



Figure 1. The band on the roof of a panel house

At the line *Our favourite place is no more*, we look out of a schoolroom window onto a lake, with panel rows in the background, and so we can contextually assume that both the school and the lake anchored in the text are interpreted as favourite places. At the first chorus, the full band is shown for the first time, still fixed on the roof of the panel house.

With the line *I'm carrying it all around with me anyway*, a musical insertion begins, the singer ascends to the height of the roofs of the houses, and with the third chorus she is finally kicked away from all solid points, flying above the houses, with the city, primarily still the panel houses, in the background.



Figure 2. The iconic scenery of panel houses

By the last line of the song, *This is how the apple tree of the country must be raised*, the singer is soaring to almost ethereal heights, with the city is mirrored and folded above and below her. The depiction is central and frontal at the very end, which may reinforce the linking role (Virág 2013) – metaphorically, the need for the song to connect the world of the viewer and the world of the city.



Figure 3. The end scene of *At night on the high street*

Movements used in ROAD MOVIES appear in the clip, such as COMPOSITION-INDUCED MOVEMENT, i.e. the dynamic movement of frames, and also EDITING-INDUCED MOVEMENT (Hurault-Paupe 2014). However, it is not a typical ROAD MOVIE, as movement is vertical instead of horizontal, and is limited to a thematic city. Thus, a contrast can be observed between the text and the clip as the text shows more ROAD MOVIE elements. The clip can also be linked to MENTAL MOVEMENT FILMS: we see places that are presented from one perspective, bound to one person's memories.

The clip mixes the markers of ROAD MOVIE and MENTAL MOVEMENT FILMS, as the representation of the locals' experiences and memories become more important from the director's point of view than creating a sense of being on the road.

4.2. *Mást vártam 'I expected something else'*

The clip begins with the name of Budapest shown repeatedly, which is not reflected anywhere in the text. Throughout the video, there are continuous and rapid cuts and pasted images of parts of houses, streets, a typical element of EDITING-INDUCED MOVEMENT (Hurault-Paupe 2014). We see the band at one point, the singer is in the spotlight, and a girl accompanies the band throughout the clip, constantly taking photographs as an outside observer. The visual world reflects and conveys the atmosphere of the eighties and nineties: blurred colours, contours, the image is not sharp.

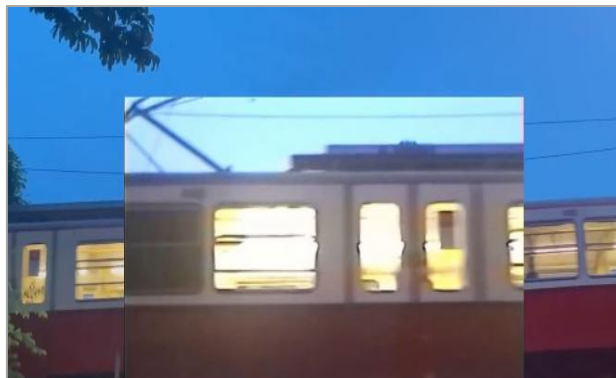


Figure 4. Blurred and sharp pictures on each other

At the beginning of the song, the viewer is taken into a studio, where pictures of the singer are taken continuously (with other cuts of street scenes in between). With the appearance of the first chorus, we leave the studio and the band starts walking on the streets.



Figure 5. Walking on the streets of Budapest

Abrupt and rapid image changes, zooming in and out, will continue to be an important element. The pictures with the line *We stood together in front of places* reinforce the "movement" of the standing with the view of several nightclubs alternating with the band in the foreground. The compositional element of the song is framing, this framing is provided by constant shifts in perspective, the distance is largely public, but can also become intimate in many cases with sudden shifts (Kress – van Leeuwen 2006; Virág 2013). There is no clear principle of direction, rather the cavalcade becomes important.

From the second chorus onwards, modern architectural elements begin to appear in the video clip, and visuality begins to sharpen, during a musical interlude neon signs flash, still retaining the atmosphere of the eighties. The sequence of events that had been taking place during the daytime is shifted into the evening. The images of day and night alternate, as does the contrast between the blurred, old-fashioned images and the images of modern lifestyle.



Figure 6. A picture of the band for the montage

The video clip ends with showing a wall with a montage of the pictures taken by the girl. The movement is continuous in the clip, the narrative structure is thus based on action, actional and relational processes (Virág 2013: 499), and is strongly metaphorical, although there are also examples of explicitness of certain elements by lyrics (for example, standing in places or images of up and down).

Nevertheless, with elements of constant movement and the merging of the eighties with the present, the clip creates a mixture of the two genres. However, the final scene, with a montage of photographs, brings the whole clip into the realm of memory and, in this sense, closer to MENTAL MOVEMENT FILMS.

4.3. Identifying landmarks in the music video

In addition to promoting the cities and the countryside, the Road Movie project also has typical signs that must appear in the videos. One is the Road Movie neon sign and the other is a bus used by the bands to travel from one place to another.



Figure 7. The Road Movie logo



Figure 8. The bus of the Road Movie project

In the *At night on high street* clip, the Road Movie sign only appears at the beginning, while the bus plays a bigger role, with the singer travelling on it at one point in the clip. In the *I expected something else* clip, the Road Movie sign is only shown at 2.51 minutes and the image of the bus only appears a few times. In both clips, the Tourist Office's features are not highlighted.

The landscapes in other clips are tourist-friendly and serve to highlight the sights and beauties of the area.



Figure 9. The roadsign of the county

In *Makuka*, we can also see a roadsign with the name of the county, so the viewer's attention is explicitly focused on where the story takes place, it is salient.



Figure 10. A typical Szekler Gate

In *I will return* we can see typical landmarks of Transylvania, one of them is the so-called Szekler Gate, the landmarks and the beauty are highlighted.



Figure 11. The Danube Bend

In *Infinity* we focus on the beauty of the Danube Bend, the whole video clip takes place there, showing it from above and from a boat view. This can be seen as the most salient of the three.

On the other hand *At night on the high street* cannot comply with the Tourist Office's aim, as the main focus on panel houses and the old city centre is not highlighted.



Figure 12. The statue of the Hungarian regalia, the apple in Székesfehérvár

Once we see the apple, which is also mentioned in the text, but without the knowledge to link it to Székesfehérvár, it cannot be thought of as a prominent element.

In the *I expected something else* clip, there are elements of Budapest that are recognisable, famous buildings or the landscape of the city as a whole, but it is more focused on showing a vibrant and lively side of a capital city.



Figure 13. The Fisherman's Bastion in Budapest

Despite the fact that it does not focus on explicitly showing the city itself, the main objective has been achieved.

All in all, these two music video that were analysed in this paper do not correspond to the Tourist Office's main goal of encouraging Hungarians to visit these landscapes as much as the other music videos, shown above, did.

5. Summary

The main aim of this paper was to show that interdisciplinarity can be fruitful when lyrics on a certain topic and film genres are looked at together. An additional goal was to find out whether songs produced for a promotional purpose were able to live up to the relevant expectations.

For this reason, I first examined the verbs in two songs and classified them into MOVEMENT VERBS and ABSOLUTE MENTAL VERBS. These two linguistic categories could then be brought into

correspondence with the schemas of ROAD MOVIES and MENTAL MOVEMENT FILMS. The results showed that verbs can express movements very similar to those seen in films, and the overall meaning of the songs can be similar to the meaning of the corresponding films. Generally, however, the name of the Tourist Office's project, Road Movie, does not seem to have prompted songwriters to produce songs specifically designed to match the style of ROAD MOVIES. Secondly, I checked whether the lyrics themselves were able to draw attention to the cities or landscapes which was the main focus of the Tourist Office. To highlight the differences among the texts, three more songs, created in this project, were shown. The results presented that *At night on the high street* and *I expected something else* did not focus on promoting an area but rather on promoting a feeling.

The next section focused on the music videos with the same distinction that had been applied to the texts. First, movement was detected in connection with the film genres. After an analysis of the images and movements, excluding the sound, the results showed that a mixture of ROAD MOVIE and MENTAL MOVEMENT FILM was more likely to appear, as memories and fantasies were more prominent. Secondly, the visual focus was checked by comparing them with the three other songs. Both of the music videos shown in this paper focused more on presenting the atmosphere of the cities rather than showing the most prominent tourist areas.

All in all, it can be said that the chosen songs did not match the focus of the project but solved the given task in a unique way. In the future, it would be worth exploring other songs that are either made for a travel purpose or have a travel theme, to see whether the movement takes place in the mind or in the domain of reality.

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