

EDITING TECHNIQUES: AN ANALYSIS ON ACTION SCENES IN ROAD ACTION FILMS IN MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT- This essay will dismantle about the utilization of editing techniques in an action scene in road action films in Malaysia. An action scene in films will look more dramatic and could provide optimum effect if appropriate editing techniques are used. It is not solely depending on the acting, visual and audio. However, editing techniques must be emphasized by the director and editor in producing a scene. The director and editor must be aware and know the suitability on the utilization of editing techniques in an action scene so that the desired effects could be achieved. Many researches have been conducted regarding the cinematography in films in Malaysia. Nonetheless, there is still a lack of emphasis on editing techniques. Thus, this article will focus on the editing techniques used through road action scenes by looking thoroughly on the suitability of their utilization in these road action scenes. Analysis is done by discussing into details based on the analysis method through continuous watching by viewing in stop motion, which is examining the pictures of each scene in the road action films in Malaysia, frame by frame.

Keywords: Editing Techniques; Action Film; Action Scene

I. INTRODUCTION

Editing techniques is a very important necessity in editing process. It is to produce a better film and also to form a better narrative. A failure to combine a shot properly or the chosen shot is inappropriate through editing process will cause disturbance in term of the film narrative. This is because road action genre film is a film genre that keeps on moving quickly in order to produce high quality road action genre films.

According to A. Wahab Hamzah (1998), to show an interesting visual, the typography used, high speed camera movement, and tempo changing could develop a visual flow style of a film and this gives a reality effect on the film. This proved that shot changes together with camera angle could establish more exciting effect on the audience to keep them watching the film. Panic atmosphere could also be built through shot changes and camera angle which is beyond audience's expectation.

The utilization of editing techniques is very crucial in making a scene in road action films. It is to ensure that psychological and emotion effects on audience could be achieved. Similarly, horror genre films give traumatic effect in the form of violence. Action films also create excitement among the audience through chaotic, murdering, chasing and shooting actions (Pramaggiore dan Wallis: 2008).

II. FILM EDITING IN MALAYSIA

Editing system in Malaysia has now changed following the current situation. This is because most of the editing technologies available in Asian countries are imported from the Western countries. As the consequence, editing system in Malaysia is along with the development in developed countries. This can be seen through Avid editing system

which is massively used in the entertainment world in Hollywood, Bollywood and other Asian countries. Film producers in Malaysia such as KRU Studio have also used this machine in producing their film outputs.

Editing is not merely seen as a task of separating and rearranging scenes and then combining it to become a story. Editing that is equipped with the technique is a method which could give psychological effect on the audience. As an example, the film entitled *Evolusi KL Drift 2* directed by Samsul Yusof could give terrifying experience and effect to the audience especially in the chasing scenes. This can be seen through visuals with the right selection of a certain time and tempo. Shots such as long shot to close-up or medium close-up can create different feelings in audience's heart. Through an action scene in a film, audience are able to feel what is being experienced by the characters. The expertise or effectiveness in the visual arrangement and selection is in the hand of an editor who should be able to help the audience to experience that what they are watching is not made up but is an event that seems real and only separated by the white screen.

III. ACTION FILMS IN MALAYSIA

Action films usually use short sequence to introduce main character and also the main conflict in an action film genre. As an example, in the film entitled *Salt* (2010), the main character is easily introduced to the audience by the editor. The introduction of the main character in this film is very simple and solid by using editing techniques in fast cut method following the tempo rhythm and the utilization of appropriate flash back technique. This editing technique causes time backdate and is summarise by the editor. According to this concept, it can take the audience to feel the impact of the storyline with distinctive visual arrangement.

In Malaysia, the film entitled *Hang Tuah* is a historical film (Phani Majumdar: 1954). The film contains action element which shows martial art of Malay society at that time, which is *silat*. Action scene is shown in a fight involving "keris" between the characters of Hang Tuah and Hang Jebat. However, the editing is still lacking of editing techniques that could enhance the fight scene. The lack of using different sizes of shot gives less dramatic effect. Especially without the help of computer-generated imagery (CGI) system back then.

In 1984, the company of Sabah Film Production Sendirian Berhad produced the film entitled *Azura* through the direction of Deddy M. Borhan. This film contains road action scene which aimed to give dramatic effects to audience and to create a more real situation. Action scene through motorcycle-riding is seen more challenging and dramatic. From the film *Azura*, people were observed started to grow interests in Malay films. This was proven when this

film reached a box office collection. At once, Deddy M.Borhan successfully raised Malaysians' support to continue watching Malay films in the cinema.

The success of Deddy M.Borhan had encouraged local filmmakers to produce films that contain action scenes. Among them are films entitled *Bujang Selamat* (1985) directed by Z.Lokman, *Roda-Roda* (1985) directed by Mahadi J Murat, *Pelumba Malam* (1989) directed by A.R Badul, *Operasi Cegah Jenayah* (1991) directed by Eddie Pak, *Konstabel Mamat* (1992) which is directed by Z.Lokman, and *XX Ray* (1992) with Aziz M.Osman as the director. The utilization of special effect technique in the action scenes was done by Aziz M.Osman in his film *XX Ray* (1992). This special effect helps the action scene to create more exciting effect to the audience. The film was favored and successfully achieved a box office collection.

Later in 2002, once again, film with the element of motorized vehicle actions was continued and produced by Badaruddin Hj Azmi in the film entitled *KL Menjerit*. The film director worked hard in creating a film with the element

of romance and action drama. In the motorcycle-riding action scene, Badaruddin Hj Azmi worked it well and had use cross cutting editing technique to create suspense effect to the audience. Badaruddin Hj Azmi did a careful editing in the scene of motorcycle-riding by the main role, Rosyam Nor. This film won several awards in the 16th Malaysia Film Festival, among them were the best film and the best editing. Badaruddin Hj Azmi is a director who pioneered the action genre films in Malaysia.

It also cannot be denied that local road action films are successful and are capable to produce good road action scenes. However, the utilization of editing techniques in road action scenes must be scrutinized on its' appropriate utilization so that the message to be delivered by the directors can easily be understood without require the audience to think deeper and thus be entertained with the road action scenes that are being shown. The following are several productions of action genre films in Malaysia over the past 10 years from year 2001 until year 2010.

Tahun	Films / Pengarah	Penyunting	Kutipan (RM)
2001	Gerak Khas The Movie	Hisham Jupri	RM 4.40 Juta
2002	KL Menjerit (Badaruddin Hj Azmi)	Badaruddin Hj Azmi	RM 2.87 Juta
	Gerak Khas The Movie 2	Musa Idris	
		Hisham Jupri	RM 3.10 Juta
2003	Tiada		
2004	Tiada		
2005	Gangster (Badaruddin Hj Azmi)	S.Rakesh	RM 2.88 Juta
	KL Menjerit 1 (Badaruddin Hj Azmi)	Badaruddin Hj Azmi	RM 2.52 Juta
2006	Castello (Badaruddin Hj Azmi)	Musa Idris	RM 1.56 Juta
	Remp-it (Ahmad Idham)	Badaruddin Hj Azmi	
		Ahmad Mustadha B. Samingon	RM 4.00 Juta
2007	Impak Maksima (Ahmad Idham)	Ahmad Mustadha B. Samingon	RM 2.06 Juta
2008	Evolusi KL Drift (M.Shamsul Datuk Yusof)	M.Shamsul Datuk Yusof	RM 3.90 Juta
2009	Bohsia: Jangan Pilih Jalan Hitam (M.Shamsul Datuk Yusof)	Musa Idris	RM 4.14 Juta
		M.Shamsul Datuk Yusof	
2010	Evolusi KL Drift 2 (M.Shamsul Datuk Yusof)	M.Shamsul Datuk Yusof	RM 6.07 Juta
	V3 Samseng Jalanan (Farid Kamil)	Hisham Jupri	RM 3.88 Juta
	Adnan Sempit (Ahmad Idham)	Brian Ng (Kang)	
		Johari Ibrahim	RM 7.66 Juta

Table 1: List of Road Action Film Genre in 10 Years Time.

Source: Finas, January 2nd, 2011

IV. ANALYSIS OF ACTION SCENES AND RESULTS

A. Parallel technique and cross cutting

There will be many events and actions in a film. A film will contain several scenes. Every scene will contain several events. Each of the events will contain actions that will form a film. There are static and also fast or slow moving actions. The utilization of parallel technique or cross cutting is a parallel action technique that was pioneered by Edwin S. Porter through his directed film, *The Life of an American Fireman* (1903). This technique is also giving more emotional effect and forming the storyline of a film. According to D.W Griffith as cited from M. V. Ramachandra (2000:133), this parallel technique is very suitable to be used in an action film genre.

Most of the road action films produced in Malaysia until now rarely adopt the parallel or cross cutting technique. Nonetheless, the film made by Badaruddin Haji Azmi which is *KL Menjerit* (2002) had in fact use the cross cutting technique. Scene 52 in *KL Menjerit* (2002) produced is very compatible if it is edited using the parallel technique. If parallel technique is used by the editor, the dramatic effect created would be much better. However, the editor and producer did not use that editing technique. Instead, the editor and director merely proceeded with cross cutting technique.

This display of scene 52 which is the visual of Tun riding a motorcycle (cross cutting technique) in a race with Sharul in the race circuit was interspersed. However, it could not give even a little shock to the audience. This is because the

audience could predict the ending of the scene. If the technique was changed to parallel technique, shock effect and more dramatic impact would be created. However, the director and editor should cooperate in making the scene which indeed started from the scene shooting location. Below is scene 52 which is using cross cutting technique.



Table 2: Cross Cutting Technique in The Film *kl menjerit* (2001).

Actually, the training session was done quite long if compared to the time when Tun riding Sharul’s motorcycle. However, if editor and director showed the entire time of Sharul’s training time, it surely would make the audience bored. With cutting away Sharul’s training and later was cross-cut to the shot of Sharul’s motorcycle being ridden by Tun caused a shorter time for this scene. Yet it did not give bad impact to this scene because audience understood and believed that the scene was conducted.

B. Cutting to the beat technique

Next is a technique that is commonly used by editor in road action film which is cutting to the beat. This is a technique that needs visual cutting based on the tempo of the background music. Usually, the editor will use this technique in chasing scenes. The change of a shot to another shot is totally depending on the tempo of the background music. The utilization of this technique can create more energetic effect on a road action film. The audience also feel the tense atmosphere not only presented with visual cutting quality and different shot connection, it even comes together with background music that is appropriate with the rhythm to the shot change in that scene.

In the film *Evolusi KL Drift 2* (2010) directed by Syamsul Yusof, the director and editor have used this technique in the earlier part of the story which is at the race location. The utilization of this technique at the starting point of the story could give spirit to the audience to follow the film story. The presented music sound and action visual could give more energetic atmosphere. Though the shot changes fast up to 1

frame per second was done by the editor, but the utilization of the shots in different sizes shot could give more dramatic impact. Wheels close up and the sound effect of car tires during the drift action could provide action that keeps the audience excited. Below is the utilization of cutting to the beat technique in the earlier scene in the film *Evolusi KL Drift 2* (2010).

	Masa 0:00:42:22 26fps	Long shot	Syot 1 Syot eye level.
	Masa 0:00:43:24 2fps	Close shot	Syot 2 Pandangan eye level dan insert shot.
	Masa 0:00:44:01 2fps	Long shot	Syot 3
	Masa 0:00:44:03 2fps	Close shot	Syot 4 Insert shot
	Masa 0:00:44:05 2fps	Low angle	Syot 5
	Masa 0:00:44:07 2 fps	Close shot	Syot 6 Penggunaan close-up bertujuan memperlihatkan aksi drift.

Table 3: The Utilization of cutting to the beat technique in the film *evolusi kl drift 2* (2010).

C. Continuity, cutting on action and matching technique

Continuity or visual continuity in a scene in film is a very important matter and must be emphasized by the director or editor of the film or drama. The importance of this must be preserved because it can damage a film or drama if jump cut or discontinuity happens. Usually this technique will build the scene by using long shot at the starting of the sequence. Then, do the cutting or continuity to medium shot gradually before choosing a close-up to show the emphasis of the subject and object in detail.

A continuity of a film or drama is also taken into account by editor in shots continuation that forms a scene, and it is called matching. Compatibility or matching is very important in film editing regardless of whether or not an action film. The three matters are matching the look, matching the position and matching the movement. Visual matching or continuity in a shot to another shot needs to be emphasized by all film editors to make a good film successfully and to be seen more arranged and the storyline could be understood by the audience.

In the film of *Impak Maksima* (2007) directed by Ahmad Idham, the film editor emphasized on continuation through a shot to the another. This was put first in chasing scenes so the audience could follow the film storyline. Below are those film visuals which are loaded into a table based on a shot changing with another.

	Masa 1:03:16:09	Low angle Full Shot	Syot 1 Kereta dipandu laju oleh Ray yang memperlihatkan aksi kejar –mengejar.
	1:03:17:20	Long shot	Syot 2 Kelihatan Amran menunggang laju motosikal menerusi kereta Ray.
	1:03:19:17	Medium Close up	Syot 3 Pandangan depan yang memperlihatkan kedua-dua watak bagi menunjukkan ketengangan adegan.
	1:03:21:05	Medium Shot	Syot 4 Pandangan Ray membuatkan audien geram akan tindakannya yang cuba membunuh Amran.

Table 4: The Utilization of continuity, cutting on action and matching (match the look, match the movement, match the position) techniques in the film *impak maksima* (2007).

D. Expanding time technique

Expanding or extending time technique refers to the long period sequence in a film or video rather than the real-time. The utilization of this technique is rarely done by the film editor unless they want to focus on a shot in a film so that the audience can see more clearly. The utilization of this technique is very clear, especially in the form of sports movie. Sports videos or films, especially football, use this technique to give emphasis on something. If the display of football is on television, scoring will be demonstrated repeatedly using slow motion technique so that more dramatic effect can be demonstrated. Audience will feel excited at the show. Elongation time through slow motion technique is to change the actual display of real-time.

Time expanding technique includes techniques to slow visual, visual repetition, different shot positions and normal

moving visual that either then accelerated or slowed. Expanding time also is a technique commonly used by editors in road action scenes intended to show the car driving skills of a character in an action movie. Other than that, this technique also makes a scene not to drag on which may bored the audience who are watching the film. Although there are some repeated shots, but the shot repetition becomes an attraction due to different angles. This scene can be seen at the time "1:25:35" in which a car driven by Shaheizy Sam acting as Ery skidded and fell from the top highway onto the other lower highway shows that many cameras were used and combinations of shots chronologically was able to give dramatic impact to the audience. Director who splurged for this action had no loss with the interesting scene outcome that had never been done by any film production in Malaysia. The situation can be seen through the table below.

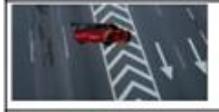
	Masa 1:25:35:06	Long shot Low angle	Syot 1 Pandangan bawah jalan raya. Kamera 2.
	Masa 1:25:36:21	Full Shot	Syot 2 Pandangan atas. Kamera 1.
	Masa 1:25:39:02	Long shot Low angle	Syot 3 Kamera 2. Sudut sama tetapi kedudukan subjek berubah.
	Masa 1:25:40:16	Long shot Low angle	Syot 4 Kamera 3. Memperlihatkan keseluruhan subjek.
	Masa 1:25:41:18	Long shot High angle	Syot 5 Kamera 1. Kedudukan kereta yang berlainan.
	Masa 1:25:43:00	Long Shot	Syot 6 Kamera 2. Namun imej kereta di dekatkan. Penggunaan zoom in subjek.

Table 5: The utilization of expanding time (slow motion, time remapping, repetition, different angle) technique in the film *evolusi kl drift 2* (2010).

Syamsul managed to give something to the audience and make the action scene stuck in their mind. In addition to a variety of shots and camera positions, the utilization of slow motion technique also adds more dramatic effect. This technique can be seen based on the table above that begins at the 1st shot until the 6th shot.

E. Insert shot or cut in and cut away shot techniques

In the film entitled *V3 Samseng Jalanan* (2005) directed by Farid Kamil, the director also used this technique and often performed by Brian Ng in chasing scenes. However, there is a shot used (insert shot) that was loaded in this film which does not reflect the real situation of a motorcycle racing such as the utilization of close-up shot on the faces of Garing and Rudy in the film. Their face had only slightly blown by the wind which showed different situation with the chasing scene. Farid Kamil should emphasize the utilization of this insert shot with taking close-up of the faces blown by the strong wind as this situation is able to convince the audience with the motorcycle racing scene despite the fact that there were some stuntman who performed the action.

Road action scene done by the director of *V3 Samseng Jalanan* (2005) is seen as capable to generate a smooth shot transition (smooth transition). This is clearly seen in the diagram below, which looks effective through a chasing scene. Although shot changes are quite fast, the audience can identify the displayed image and this is the relationship between the shots with shots and scenes with scenes that is said by Griffith. The diagram below shows the utilization of the insert shot done by Brian Ng as the editor of this film. The action scene done is seen to be successful despite the face close-up of Garing looks as if riding a motorcycle in an unsuitable condition. This can be seen through the second shot. Here are the visuals compiled by the editor to reflect the chasing scene.

	Masa 1:10:51:19	Long shot	Syot pertama Para pelumba menarik minyak untuk memecut laju.
	Masa 1:10:53:21	Close-up	Syot kedua Insert shot
	Masa 1:10:55:22	Full shot	Syot ketiga Kelihatan Garing menjatuhkan pelumba lain.
	Masa 1:10:56:16	Full shot	Syot keempat
	Masa 1:10:58:05	Full shot	Syot kelima Rudy memecut laju mengejar pelumba lain.
	Masa 1:10:59:11	Close-up	Syot keenam Insert shot

Table 6: The utilization of insert shot or cut in and cut away shot technique in the film *v3 samseng jalanan* (2010).

F. Elliptical (jump cut / dissolve) technique

The utilization of elliptical technique in the film *V3 Samseng Jalanan* (2010) began in the beginning of the story after Rudy (acted by Farid Kamil) and his friends came out from the cinema. They rode their motorcycles together in the manners that could cause death. The elliptical technique is used starting at time "12:01:42" to "12:01:43". Brian Ng

used the jump cut technique wisely and visual was slowed and accelerated to create more dramatic effect. Even so, there is still continuity on the screen and the audience can still recognize the visual displayed, thus providing dramatic impact on the scene. Brian Ng did the editing more carefully so that there would be no confusion in the audience. This situation must be taken into account so that it is easy for the audience to follow the storyline of a film, especially in the action scenes involving chasing.

This editing produces a complete film scene. Natural smoothness of the film (mechanically smooth) exists only after a completed film scene produced. Following are the visuals showing elliptical technique used by Brian Ng at the beginning of the action scenes in *V3 Samseng Jalanan* (2010).

	Masa 0:01:43:12	Medium Shot Eye Level	Syot pertama
	Masa 0:01:43:13	Medium Shot Eye Level	Syot Kedua Berlaku jump cut yang membuatkan visual bergerak laju menjadi satu montaj di awal adegan.
	Masa 0:01:43:15	Medium shot Eye Level	Syot ketiga Jump cut
	Masa 0:01:43:17	Medium Shot Eye Level	Syot keempat Jump cut
	Masa 0:01:44:18	Medium Shot Eye Level	Syot kelima

Table 7: The utilization of elliptical (dissolve and jump-cut) technique in the film *v3 samseng jalanan* (2010).

The utilization of jump cut in this scene gives little impact on the audience about the speed of the motorcycle ridden by the character in the film. The utilization of this technique is rarely carried out by local action genre film editor. Brian Ng together with his director, Farid Kamil were able to create smoothness at the screen and the speed of the image which was accompanied by appropriate background music. Though using jump cut in the image, but the scene did not look surprised and the audience could feel the speed of visual impact that the director and editor wanted to feature.

V. CONCLUSION

The four road action films are studied in details by reviewing on 'editing techniques' in producing more dramatic effect and then to ease the audience in understanding the storyline and to know the action elements of a road action film genre.

Badaruddin Hj Azmi in *KL Menjerit* (2002) has used the techniques of editing nicely as well as compatible with the action scenes generated. This makes the film to be the best action film and had win several awards including the best editing award. Farid Kamil also used motorcycle as the primary vehicle in the film entitled *V3 Samseng Jalanan* (2010). He seemed to be able to use fast motion editing

techniques at the beginning of the road action scenes. Expanding time technique through the scene of an accident between a motorcycle with a lorry is capable to show clearly that some parts of the victim's body are almost destroyed when it is run over by a lorry.

Through the film *Impak Maksima* (2007), Ahmad Idham was viewed using editing techniques with more caution because the film which is loaded with drift racing scenes needed to be edited with more streamlined so it would not confuse the audience. Editing techniques were used in each road action scene intended to create dramatic effect. Nevertheless, this film is seen less effective when compared with *Evolusi KL Drift 2* (2010) directed by Syamsul Yusof as the editor of this film focused or emphasized less on road action scenes that desired to be highlighted.

Aside from that, the utilization of CGI techniques in some action scenes in *Impak Maksima* (2007) resulted in this film seemed unreal and making this action film did not achieve the level to be proud of. However, Syamsul in his action film *Evolusi KL Drift 2* (2007) had use editing techniques more effectively, and almost the entire editing techniques he used was successful and appropriate through the road action scene generated.

Filem	KL Menjerit (2002)	Impak Maksima (2007)	V3 Samseng Jalanan (2010)	Evolusi KL Drift 2 (2010)
Teknik				
Penyuntingan				
Parallel				
Cros Cutting	✓			
Elliptical -Disslove		✓		
-Jump cut			✓	✓
Expanding time-Slow motion	✓	✓	✓	✓
Time remapping			✓	
Repetition	✓	✓	✓	✓
Diffrent angles	✓	✓	✓	✓
Continuity	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cutting on action	✓	✓	✓	✓
Matching the look	✓	✓	✓	✓
Matching the movement	✓	✓	✓	✓
Matching the position	✓	✓	✓	✓
Insert shot, cut in dan cutaway	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cutting to the beat		✓	✓	✓
Fast Motion			✓	

Table 9: Chosen editing technique and road action film in malaysia.

Through the table above, it can be concluded that the road action genre films in Malaysia have been using some editing techniques to produce a road action scene. Based on the study, researcher has found that there are some editing techniques that should be included in a road action scene to evoke the desired emotional impact. Those editing techniques mentioned are cross cutting technique, elliptical which includes dissolve technique and jump cut, expanding time technique which extends the time such as the utilization of slow motion, repetition, different angle and time remapping.

The next technique is continuity technique, cutting on action technique and matching techniques which includes match look, match position and match movement. The other editing technique which is also important in the production of a road action scenes is insert shot, cut in and

cut away shot technique and fast motion technique as well as cutting to the beat and fast motion technique. Researcher also has found that the utilization of parallel technique is very suitable to be applied in producing a road action scene to create more dramatic effect. Using the right type of editing techniques is capable of giving the desired emotional impact, conveying a narrative that is easy to be understood by the audience as well as giving impact to a road action film in term of box office collections.

However, the measurement of the success of a road action film also does not depend solely on the type of editing techniques used in producing an action scene. What is more important is the utilization of editing techniques that suits a road action scene and fast cut together with the right and accurate shots connection. In addition, a good utilization of special effects or (CGI) also plays an important role in a road action film and a film script.

Next, based on the table above, it can also be seen that the utilization of parallel technique is not applied at all by the editors of the selected action films. Researchers recommend this technique to be used in the production of a road action scene, as this technique is able to give a more dramatic effect. Therefore, in producing a road action scene, the utilization of editing techniques should also be studied in depth other than the big capital spending and advanced technical equipment so that the road action scene can give more dramatic impact. Thus, the editor should apply the right editing techniques into the road action scene produced in order to give a more streamlined, organised edited outcome and to be able to achieve a level that can be proud of.

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