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## Camera Work Used in the Sri Lankan Horror Movie 'Bandhanaya': A Content Analysis

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### Abstract

Camera shots and movements are the most essential ingredients in filmmaking. All renowned cinematic creations have employed great camera shots and movements. Film directors, cinematographers and editors work together to create cinema productions. Horror films are considered one of the main genres, which is able to grab the attention of the viewers. Even though Sri Lanka does not have a larger film industry, directors and cinematographers experiment with this particular genre to a certain extent. However, researchers in Sri Lanka have not explored the horror genre and its camera usage, therefore a research gap is visible in the field of film media studies. The present Study focused on the camera shots and movements used in the Sri Lankan horror movie 'Bandanaya (2017).

Video-based observation and content analysis methods were used. 74 scenes were identified. The unit of analysis was the camera shots and movements used throughout the scenes. 12 terminologies were adopted for the analysis. The Study revealed that 1182 camera shots were used in the entire movie.

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There are 396 (35%) Medium Close Up shots, which was the maximum percentage followed by 214 (18%) Medium shots, 204 (17%) Long shots, 136 (12%) Medium Long shots, 132(11%) Close Up shots, 31(3%) Big Close Up shots, 28(2%) Extreme Close Up shots, 24 (2%) Point of View shots & 13(1%) Very Long Shots whereas there are only 4 (0.33%) Extreme Long shots used in the entire movie, which is lowest in percentage. Truck out was the least used camera movement in the film.

**Keywords:** Horror, Camera Shots, Camera Movements, Genre, Film

## Introduction

The camera shots and movements employed in the films enhance the creativity and draw the attention of the viewers. Film directors and cinematographers all around the world experiment with various camera shots, and movements to create visually attractive films. As a result, various camera shots and movements can be seen in the films. Horror is a cinema genre that attracts the audience's attention with its different camera angles, shots, and movements employed by the director, cameraman, and editor.

Le Manoir du Diable (*The Manor of the Devil 1896*) by George Melies is the first picture that can be classified as a horror film (*The Manor of the Devil 1896*). The story revolves around a demon and his exile. George Melies was the most renowned horror director in the 1890s, making more short horror films such as *L'auberge ensorcelée* (*Bewitched Inn 1897*), about a guy at a hotel who is the victim of a paranormal being's prank. Because this was the early age of motion pictures, not many horror films were created.

Because of the introduction of sound in movies in the 1930's, horror films saw a renaissance. The ability to add sound effects to a horror film altered the mood by assisting in the creation of tense moments. The horror genre was also referenced for the first time in the 1930s. Numerous consider this period to be the "Golden Age of Horror Films," as many notable films such as *Dracula* (1931), *Frankenstein* (1931), *The Mummy* (1932), *Freaks* (1932), *King Kong* (1933), and *Bride of Frankenstein* were released during this time.

According to the history of Sri Lankan Cinema, *Broken Promise* (Kadawunu Poronduwa) was the first Sinhala film Screened in 1947. Sinhala cinema is 75 years old and a large number of films have been made in Sri Lanka since then.

Many horror movies have become popular among the Sri Lankan audience. Among them, were films such as Maya(2016), The horn (2020), Zoom(2016), Gharasarapa(2018), Seya(2018), Spandana(2015) and Bandanaya(2017) were able to achieve more than 6 rating score in the IMDB website.

However, no one has studied the camera techniques employed in these films. In the present Study, the researcher focuses on the camera work of the film Bandanaya. However, very little research can be seen on how the world's greatest films employed different camera angles, shots, and movements. Content analysis studies on camera angles, shots, and movements contained in films are very rare in Sri Lanka. Accordingly, a huge research gap can be seen at present. The studies of camera shots, and movements embedded in films can provide a large number of facts for the local and foreign film industry, film directors, cinematographers, scholars and future researchers.

Synopsis of the Bandanaya film can be describe as follows. Mahairikanniya is a beautiful low country village where farming is the main livelihood. Manikhami and Punchirala were two cousins who are well known for their black magic and sorcery. Punchirala was the son of Manikhamy's uncle. Both have been embroiled in a father's property dispute for quite some time. Menik Hami was an experienced black magic sorcerer who is a descendant of his father. Wife name was Alice nona. They had only one daughter. Her name was Nandavathi. Nandavathi's husband Ariyapala lived with Manik Hami's house after the marriage. He eared his living by helping his father-in-law with farming and black magic activities.

Punchirala was not cleaver as Manik Hami for black magic. Punchirala had a daughter and a son. The son of Punchirala was a stubborn man. His name was Wimalasiri. The daughter was Piyaseeli. Piyaseeli's daughter Sumana Piyakaru was a seven-year-old girl. The eight-year-old son is Sirithimal. Piyaseeli was married to a person called Jayasoma. He runs a bakery in town. Punchirala's mother also stayed with them. She is ninety years old and name was Celestina. Manik Hami finally decided to use his black magic and dispatched a cat (Pilli) to kill Punchirala.

Manik Hami came to Punchirala's funeral with Ariyapala but Punchi Rala's son Wimalasiri got into a fight with them. Then Manik Hami leaves the funeral house with the intention of taking revenge on Wimalasiri and the rest of the family one day. After Punchirala's death, Manik Hami and Ariyapala

were able to change the boundaries of the fence according to their wishes due to the fear of Panchirala's family about Panchirala's black magic abilities. Meanwhile, Sumana, the daughter of Piyaseeli, was bitten by a snake. Piyasili took the girl and ran to Manik Hami, a snake doctor in the village. Taking advantage of this opportunity, Manik Hami inserts a demonic spirit into the girl's body and fixed a pin on her head. At the same time, he told Piyaseeli that after three months, not to cut her hair.

Sumana stayed at home as usual but she was unable to talk. Unusual traits began to emerge from her time to time. Manik Hami's intention was to see everyone in the house destroyed in three months by the demon possessed by Sumana. One day Wimalasiri saw Sumana killed her pet rabbit and eaten. Through her face he saw the face of a terrible demon. At the same time she scolds Wimalasiri in a demonic male voice. Wimalasiri was very upset and tells the family about it but no one accepts it. Later he meets a monk who practice black magic in a forest temple. In an unexpected moment before the monk breaks the bond, the demonic spirit leaves Sumana and began to wreak havoc. The story based on the folklore tale of demon 'Mahasona'. In the end the demon Mahasona destroyed Manikhami and his family members. After that the curse was ended. Sumana back to her normal life and lived happily with her family members.

Bandanaya is a Horror film produced in 2017. This film was unique in that it was shown in theatres utilising 3D technology. Udayakantha Warnasuriya was the director of the film Bandanaya and many veterans and popular actors and actresses can be seen in the film. Among them are Cyril Wickramasinghe, Hemal Ranasinghe, Dulani Anuradha, Nilmini Tennakoon, Ravindra Yasas, Priyankara Ratnayake and others. The film has a running time of ninety-two minutes. The film's cinematographer was K.D Dayananda, and it screened in Sri Lanka for the first time on April 7, 2017.

It is important to identify how the researchers around the world contributed their knowledge to conduct research on camera work used in the films. Since the end of the 1800s, when cinema became the most popular visual art medium, principles and criteria have been developed. Today's filmmakers are continuously encouraged to be current in their work, which results in bolder thinking than when the principles of cinematography were first established. (Bordwell, 2004). The intimacy between shots is also an important component

in deciding how invested the spectator will feel. Close-ups and long views offer the audience an intimate or general sense of the shot and the activity on the screen. Open framing encloses a topic for emphasis and involves the audience in the scene, whereas closed framing does not. Katz (1991).

Kratz mentioned that a moving shot is more difficult to execute than a static shot, but it also offers graphics and dramatic opportunities unique to film. He further explained, when a moving shot replaces a succession of edited shots, the audience is treated to a rhythmic variation and a realistic simulation. Panning, craning, tilting and tracking are the three major camera movements. When a camera pans, it follows the item without ever moving out of place. Craning is the use of a crane to accomplish a range of varied framings and complex variations in a single picture, such as a high shot, a low shot, and open and closed framings. A tracking shot follows a subject with a moving camera. The most typical application of tracking is to follow a moving object, such as a person walking. The viewer's level of interest is determined by varied framings. On the other hand, the viewer's point of view defines whom he or she involves and identifies with. The significance of a point of view is that it influences how a spectator understands a situation. In the film, various point of view narrations are employed, but the most prevalent are the first-person point of view, third-person limited point of view, and omniscient point of view.

Another research conducted by Heimdahl.L at al. (2016), has been able to analyzed Camera work used in the horror movie 'A Tale of Two Sisters' directed by Janghwa, Hongryeon in 2003. The researchers have used 5 parameters : Terror, horror, repulsion, recovery and background , to analyse the shot selection. Considering the above literature, the researcher develop the objectives for the present Study.

The main objective of this Study is to understand camera work employed in the Sinhala horror movie 'Bandanaya'. The other objectives of the present research can be listed as follows;

- To identify the how camera shots used in the 'Bandanaya' horror movie
- To identify the how camera movements used in the 'Bandanaya' horror movie

Based on these objectives the researcher expects to find the answers to the research questions below.

1. What are the camera shots used in the 'Bandanaya' horror movie ?
2. What are the camera movements used in the 'Bandanaya' horror movie ?

## **Method**

The researcher used an exploratory research strategy in this Study. Video-based observation research and content analysis methods were used to acquire the necessary data. In 1952, the Scholar Berelson explained that content analysis is a research approach for describing the evident content of communication objectively, systematically, and quantitatively.

In 2002, Rosenstein emphasizes that the Researchers can use video observation methods to provide permanent, revisable documentation from the chosen sample. This documentation can be used as a source of data collection for study or analysis and as a historical record. In 2020, Mesman elaborated in her study that this strategy also allows the researcher to return to past video footage if, after watching the initial order, they detect a trend that was not previously seen.

The scholar Chalfen in 2011 explained that video allows the researcher to view an event through the camera lens, either actively or passively, and then communicate their observations.

Purposive sampling technique was employed in this research. The researcher carefully observed the 92-minute-long 'Bandanaya' movie timeline, identified each scene, and categorized them in sequential order. 74 scenes were identified in the movie timeline and these 74 scenes were selected as the sample for the Study. The unit of analysis in this research is the camera shots used throughout the scenes. Terminologies were adopted from the book 'Grammar of the Shot' in 2009 by Roy Thompson & and Christopher J. Bowen. Terminologies can be listed as follows.

**Extreme Long Shot** - May be abbreviated as either XLS or ELS. Encompasses a large field of view, therefore forms an image that shows a large amount of the environment within the film space.

**Very Long Shot** - May be abbreviated VLS. Environment within the film space is still very important as it fills much of the screen, but the human figure is more visible and clothing detail may be observed.

**Long Shot/Wide Shot** - Abbreviated LS and/or WS. This is usually considered a "full body" shot, wide but in close to a figure with head and feet visible in the frame.

**Medium Long Shot** - Abbreviated MLS. The first shot in increasing magnitude cuts off a body part of the subject traditionally framed such that the bottom of the frame cuts off the leg either just below or, more commonly, just above the knee.

**Medium Shot** - Abbreviated MS. May also be called the "Waist" shot, as the frame cuts off the human figure just below the waist and just above the wrist if arms are down at the side.

**Medium Close-Up** - Abbreviated MCU. Sometimes called a "two-button" for the tight bottom frame cutting off at the chest, roughly where you would see the top two buttons on a shirt. Definitely cuts off above the elbow joint. Adjust bottom frame slightly for men or women, depending on costuming.

**Close-Up** - Abbreviated CU. Sometimes called a "head shot," as the framing may cut off the top of the subject's hair and the bottom of the frame can begin anywhere just below the chin or with a little upper shoulder visible (costuming and hairstyle dependent).

**Big Close-Up** - Abbreviated BCU. Human face occupies as much of the frame as possible and still shows the key features of eyes, nose, and mouth at once.

**Extreme Close-Up** - Abbreviated ECU or XCU. Purely a detail shot—framing favors one aspect of a subject such as his/her eyes, mouth, ear, or hand.

**Point-of-view (POV)** - the audience is encouraged to do the thinking and feeling for the character or as the character more directly.

**Pan and Tilt** - Pan and tilt refer to the horizontal and vertical repositioning of the camera lens. A pan (or panoramic shot) keeps the camera anchored to the center of an imaginary circle but rotates or swivels the camera lens horizontally such that it views the outside of the circle in an arcing motion. Pan shots are often referred to as "sweeping" because they can encompass large swaths of wide open landscape with only a few degrees of sweep along the arc of the panning circle (see Figure 5.2). A tilt rotates or swivels the camera's lens along a vertical axis during the recording of a shot. If a balloon floats out of a child's hand and drifts up to the clouds, the shot can start with the lens pointing down toward the ground and end tilting up toward the sky in order to follow the path of the balloon.

**Truck** - If you need to push the camera into the set or in toward a subject being recorded, then you are "trucking in." If you need to pull the camera out away from the set or the subject being recorded, then you are "trucking out." These movements may also be referred to as tracking in and tracking out. This type of dolly move usually entails that the dolly and the camera are pointing in the same direction. The one axis glides deep into the set or out of the set in a straight line.

**Crab dolly** - Much like a crab on the seashore walks sideways, a dolly can be pushed left or right parallel to the action being recorded. In this case, however, even though the dolly is physically moving parallel to the subjects, the camera faces the action perpendicularly. Traditionally, during the crab dolly, the camera moves at the same pace as the walking talent. Picture a person walking down the sidewalk of their urban neighborhood greeting the many people he encounters along the way.

Considering the limitations, this Study analyse only the Camera Shots and Camera movements used in the Sinhala Horror movie 'Bandanaya'. By adopting the above-mentioned terminologies, the researcher expects to conduct the content analysis and find the answers to the research questions.



## Results

Data were analyzed to find answers to the main two research questions in the study. The researcher identified the most used camera shots in the *Bandanaya* movie by analyzing the 74 identified scenes. One thousand one hundred eighty-two camera shots were used in the entire movie timeline.

*Table 01 - Analysis of the Camera Shots used in the Sinhala Horror movie 'Bandanaya'*

Scene No	ELS	VLS	LS	MLS	MS	MC U	CU	BCU	ECU	POV
1.	01		06	01	05	01	04			02
2.			08		01		02			01
3.			02	02	03	03	07	03		
4.			10	03	04	19	10	01	09	01
5.		01	04	02	10	05	01			
6.				01	02	08				
7.				01	05	10	01			
8.			02	05		05	03			
9.			02	02		02				
10.			10	07	02	05				
11.			01							
12.				04	07	04				
13.				02		04				
14.			02	01	03					
15.				01	01	01	01			
16.			03	01	01		01			
17.			04		09	07				
18.				02	01	01				
19.			02		01	01				
20.			01			02	01			
21.			28	01	08	39	20		05	
22.	01	01	01	03		05			01	01
23.			04	07	10	20	01			
24.		01								

25.			01	01	01	03				
26.				01		06				
27.			01			02				
28.			02		01	03	01			
29.				05	03	01	01			
30.			02	01	01	04				
31.			01	02	01	01	02			
32.		03	05	03	03	19	04			
33.			04	03	05	02				
34.			01	01	01	01				
35.			01		01					
36.				01	01					
37.		01	04		02	04	03			03
38.				01						
39.			06	02	02	06	07	02		02
40.			03		02	04				
41.			01			03				
42.				02	03	08	03			
43.			02	01		03	02			
44.			01	01	04		01	01	01	
45.			03			09				
46.			01	02	04	06	01			
47.		02	04	03	02	02				
48.				01						
49.			01		01	02	01			
50.			02	01		02	02			
51.				01		01				
52.							01			02
53.			05	04	07	10				
54.			01							
55.			01	01		06	01			
56.		02	05			01				
57.			01	03	07	13	01	01		
58.			01	01	01		01			
59.			02							

60.				02	05	01				
61.			03	04	04	15	02	01	01	
62.			01	01	01	03	01			
63.		01	03	01		04				
64.	01					02	01	02	01	
65.			17	16	40	55	15	09	03	01
66.			01							
67.	01		03			01				
68.			01							
69.			01	01						
70.			05	04	07	13	03	01	01	03
71.			02		01	01	02			01
72.			14	19	29	36	24	09	04	06
73.			01		01			01	02	
74.		01				01				01
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>396</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>24</b>

**ELS** – Extreme Long Shot, **VLS** – Very Long Shot, **LS** – Long Shot, **MLS** – Medium Long Shot, **MS** – Medium Shot, **MCU** – Medium Close Up, **CU** – Close Up, **BCU** – Big Close Up, **ECU** –Extreme Close Up, **POV** – Point of View shot

Table 01 shows that in total there are 396 (33.5%) Medium Close-Up shots used in the horror Sinhala movie 'Bandanaya' which is the maximum in percentage followed by 214 (18.1%) Medium shots, 204 (17.25%) Long shots , 136 (11.5%) Medium Long shots, 132(11.16%) Close Up shots, 31(2.6%) Big Close Up shots, 28(2.36%) Extreme Close Up shots, 24 (2.03%) Point of View shots & 13(1.09%) Very Long Shots whereas there are only 4 (0.33%) Extreme Long shots used in the entire movie which is lowest in percentage. Pie chart 1 indicates the visual representation of the Camera Shots used in the horror Sinhala movie 'Bandanaya'.

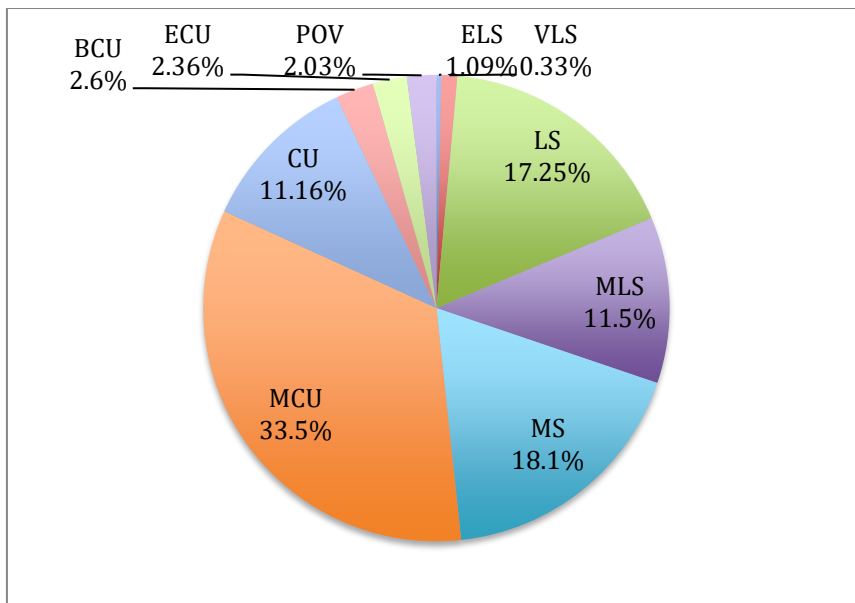
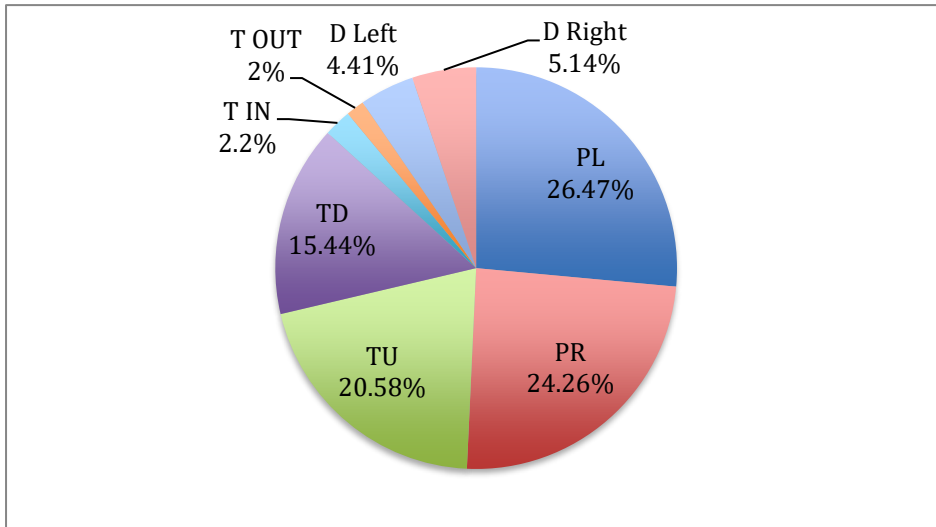


Chart 1 - Camera Shots used in the entire movie

Table 02 - Analysis of the Camera movements used in the Sinhala Horror movie 'Bandanaya'

PL	PR	TU	TD	T IN	T OUT	DL	DR	Total
36	33	28	21	03	02	06	07	136
<b>PL – Pan Left, PR – Pan Right, TU- Tilt Up, TD –Tilt Down, T IN - Truck In, T OUT - Truck Out, DL - Dolly Left, DR - Dolly Right</b>								

Table 02 shows that in total there are 36 (26.47%) Pan Left camera movements used in the horror Sinhala movie 'Bandanaya' which is the maximum in percentage followed by 33 (24.26%) Pan Right camera movements, 28 (20.58%) Tilt Up camera movements , 21 (15.44%) Tilt Down camera movements, 7(5.14%) Dolly Right camera movements, 6(4.41%) Dolly Left camera movements, 3(2.2%) Truck IN camera movements and finally 2 (1.47%) Truck OUT camera movements, which is lowest in percentage. 136 camera movements were used in the entire movie. Pie chart 2 indicates the visual representation of the Camera movements used in the horror Sinhala movie 'Bandanaya'.



*Chart 2 - Camera Movements used in the entire movie*

## Conclusions and Discussion

In this explorative research, the researcher came up with the following conclusions.

- Medium Close-Up shot is the most used camera shot in the Sinhala horror movie 'Bandanaya'
- Medium Shot is the second most used camera shot and Long Shot is the third most used camera shot in the
- Extreme Long Shot is least used camera shot in the Sinhala horror movie 'Bandanaya'
- Pan Left was the most used camera movement in the movie 'Bandanaya' while Truck IN and Truck OUT was the least used camera movements.

According to the findings of the Study, medium close-up shot was the most used camera shot in the entire movie. The film Banadanaya can be put into the Genre category of horror. Horror films generally use the character more visible and get the attention of the audience. The character's facial features are rather clear in a Medium close-up shot. The authors of the book 'Grammar of shot', Roy Thompson & Christopher J. Bowen mentioned that "Medium close up is

one of the most commonly used shots in filmmaking because it provides so much information about the character while speaking, listening or performing an action that does not involve much body or head movement".

Scene No 65 is not the climax of the movie, however, many camera shots were employed. It was the time that the evil spirit goes to the little girl's house and enter her body. Her family members trying to save her. However, this scene is embedded in evil, horror actions.

Camera movements always help to get the attention of the viewer. Motivating the action might assist the viewers to accept the camera's panning or tilting movement. A pan or tilt movement is an unnatural sensation for the human visual system. While viewing our environment, our eyes and brains do not produce smooth pans or tilts. Instead, the eye moves through space, locking onto points of interest, registering with the brain, and then swiftly moving on to the next object of interest. Bandanaya movie consisted of 136 camera movements.

Studying the camera work of a film is helpful to the film industry in many ways. It is also beneficial for film directors, cinematographers, and editors to better understand and enhance the process. This sort of Study is also beneficial to academics and future researchers in producing more cinematic information for the field of film media and communication.

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