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| RESEARCH ARTICLE

## Drama Translation Strategies from the Perspective of Metaphors of Mood

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| ABSTRACT

Halliday proposed the concept of "metaphors of mood" in the framework of systemic functional linguistics. Metaphors of mood refer to the phenomenon that the mood and speech function of a sentence is not consistent. What translation strategies will the translator adopt when translating a drama with metaphors of mood? What is the basis for translators to choose different translation strategies? Based on Mo Yan's drama *Frog* and its English translation from Ge Haowen, this paper studies the drama translation strategies from the perspective of metaphors of mood. It is found that translators usually choose the following three translation strategies in different situations: using the same metaphors of mood as the source text, choosing the corresponding mood according to the actual speech function of the source text, and using other types of metaphors of mood.

| KEYWORDS

Systemic-functional framework, metaphors of mood, drama translation, translation strategies

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### 1. Introduction

Halliday, a famous linguist, put forward the concept of "grammatical metaphor" in the systemic-functional framework (Halliday, 1985). Grammatical metaphor includes conceptual metaphor and interpersonal metaphor, among which interpersonal metaphor includes modal metaphor and metaphors of mood.

At first, scholars only discussed the phenomenon of metaphors of mood in English. For example, Fan Wenfang first gave the definition: metaphors of mood refer to "the transfer from one mood domain to another mood domain" (Fang, 2000); Chang Chenguang briefly introduced Halliday's concept of metaphors of mood and then discussed its role in conversation analysis. He claims that studying metaphors of mood can help us understand turn-taking and semantic coherence in conversations (Chang, 2001).

Subsequently, Wei Zaijiang thought that grammatical metaphors also exist in Chinese, and for the first time, he used Halliday's grammatical metaphor theory to conduct a comparative study of metaphors of moods in English and Chinese, which greatly simplified the complex classification of mood in Chinese and laid a good foundation for the later application of metaphors of mood in translation studies (Wei, 2003). Tang Qingye and Li Dongyang made a comparison in mood systems between Chinese and English, focusing on the forms of Chinese modal particles at the end of sentences in English translation (Tang & Li, 2007); Huang Guowen also tried to study metaphors of mood in translation research and analysis. He believed that if the mood of the target text is no longer consistent with the source text, it belongs to metaphors of mood in interpersonal metaphor, and he cited corresponding examples to demonstrate (Huang, 2009). Some scholars began to select different types of texts as the objects of analysis and use metaphors of mood to analyze their translations (Zhang, 2015; Liu, 2012; Xie, 2005). Most of these texts are brochures, novels, and poems.

According to the current research, some scholars have applied metaphors of mood to translation studies, and most of the text types are novels and poems. The author believes that metaphors of mood are helpful for us to analyze interpersonal relations and conversational meanings and that drama, a literary form, is a typical text for analyzing metaphors of mood with the dialogue of characters as its core content. Therefore, this paper will select a drama script and its English translations as the research object to study the translation methods of metaphors of mood in the source text. In this way, the study can fill the gap in the application of metaphors of mood in drama translation research and translation studies.

## 2. The concept of metaphors of mood

Halliday's systemic-functional framework consists of three meta-functions: conceptual function, interpersonal function, and textual function. Among them, interpersonal function means that people use language to establish and maintain interpersonal relationships with others to influence others' behaviors or express their views on the world and change the world. Halliday proposed that speech has four basic functions, namely, "statement", "question", "offer," and "command". Among them, statement, question, and command are closely related to three grammatical structures. Statement function is usually expressed by declarative sentences, question function by interrogative sentences, and command function by imperative sentences, but the offer function is not expressed by specific grammatical structure. When the speech function is expressed in the usual form, we call it the consistent expression of speech function, as shown in Table 1:

Table 1 consistency of speech function and tone (Fan, 2000)

Speech function Tone	Statement	Question	Command	Offer
Indicative mood	I have never let you down.			
Interrogative mood		Where have you been?		Would you like this tea pot?
Imperative mood			Tell me the truth!	Let me help you with the trunk.

In fact, the relationship between mood and speech function is not one-to-one but many-to-many. One kind of speech function can be reflected by different moods, and one kind of mood by different speech functions, as shown in Table 2:

Table 2 metaphorical expression of speech function and tone (Fan, 2000)

Speech function Tone	Statement	Question	Command
Indicative mood	<b>I have never let you down.</b>	I wonder where you have been.	You should tell me the truth.
Interrogative mood	Have I ever let you down?	<b>Where have you been?</b>	Could you tell me the truth?
Imperative mood	Admit that I have never let you down!	Tell me where you have been!	<b>Tell me the truth!</b>

For example, sentences in interrogative mood and imperative mood can both express the speech function of a statement. "Have I ever let you down" and "Admit that I have never let you down" are both intended to state the viewpoint of "I have never let you down". When the speech function is not expressed by its corresponding mood, it is a phenomenon of mood domain conversion, also known as metaphors of mood.

There are abundant dialogues among characters in the drama scripts, and there are phenomena of metaphors of mood. The use of metaphors of mood can reveal the vivid personality of characters. How will the translators deal with the metaphors of mood in Chinese-English drama translation?

The analytical text selected in this paper is the nine-act drama *Frog*, which comes from the fifth part of the novel *Frog* written by Mo Yan, a contemporary Chinese writer. This novel consists of five letters, four long narratives, and a play. It tells the life experience of the rural maternity nurse Gu Gu and shows the complicated process of China's implementation of the national policy of family planning to control the rapid population growth. The drama *Frog* in the last part of the novel is not only the end but also complements the main body. The play takes the dialogue of characters as its core content and fully shows the relationship and image of the characters. It is suitable for the translation study in metaphors of mood. Its English translation *Frog* (2014) is translated by the famous American Sinologist Howard Goldblatt.

This paper takes the play *Frog* and its English translation as the research object and tries to answer the following research questions from the perspective of metaphors of mood under the systemic-functional framework:

1. Which sentences in the source text of the drama *Frog* have metaphors for mood?
2. How does the translator of the drama *Frog* deal with the metaphors of mood in the source text when translating?
3. What is the basis for the translator of the drama *Frog* to choose different translation strategies for metaphors of mood?

**3. The translation strategies of *Frog* from the perspective of metaphors of mood**

This paper analyzes the phenomenon of metaphors of mood in the drama *Frog* and their corresponding translation. When translating the metaphors of mood in the source text, the translator mainly adopted the following three methods: using the metaphors of mood consistent with the source text, choosing the corresponding tone according to the actual speech function of the source text, and using other types of metaphors of mood.

For example, when the original text is "我想知道你去哪儿了"(I want to know where you have gone), the actual speech function of this statement is to ask a question, asking where the listener has gone. When the speech function is not expressed in the usual mood, the phenomenon of metaphors of mood appears. At this time, the translator may choose the above three translation methods. First, the metaphors of mood consistent with the source text are used. The translator chooses a declarative sentence to ask the question, translating it into "I wonder where you have been" with the real meaning of "Where have you been". Secondly, the corresponding tone is selected according to the actual speech function of the source text. The speech function of the above sentence is a question, so the translator selects an interrogative sentence, "where have you been," for translation, which directly indicates the true meaning of the sentence. Third, the translator also chooses to use other types of metaphors of moods for translation. For example, the above sentence is translated into "Tell me where you have been", and the imperative sentence is used to express the interpersonal function of the question, which changes the type of metaphors of mood in the source text. The three translation strategies can be shown in the following table:

Table 3 three translation strategies for metaphors of mood

Translation strategies	The source text	The target text
1. Applying metaphors of mood consistent with the source text	我想知道你去哪儿了。	I wonder where you have been.
2. Choosing the corresponding tone according to the actual speech function		Where have you been?
3. using other types of metaphors of mood		Tell me where you have been!

According to statistics, the frequency and proportion of the above three translation methods adopted by the translator of the drama *Frog* to deal with the metaphors of mood are as follows:

Table 4 frequency and proportion of the three translation strategies

Translation strategies	Frequency	Total	Proportion
1. Applying metaphors of mood consistent with the source text	101	128	78.9%
2. Choosing the corresponding tone according to the actual speech function	20		15.62%
3. using other types of metaphors of mood	7		5.47%

It can be seen from table 4 that the translator used the first translation method most often, that is, choosing the metaphors of mood consistent with the source text. In the English translation, if the metaphors of mood consistent with the source text can achieve the same effect, i.e., express the meaning equivalent to the original, the translator will generally choose this processing method first. Secondly, the translator may also directly select the corresponding mood according to the actual speech function in the source text. In this case, the translator might think that the use of metaphors of mood is not enough to achieve equivalence. The third translation method, which uses other types of metaphors of mood, is rarely used by the translator. Based on the drama script *Frog* and its English translation, this paper analyzes the three translation strategies for metaphors of mood and explores the reasons and purposes for the translator to choose different methods.

### 3.1 Using the metaphors of mood consistent with the source text

Example 1:

陈眉：你当然不会说认识！你们这些贼，强盗，偷孩子、卖孩子的魔鬼。你们不认识我，可我认识你们。**不是你们把我的孩子抢走之后，还给我服了两片安眠药让我睡觉吗？我醒了之后，你们不是骗我说我的孩子生下来就死了吗？不是你们，弄来一只剥了皮的死猫在我眼前晃了晃，说那就是我孩子的尸体吗？**

(Mo, 2017)

CHEN MEI: Of course, you'd say that. You thieves, you gangsters, you steal children to sell them, a pack of devils. You may not know me, but I know you. **Wasn't it you people who gave me sleeping pills after you stole my baby, and when I woke up, told me he was still born? Wasn't it you people who flashed a skinned cat in front of my eyes and told me it was my baby's dead body?**

(Goldblatt, 2015)

Chen Mei made this remark after mistaking the supervisor for the person who robbed her child. In the bold part of the source text, there are metaphors of mood that expresses the statement function in an interrogative tone. She stated that Yuan Cai and others robbed her child, gave her sleeping pills, deceived her that the child died after birth, and brought a dead cat to say that it was the child's body. The interrogative tone can better reflect Chen Mei's anger and accusations against these "robbers" than the declarative tone. In the English translation, the translator chose to use metaphors of mood that are consistent with the source text, using the interrogative sentence to express the statement function. Since there is no wide discrepancy in the meaning of the sentence between Chinese and English, this translation can achieve equivalence with the source text. If the translator directly converts to the declarative tone consistent with the speech function, "It was you people who played me sleeping pills after you stopped my baby, and when I would up to tell me he was still born. It was you people who flashed a skinned cat in front of my eyes and told me it was my baby's dead body", then there will be less anger and criticism than in the original.

Example 2:

领班：（伸出右手）拿来！

保安：什么？

领班：你说什么？手机！！

保安：班长，我保证不看了行么？

领班：少啰嗦！**你拿不拿？**不拿我立刻向刘处报告。

保安：班长，我正在恋爱，没有手机不行.....

领班：**你爹恋爱那会儿，连电话都没有不是照样把你娘弄到手了吗？——快点！**

(Mo, 2017)

SUPERVISOR: (sticks out his right hand) Hand it over!

SECURITY GUARD: What?

SUPERVISOR: Your cell phone, that's what.

SECURITY GUARD: I promise I won't use it again, sir. Okay?

SUPERVISOR: Shut up! **Are you going to hand it over, or aren't you?** If you don't, I'll report you to the department head.

SECURITY GUARD: I'm involved in a romance, sir, and I need my cell phone.

SUPERVISOR: When your father was involved in a romance, he didn't even have a telephone, and he managed to win over your mother, didn't he? Make it snappy!

(Goldblatt, 2015)

The supervisor repeatedly asked the security guard to give him the mobile phone, but without any result. He even made a "threat" to the security guard, claiming that if he did not hand over the mobile phone again, he would report to Director Liu. The bold part of the source text is "你拿不拿"(Do you take it), a metaphor for the mood of indicating command function in an interrogative tone. The actual meaning of the supervisor's words is "Take it to me". Using the interrogative tone can better reflect his impatience at this time, so the translator chose the metaphors of mood by realizing the command function in the interrogative tone to show the actual meaning of "Hand it over!"

### **3.2 Choosing the corresponding tone according to the actual speech function of the source text**

Example 1:

郝大手：(指着秦河)你每隔两个月，就要到冯耳山精神病院住三个月。在那里，你穿紧身衣，吃镇静剂，实在不行还要坐电椅。你被他们折腾得皮包着骨头，眼珠子发直，好像一个非洲的孤儿。你的小脸上沾满了苍蝇屎，好似一块旧墙皮，**你从那里逃出来，又有两个月了吧？明天，或者后天，你又该到那里去了吧？**(逼真地模仿救护车的警笛声，秦河浑身颤栗，跪在地上)你这次进去，就不要出来了。你这样的狂躁型精神病，放出来就会给这个和谐的社会增添不和谐的因素！

(Mo, 2017)

HAO DASHOU: (points to Qin He) Every two months, you have to check in to the Ma'er Shan Asylum for a three-month stay. They put you in a straitjacket and a sedative regimen; if that doesn't work, they use electric shock therapy. When they finish with you, you're skin and bones and glassy-eyed, like an African orphan. Your face is covered with flyspecks, like an old wall. **You finally escape but are never out more than two months. Tomorrow or the day after, you have to go back there again.** (deftly imitates the sound of an ambulance siren. Qin He trembles and falls to his knees) When you go in this time, you'll not come out again. If they let you out with your manic condition, you would introduce an element of disharmony into a harmonious society.

(Goldblatt, 2015)

Hao Dazhou was the husband of Gu Gu, and Qin He was her follower, so they always disagreed with each other. This line appeared during the quarrel between them. The bold part of the source text is the metaphors of the mood of using an interrogative tone to express the statement function. On the surface, Hao confirmed Qin with an interrogative tone, but in fact, he stated the fact that Qin had escaped from the mental hospital for two months and would be sent back tomorrow or the day after tomorrow to intimidate Qin. The translator did not choose the interrogative tone consistent with the source text but used the interrogative tone consistent with the speech function to clarify Hao's intention to scare and intimidate Qin.

Example 2:

陈鼻：(咆哮着)放开我的女儿！

黑衣人甲：你这老不死的，老酒鬼，老无赖，老叫花子，竟敢来冒认女儿。

黑衣人乙：你说她是你的女儿，你叫她一声，看她答应不？

陈鼻：眉子.....我可怜的女儿.....

陈眉：(冷冷地)你认错人了吧？你一定认错人啦。

陈鼻：(沉痛地)眉子，我知道你恨爹，爹对不起你，对不起你姐姐，对不起你们的娘，爹害了你们，爹是罪人，爹是废人，爹是一半死了一半活着的死活人...

(Mo, 2017)

CHEN BI: (roars) Let my daughter go!

FIRST MAN: You old derelict, you drunk, you scoundrel, you old beggar, how dare you to claim her as your daughter!

SECOND MAN: You say she's your daughter. Call her and see if she responds.

CHEN BI: Mei...my poor, suffering daughter.

CHEN MEI: (coldly)**You've mistaken me for someone else.** I'm not who you think I am.

CHEN BI: (agonizing) Mei, I know you hate your dad. I let you down, I let your sister down, and I let your mother down. Your dad caused you all great pain. Your dad is a sinner, a good-for-nothing, a man stranded on the line between life and death.

(Goldblatt, 2015)

The "bandits" who stole Chen Mei's child sent two men to kill Chen Mei to eliminate future troubles. At this time, Chen Mei's father, Chen Bi, appeared and stopped them. Because of the sin made by her father, Chen Mei was unwilling to recognize her father again,

so she was very indifferent to him. The bold part of the source text "你认错认了吧"(You have mistaken the person) is a metaphor for mood by using the interrogative tone to express the statement function, meaning "You have mistaken the person". The translator directly translated it into a declarative sentence, which is consistent with the actual speech function. In this way, the translation can better reflect Chen Mei's indifferent attitude towards her father, and there is no room for negotiation. It reflects that Chen Mei no longer held any hope for her father, refusing to recognize the relationship between them, and can more vividly reflect her characteristics.

### 3.3 Using other types of metaphors of mood

Example 1:

秦河: **凭什么她就能证明?**

郝大手: 她是我的老婆!

秦河: **你凭什么说她是你的老婆?**

郝大手: 因为我和她结过婚。

(Mo, 2017)

QIN HE: **Prove it.**

HAO DASHOU: She's my wife.

QIN HE: **Prove it.**

HAO DASHOU: We're married.

(Goldblatt, 2015)

Qin He and Hao Dashou are arguing fiercely. The bold part of the source text, "凭什么她就能证明"(How can she prove it) and "你凭什么说她是你的老婆"(What makes you say she's your wife) are all metaphors of mood by using interrogative tone to indicate the statement function, with the underlying meaning of "She cannot prove it" and "You are not qualified to say she is your wife". However, the translator chose metaphors of mood and translated them into "Prove it," which means "She cannot prove it" and "You are not qualified to say she is your wife". The translator chose the imperative sentence "Prove it," which is often used by native English speakers in arguments to irritate the other party. If it is directly translated into "She can't prove it" and "You are not qualified to say she is your wife", it is less provocative than the source text.

Example 2:

陈鼻: 眉子, 你恨我, 我理解; 你不认我, 我同意。但你不能跟他们走, 他们把你的孩子卖了, 你如果跟他们走, 他们就会把你推到河里淹死, 然后伪造一个你跳河自杀的现场, 这样的事, 他们干过不止一次了.....

黑衣人甲: 老东西, 我看你真是活够了, **有这样污人清白的吗?**

(Mo, 2017)

CHEN BI: Mei, you hate me; I understand that. You say you're not my daughter; I can live with that. But don't go with them. They sold your baby, and if you go with them, they'll throw you into the river to drown, then make up a story that you threw yourself in. They've done that before, and more than once.

FIRST MAN: I think you've lived long enough, old man. **You can't smear us like that.**

(Goldblatt, 2015)

When the two people were going to take Chen Mei away, Chen Mei's father, Chen Bi, came out to stop them. The bold words "有这样污人清白的吗"(Is there such a person who stains people's innocence) in the source text use the metaphors of mood by indicating the command function in interrogative tone, which has the actual meaning "Don't smear us like that". The translator chose to express the command function in an indicative tone by translating it into "You can't smear us like that" to express "Don't smear us like that". In Chinese, personal pronouns are often omitted, or vague ones are used, while in English, specific personal pronouns are often pointed out. Therefore, "You can't smear us like that" in the declarative sentence more clearly indicates who the "us" are. Corresponding to "I think you've lived long enough" mentioned above, the use of the declarative sentence can better reflect the two people's intimidation of Chen Bi.

## 4. Conclusion

Based on Mo Yan's drama *Frog* and Goldblatt's English translation, this paper explores how the translator deals with the metaphors of mood in the source text when translating. The analysis shows that when there is no big difference in language expression habits between Chinese and English, the translator chooses to use the same metaphors of mood as the source text. In addition, the translator might choose to switch to the mood consistent with the speech function or use other types of metaphors of moods to strengthen and weaken the mood, highlight the characters' personality, achieve equivalence with the actual meaning, or make the translation idiomatic English.

However, this study only focuses on a single case as an example to investigate how the translator deals with metaphors of mood in drama translation, which may not lead to a comprehensive conclusion. Researchers can continue to explore this issue from other text types, or seek to compare the methods of different translators for the same source text, so as to enrich the translation study of metaphors of mood.

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