Analyzing Interpersonal Metafunction through Personal Pronouns in Song Ci *Jiang Cheng Zi. Ji Meng*

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Abstract

Interpersonal metafunction has been studied in the four translated versions of Song Ci Jiang Cheng Zi. Ji Meng through contrastive analysis with the focus on personal pronouns. It aims to find out that the use of different personal pronouns connotes different interpersonal meaning and test the feasibility and applicability of Systemic Functional Grammar to discourse analysis. It also helps people who love Song Ci better appreciate this Ci-poem from a different angle.

Keywords

interpersonal metafunction, personal pronoun, Song Ci, translated versions

1. Introduction

1.1 About Ci

It is well known that China is a country with an extensive and profound culture. In the sky of Chinese cultural heritages, Classical Chinese Poetry (CCP) is undoubtedly one of the brightest stars and enjoys unique poetry features with a long history and the product of 3000 years of culture and civilization. Chinese poetry is well-noted around the world for its delicate language, refined connotation, tidy forms, original styles and various genres.

A special form of poetry, named Ci, is occupied a fairly important position in the history of CCP. In form, Ci was made up of long and short lines. The length of Ci ranged from the shortest of 16 characters to the longest of 240 ones. In content, the Ci language was delicate, refined and subtle. Ci reached its peak development in the Song Dynasty, when many famous poets emerged. Su Shi was one of the most outstanding representatives.

Su Shi (1037-1101), whose courtesy name is Zizhan, or Hezhong, self-titled Dongpo Jushi, or "Scholar in Retirement of Eastern Slope", was born in Mount E Mei in Si Chuan, a famous politician, writer, poet, painter and calligrapher. People later call him Su Dongpo. He ranked as one of eight men of

letters of the Tang and Song Dynasty. His Ci-poems have been loved by millions and millions of people from home and abroad. The Ci *Jiang Cheng Zi. Ji Meng* is so graceful and tactful that its original version and translated versions have been studied by many scholars. For the original version, the scholars such as Ma (2012) and Liu (2008), analyze it through the aspect of Traditional Grammar, which only focuses on the choices of words, sentence structures and rhetorical devices. For the translated versions, most of the scholars analyze the Ci-poem from the perspective of literary criticism and literary translation, such as Shi (2012) and Ma (2014), which will inevitably bring the color of a random, personal experience style (Huang, 2006, p. 20). Both of the two ways are far from satisfactory to analyze the Ci-poem. This paper intends to study the Ci-poem from the perspective of Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG).

1.2 About Three Metafunctions

In the 1960s Halliday began to develop SFG, which is "a theory of meaning as choice, by which a language, or any other semiotic system, is interpreted as networks of interlocking options: 'either this, or that, or the other', 'either more like the one or more like the other', and so on" (Halliday, 2000, p. 40). But only the structural part of SFG, or functional grammar, is enough to "show how the options are realized" (ibid, p. 41). Halliday believes that all adult language is organized around a small number of "functional components" which correspond to metafunctions (or the purposes which underlie all language use) and that these *metafunctions* have a systematic relationship with the lexicogrammar of the language. The functions of language can be classified into three metafunctions: ideational metafuncton, interpersonal metafunction and textual metafunction.

We use language to interact with other people, to establish and maintain appropriate social links with them. We tell other people things for a purpose: we may want to influence their attitudes or behavior, or to provide information that we know they do not have, or to explain our own attitudes or behavior, or to get them to provide us with information, and so on (Thompson, 1996/2000, p. 38). These are the interpersonal meanings of language. The interpersonal metafunction is mainly realized through Mood. According to Halliday (1994/2000, pp. 68-69), the most fundamental types of speech roles, which lie behind all the more specific types that we may eventually be able to recognize, are just two i) giving, and (ii) demanding. Cutting across this basic distinction between them is another distinction, equally fundamental, that relates to the nature of the commodity being exchanged. It is mood that expresses the speech function (ibid, p. 363).

This paper mainly aims to study the original poem *Jiang Cheng Zi. Ji Meng* and its four selected English versions in application with the Systemic Functional Linguistics. Since this poem merely expresses the poet's deep thought of his dead wife, we will only focus on the interpersonal metafunction. Specifically, our stress will be laid on the mood system. Subject is an important ingredient of the mood system, and using personal pronouns as the subject is the most frequently seen grammatical device. In this paper, the original poem and its translated versions will be analyzed mainly from the aspect of personal pronouns.

2. Personal Pronouns and Their Interpersonal Function

Personal pronouns are used to refer to different entities within a discourse for the purpose of conciseness and less confusion. Whether the writer can arouse the listeners' sympathetic response largely depends on the choice of words, esp. the choice of personal pronouns. The personal pronouns are not only used to refer to the participants, but also reflect the relationship between people involved. A skillful writer never uses a personal pronoun casually. The meaning is the use (Thompson, 1996/2000, p. 26). The choice of personal pronouns displays the writer's intension: to show his respect to the readers so as to establish a good relationship with them, or to serve other purposes such as conveying the connotation in the text.

2.1 Personal Pronouns in the Original Poem Jiang Cheng Zi. Ji Meng and Their Interpersonal Metafunction

Su Shi wrote this poem in memory of his dead wife, Wang Fu. They lived a very harmonious life after getting married when he was 19, and she 16. Later Wang Fu got seriously ill and passed away in 1605. Su Shi was under the double blow of her death and the political persecution he was suffering at that time. He had nowhere to tell his great sorrow and finally wrote this poem in 1705, right 10 years after her death. The original poem consists of two stanzas; each has four sentences, neat in antithesis. The first stanza reveals the reality: The poet couldn't forget his wife though she had been away for ten years. He thought of her and felt lonely because he could find no one to listen to his sorrow. He wanted to see her and talk with her but was afraid that she would not recognize him as he looked haggard and worn. The second stanza describes a vivid dream world, in which the poet returned home and saw his wife dressing up by the window. They looked at each other, saying nothing, only tears streaming down both faces. Finally, the poet seemed to wake up from the dream and face the reality: The beloved had gone, only leaving himself mourn in front of the grave on the hill full of pine trees under the moonlight every year.

The poem is made up of 8 sentences, but none of them has a subject, and there's not a single pronoun to denote any entity, either. But the readers will not feel confused without the use of any pronouns because Chinese language is paratactic. The Chinese sentences are mainly formed by meaning and word order. In Chinese, there are sentences without the subjects or predicates, which do not affect the meaning of the sentences. In the poem, the frosted moonlight aroused the poet's deep thought of his dead wife and his heart could not be calm for a long time. Su Shi was a master of integrating his sentiment with images and situations. He expressed his sentiment by describing such situations and images: a thousand miles away, a small hill, a lonely grave, some pine trees under the pale moonlight. The perfect integration of the sentiment with such images and situations makes the readers deeply moved.

2.2 Personal Pronouns in the Four Translated Versions of Song Ci Jiang Cheng Zi. Ji Meng and Their Interpersonal Metafunction

The four translated versions adopted in this paper are those of Gong Jinghao, Burton Watson, Yang Xianyi and Xu Yuanchong (hereafter referred to as Gong version, Watson version, Yang version and

Xu version respectively). Contrastive analysis will be majorly employed in this paper. It is sincerely hoped that the feasibility and applicability of Systemic Functional Linguistics to discourse analysis could be well-testified, and this paper may offer a new aspect for the readers to appreciate the remarkable beauty of this poem.

Table 1. Occurrence of Different Personal Pronouns in the Four Translated Versions

Personal pronouns	I	me	my	we	us	our	you	your	she	her
Gong version	4	1	1	1	1	1	2	1		
Watson version	3	1	2	1				1		
Yang version	3		2	2		1			2	3
Xu version	3	1	5			1			3	5

From Table 1, we can find that unlike the original version, the personal pronouns are widely used in the four translated versions. In linguistics and translation, hypotaxis and parataxis are generally accepted as the most important characteristics which distinguish the Chinese language from the English. The basic form of Chinese language is not very rich, and the main meaning is the main axis. Therefore, there are apparent-null-subject sentences in Chinese. English has morphological changes and is rich in form. An English sentence is a structurally independent unit that usually comprises a number of words to form a complete statement, question or command. Normally, an English sentence consists of at least a subject and its predicate which contains a finite verb phrase. The personal pronouns are the most- frequently-used subjects. In the translated versions, the use of personal pronouns is listed as follows.

2.2.1 *I, Me, My*

The first singular personal pronouns *I, me, my* in the translated versions are all used to refer to the poet, the hero in the poem. Because the poem is mainly about the poet's personal feelings for his wife, the focus of the first personal pronouns is in accordance with the theme. In the four translated versions, the personal pronoun *I* is used with wide frequency, with Gong version four times and the others 3 times respectively. *Me* is only excluded in Yang version. It is worth mentioning that the pronoun *my* is used five times in Xu version, much more frequently than in the other versions. Therefore, more emphasis of personal feelings has been laid into Xu version.

2.2.2 *We, Our, Us*

The first plural personal pronoun *we* is used in Gong, Watson and Yang versions, *our* in Gong, Yang and Xu versions and *us* only in Gong version. *We, our* or *us* refers to both the poet and his wife, the two sides involved in the situation. *We, our* or *us* shows a close relationship between the husband and wife. The readers are given a vivid picture of how they loved each other and lived a harmonious life when they were together.

2.2.3 *You, Your*

The pronouns *you* and *your* are only used in Gong and Watson versions, referring to the poet's wife. By addressing her with "you", the poet seemed to talk to his wife face to face, which creates a warm and loving scene before the readers.

2.2.4 *She, Her*

The third personal pronouns *she* and *her* are used in both Yang and Xu versions. Especially in Xu version, *she* and *her* are used three times and five times respectively, which is quite different from Gong and Watson version. Here the translator uses *she* and *her* to refer to the poet's wife. As a rule of conversation, if you are telling the listeners a story of someone, you mainly focus on this person and seldom mention the listeners as "you", so there's no second personal pronoun in Xu version. It sounds that the poet was telling the story of his wife to the readers. The use of the third personal pronouns implies that neither the speaker nor the readers are included. Because of the irrelevant relationship, the referent of the third personal pronoun seems to be distant from the speaker and readers. By purposefully employing *her* and *she* to refer to the poet's dead wife, the translator intends to show that the living and the dead belong to the different world. She was too distant for the poet to tell his sorrow, which made him lonelier and even more heartbroken.

3. Summary

With the observation of the four translated versions, it has been found that the personal pronouns used in Gong version are similar to those in Watson version, while those in Yang and Xu versions are similar to each other. With the most use of the first and third singular personal pronouns, Xu version reproduces the images and situations of the original more accurately, hence it can arouse the sympathetic feelings from the readers more easily.

Acknowlegements

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