Translation Study of Emotion Metaphors for “Anger” in *Tang Xiangxing* and Its English Version from the Perspective of Conceptual Blending Theory

MING Qing-ying
Gannan Normal University, Ganzhou, China

Emotion has always played an important role in human life. Owing to its fuzzy and abstract features, people often express it metaphorically. Conceptual Blending theory can clearly show the meaning construction and thinking process between the author of original text and the translator of target text. Emotion metaphors are abundant in *Tang Xiangxing*, especially emotion metaphor for “anger”. So, the study will reveal the dynamic construction mechanism and translation strategy of emotion metaphor for “anger” with the help of conceptual blending theory, in order to provide some reference for metaphor translation in literary work and also be beneficial to introduce the excellent Chinese culture.

*Keywords:* conceptual blending theory, emotion metaphor, metaphor translation, *Tang Xiangxing*

Introduction

*Tang Xiangxing* is a long historical masterpiece written by Mo Yan, the first Nobel Prize winner for literature in China. Since it published, a great attention was attracted due to its rich cultural connotation. Its English version was translated by Howard Goldblatt, American Sinologist, and published in 2013. As the sole English translator and chief translator of Mo Yan’s novels, he has made important contributions to the translation of contemporary Chinese literature and introduction of excellent Chinese culture. Howard Goldblatt’s English translation of *Sandalwood Death* has not only been highly appreciated by Mo Yan, but also received by many readers and other translators. *Tang Xiangxing* vividly tells a story that happened in Gaomi County in China. The novel contains a large number of sentences describing the character’s emotion, which makes the story vividly and interestingly.

Emotion, as an important part of human experience and a unique human psychological phenomenon, is the human’s attitude, experience and corresponding behavioral response toward objective things, is the reflection of people’s needs. In view of the interaction between emotion and cognition, cognitive semantics considers the expression of emotion as an important tool to study the content and structure of emotion concept. However, human emotion is abstract and difficult to describe in nature, so the expression of emotion adopts people’s experience in a certain field to illustrate and understand an abstract emotion to make it vivid and concrete by
means of metaphor to a large extent. Therefore, conceptual metaphor of emotion refers to metaphorical concepts related to human emotions: happiness, sadness and joy, which is a cognitive process of metaphorical abstract emotion in essence.

The study of emotion metaphor began with Lakoff and Johnson. Subsequently, many scholars have studied emotion metaphor from the perspective of origin, category, type and cognitive mechanism, etc. Although there are some similarities between Chinese and Western emotion metaphors, there are still differences between Chinese and Western expressions due to various cultural factors. Fauconnier and Turner put forward conceptual blending theory from the perspective of cognitive theory. It is a set of meaning constructive system. It can be used in translation study to display directly and clearly that the translator how to build the meaning system when translate metaphor. This paper will choose Howard Goldblatt’s translation, Sandalwood Death, as the research object, and analyze the construction mechanism and translation strategy of emotion metaphor for anger in the novel, in order to provide some reference for metaphor translation in literary works and introduce the excellent Chinese culture.

Conceptual Blending Theory and Translation

In the 1990s, Fauconnier and Turner, American cognitive scientists inspired by Lakoff’s conceptual metaphor theory, put forward the conceptual blending theory from the perspective of cognition. Its core is the mapping and integration between the four mental spaces, which is the meaning transformation process of the brain when people perceive the world and communicate with each other.

This theory includes four mental spaces: input space I, input space II, generic space and blending space. Input space I and input space II represent different cognitive domains. The two input spaces project their common essential features to the third space through cross spatial mapping to form generic space, which provides the possibility of conceptual integration of generic space; the two input spaces partially map their respective structures to a new synthesis space under the restriction of generic space.

The synthesis space forms the blending space through the interaction of three psychological cognitive processes: composition, completion and expansion. The combination process refers to that the cognitive subject combines the structures mapped from two input spaces to the synthetic space to form an emergent structure; the process of completion refers to that the cognitive subject complements and perfects the hierarchical structure according to the existing relevant psychological cognitive schema; the expansion process refers to that the cognitive subject can expand the details of the hierarchical structure, so as to achieve the purpose of detailed elaboration. The hierarchical structure is not just a set of direct mapping between two input spaces, but the final synthesis result produced by combination, improvement and expansion in the integration space.

Wang Bin believes that the essence of conceptual integration theory is “the description of the implementation and operation process of thinking and the interpretation of how new concept categories are produced”. (Wang, 2001, p. 17)

The traditional view holds that translation is a kind of language communication activity, which is a one-way mapping from source text to target text. However, it is not only an activity between the two cognitive domains in the translation process, because the original text cannot automatically convert into the target text, it needs a complex processing process, that is, the translator’s subjective selection process under the constraints of the
cognitive framework of the original text and the target text. Therefore, translation is not only a language communication activity, but also a complex psychological operation process. Conceptual blending theory provides a new perspective for interpreting the psychological cognitive process of translation. According to this theory, the translation process also includes four mental spaces:

1. (1) Input space: the translator’s relevant psychological cognition of the source language materials.
2. (2) Input space: the translator’s relevant psychological cognition of the target language materials related to the source language.
3. (3) Generic space: the translator’s relevant psychological cognition of the cultural commonalities of the source language and the target language.
4. (4) Integrated space: the translator performs a series of cognitive operations on the structure mapped from input space to synthetic space to form the final translation.

Translation Analysis of Emotional Metaphor for Anger in Howard Goldblatt’s Translation of Tang Xiangxing from the Perspective of Conceptual Blending Theory

The emotion metaphors in Tang Xiangxing are classified into “joy, anger, sadness, fear and love” according to their different characteristics of source domain, such as direction, weather, temperature and human organs. Anger is a basic human emotion. General psychology believes that when a person’s dream does not realized, and the behavior of finishing this dream is failed again and again, it will accumulate pressure accordingly, resulting “anger”. When people know the source of depression, they usually appear angry accordingly. In terms of emotional state, compared with another negative emotion, the outbreak of anger is more violent and strongly out of control. Anger usually refers to explosive, strong and short-lived passion. In addition, anger is not only related to physiological changes such as muscle tension, rapid heartbeat and shortness of breath, but also related to obvious facial expressions, such as frowning, blushing and anger.

The author adopts the metaphor recognition program MIPVU to identify, screen and sign the emotion metaphors for anger in Tang Xiangxing. From the perspective of conceptual bending theory, this paper focuses on the dynamic construction mechanism and translation strategies of emotion metaphor for anger in Tang Xiangxing, and finally summarizes two translation strategies: the corresponding mapping of source language space to translator space, the mapping of translator space.

Corresponding Mapping Between Source Language Space and Translator’s Space

As a basic human emotion, “anger” is often expressed in metaphorical terms, because of its vague and abstract nature. Although different regions enjoy great cultural differences, “anger” as emotion metaphor exist great similarity. The cognitive space of original language can directly map into the translator’s cognitive space, which could be understood as literal translation. Because the two cultures have the same expression, the translators do not deconstruct the cognitive space in original language as well as blend the conceptual meaning, they can directly translate two space elements with equivalence translation.

余的心中倒海翻江，一股股热血直冲头脑。 (Mo Yan, 2012, p. 104)
An overwhelming sense of indignation filled my heart, and heated blood rushed to my head. (Goldblatt, 2012, p. 109)
When a person is extremely angry, his blood will flow to the head in response to changes in another organ. In this case, Qian Ding is humiliated by Zhao Jia, a nobody, so he is very outraged and feels his blood go up to his head. The translator Goldblatt directly maps elements of “anger” in the original language space to those in the translator’s space and blend them into the translated space to receive “Heated blood rushed to my head”. There are great similarities between Chinese and Western emotion metaphors. Therefore, literal translation (elements in the source language space and translator’s space can be directly mapped to the target language space) can not only maintain the style of the original text, but also accurately convey the emotion of the original text.

The Mapping of Translator’s Space

Under the influence of various factors such as different social environment and cultural background, the expression forms of the same thing in different countries are different. It is difficult to find a completely equivalent expression between the elements in the translator’s space and the source language space. The translator will choose to display the elements only existing in the translator’s space in the translation space. The purpose is to make the target readers have a clearer understanding of the original text. Metaphor is actually the product of culture and contains rich cultural connotation. Therefore, the translator must be familiar with the differences between the two languages in the process of translation.
the emperor finds the eunuch-Little Insect steal his gun, he flies into a fury and intends to give him a cruel punishment. However, “Jinxin (金星)” belongs to a typical expression in China. The translator adopts the element “golden flashes” from the translator’s space to replace it. So the translation strategy of the mapping of translator’s space was used.

钱大爷的脸色，顿时变得比紫檀木还要深沉。 (Mo Yan, 2012, p. 92)
Magistrate Qian’s face turned the color of the darkest sandalwood. (Goldblatt, 2012, p. 79)

In this example, as for the dark color like purple, dark is often linked with low spirits and unpleasant state in traditional Chinese medicine. When people are shacking with indignation, the face of capillary rupture under hypertension would appear in purple. Here, the purple color of magistrate Qian’s face is used in the source language space to indicate his frustration. However, there is no completely equivalent expression between the elements in the translator’s space and the source language space. So the translator adopts the strategy of the mapping of translator’s space to preserve metaphorical feature of color.

**Conclusion**

This study investigates the translation of emotion metaphor for anger from the perspective of conceptual blending theory in Howard Goldblatt’s translation of *Tan Xiangxing*, proves that the translation process of metaphor is actually the process of conceptual blending. This paper also summarizes two different translation methods combined with examples: the corresponding mapping of source language space to translator space, the mapping of translator space. Although emotion metaphor still has great similarities in different cultures, translators still need to accurately grasp the characteristics of the two languages and choose different translation strategies according to different contexts and backgrounds due to the differences of local languages and people’s cognition in different cultures.

**References**