Ideational and Interpersonal Metafunctional Profiles of the Chinese Grammar

Elaine Yin Ling Ng
The Open University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, China

There has been little research conducted on the applicability of Halliday’s (1994) SFG (systemic functional grammar) framework to the analysis of Chinese translated texts and the possible adjustments needed to make the model fit for comparative description dealing with translation from English into Chinese. More has been done to explore the differences in the thematic structure between English and Chinese while relatively little was discussed with regard to the ideational and interpersonal metafunctions of the Chinese language. This paper aims to test the applicability of systemic functional linguistics to the study of Chinese translated texts with regard to the transitivity and modality systems, and suggest aspects of the lexicogrammatical features of the SFG model that need to be adjusted to make it more serviceable for the analysis of Chinese translated texts. The supporting data are drawn from selected examples from two parallel corpora of the three-day battle in Hemingway’s *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952), consisting of 1,388 clause complexes extracted from the English original and its four Chinese translations of the novella compiled manually with reference to Halliday’s (1994) transitivity model and Simpson’s (1993) model of point of view. The study contributes further samples of text instances to demonstrate the “meaning potentials” of English and Chinese, support the applicability of systemic functional linguistics to the analysis of Chinese translated texts, and proposes to modify aspects of the SFG model according to the unique features of the Chinese grammar and the specific purpose of study for translation description of Chinese texts.

*Keywords:* ideational and interpersonal metafunctions of the Chinese grammar, applicability of Halliday’s systemic functional linguistics to the study of Chinese translated texts, the transitivity system in Chinese, modalization and modulation of the modality system in Chinese

Introduction

Background

Halliday’s (1994) SFG (systemic functional grammar), which relates linguistic choices to their wider sociocultural settings, has been applied to the analysis of Chinese translated texts since the 2000s, as seen in representative works by Li’s *Yupian Fanyi Yinlun (An Introduction to Discourse and Translation)* (2001), XIU’s *Xin Yixue Lungao (Discussion Into New Translation Studies)* (2001), and Li’s *A Text-Based Study of the Grammar of Chinese From a Systemic Functional Approach* (2003). However, research on the application of SFG to the analysis of Chinese translated texts is still preliminary, and there has not yet developed a systematic and comprehensive discourse framework which can be employed for translation research dealing with translation into Chinese (HUANG, 2006, p. 16). In fact, as Matthiessen (2001, pp. 41-42) observed, translated...
texts are not commonly referred to or included as an object of investigation in contrastive linguistics research, and contrastive linguistics and translation studies are still basically two independent disciplines without much overlap in their areas of research. Matthiessen (2001) located the study of translation within functional linguistics and calls attention to treat translation as a phenomenon in its own right. She also demonstrates how linguistics and translation research can inform one another.

Regarding the application of Halliday’s SFG model to translation analysis, Munday (2001, p. 101) remarked that the Hallidayan model used as an analytical framework for translation comparison is usually English-language oriented, some aspects of the model, particularly the textual and transitivity structures, should be adapted for the study of non-European languages (Munday, 2002, p. 91). Nevertheless, there has yet little research conducted on the applicability of Halliday’s SFG framework to the analysis of Chinese translated texts and the possible adjustments that are needed to make the model fit for comparative description of Chinese target texts. More has been done to explore the differences in the thematic structure between English and Chinese as seen in the studies conducted by PANG (1993) and LI (2002), while relatively little was discussed with regard to the ideational and interpersonal metafunctions of the Chinese language, particularly, their application to the description of Chinese translated texts. Except for LI’s (2003) work, who has analyzed Chinese translated texts and contributed comparative descriptions of not only the textual metafunction, but also ideational and interpersonal metafunctions between Chinese and English.

Matthiessen (2001, pp. 73-78) contextualized translation from a “wider environment” to a “narrower environment” according to a hierarchy of stratification, and assesses translation equivalence in a decreasing strata ranging from the widest scope of “context”, “semantics”, and “lexicogrammar” to the narrowest strata of “phonology”. She observes that “translation equivalence” can be attained to a higher degree as translation takes place in a wider environment. Conversely, greater “translation shifts” are uncovered at the lower levels of “lexicogrammar” and “phonology”. Matthiessen (2001, p. 116) remarked further that one of the pressing tasks for the study of translation is to conduct detailed lexicogrammatical analysis of source texts and their corresponding target texts for translation comparison since this type of research has remained sparse. For example, HUANG (2006) studied the English translations of selected Chinese classical poems from the perspectives of the experiential, logical, interpersonal, and textual functions, and attempts to test the applicability of systemic functional linguistics to the study of Chinese translations. However, his analyses focus more on the English translations of the Chinese originals rather than the Chinese translations of the English originals. Although he applies aspects of the model to analyze the Chinese poetry, they are generally not very close comparative descriptions of the lexicogrammatical features between the Chinese originals and their English translations with the aim of identifying microstructural shifts. ZHANG (2005) and SHANG (2003) examined English source texts and their Chinese translations according to the theory of context of situation (field, tenor, and mode) and context of culture. Similarly, they appear to compare the source and the target text(s) more at the level of semantics rather than that of lexicogrammar for the categorization of shifts in the group or word rank although they also scrutinize closely shifts in structure and meaning in a few free-standing sentences.

**Aims, Focus, and Methods of the Study**

This paper aims to test the applicability of systemic functional linguistics to the study of Chinese translated texts with regard to aspects of the lexicogrammar of the transitivity and modality systems at the clause, group, and word ranks, and explore the possible modifications to the SFG framework that are needed to
make it serviceable for the analysis of Chinese translated texts. The study attempts to conduct comparable systemic functional descriptions of Chinese and English against the background of a general systemic functional theory of language. It is based on the assumption that languages are too far complex to be viewed as “unified phenomena” that can be described by a single general theory of language. Each language is a unique system and thus requires particular sets of linguistic descriptions against the background of generalization across a wide range of languages (Caffarel, Martin, & Matthiessen, 2004, pp. 5-6).

The descriptions conducted in this study are grounded on data collected from four Chinese translations of a narrative of an English literary text. Specifically, the data are drawn from two parallel corpora of the three-day battle in Hemingway’s *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952). The author compiled with reference to Halliday’s (1994) transitivity model and Simpson’s (1993) model of point of view for her published Ph.D. research (Ng, 2010). The two corpora comprise an English original of a narrative of about 70 pages of the old man’s three-day battle with the marlin and its four Chinese translations produced in modern China. The original text chosen for the compilation of the corpora consists of about two third of the novella totaling 22,024 words, and the four translations total roughly 138,745 words. The two corpora were constructed manually for the investigation of selected features of transitivity and modality. For the transitivity system, there are a total of 1,277 clauses of 52 sub-categories of the material (711 clauses, 15 subcategories), mental (257 clauses, 23 subcategories), behavioral (56 clauses, four subcategories), relational (206 clauses, eight subcategories), and existential processes (47 clauses, two subcategories) compiled. As for the modality system, there are a total of 111 clauses, accounting for about 8% (out of 1,388) of the total number of clauses of the two corpora investigated. With reference to Simpson’s (1993) model of point of view, the mini parallel corpus examines the use of demotic modals “must”, “can”, “could”, “will”, “would”, and “generic statements” epistemic modals such as “may”, “perhaps”, “might have”, “maybe I’ll”, and the boulomaic modal “wish”.

The study aims to provide a sketch of the similarities and differences between English and Chinese in aspects of the ideational and interpersonal metafunctional profiles of the SFG model. The supporting data are drawn from selected examples of text instances from the 1,388 clause complexes extracted from the three-day battle in Hemingway’s *The Old Man and the Sea*. The description of Chinese is modeled on the basis of the lexicogrammatical system of English by reference to evidence of text instances. Attempts are made to find out the resemblances between English and Chinese against the background of a general systemic functional theory of language. The study will conduct grammar-based discourse analysis of selected examples from the two corpora as supporting evidence, which is basically qualitative in nature. Nevertheless, other than qualitative analysis, the study, to a limited extent, also incorporates the quantitative tool as a subsidiary means of investigation. For the transitivity system, under each of the five categories proposed to be adjusted for the Chinese system, a list of 10 more examples selected from the parallel corpus are provided (as listed in the Appendix). They are further textual instances supporting the description of aspects of the transitivity system of the Chinese language. For the modality system, the frequencies of the translations of a range of modal operators are outlined, which provide some light into their representativeness in the Chinese system. The quantitative profiles supplement the qualitative data gathered from the analysis of isolated instances as a combined research tool to generate more valid findings for the empirical study.

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1 The four Chinese translations of *The Old Man and the Sea* investigated are respectively the one produced by HAI Guan (1957), WU Lao (1987), LI Xi-yin (1987), and ZHAO Shao-wei (1987).
In terms of the hierarchy of stratification as a dimension of linguistic description in systemic functional linguistics, the contrastive linguistic analysis in this study is conducted basically at the level of “lexicogrammar”; in terms of rank, it is realized at the “clause”, “group”, and “word” ranks. This is a narrower environment where more “translation shifts” are generated because of greater disparity between the two languages in a smaller unit of grammar. In terms of the cline of instantiation of a language system, the study is located more at the instance pole rather than the potential pole since the choices made in the translation process are viewed as actual textual instances of the overall linguistic system. They are particular instances formed as the source text and the target text unfolds in the creation of meaning, and thus the study is grounded firmly in the notion of language in use. It is intended that the examples selected from the two corpora as illustrations in this study will serve to accumulate more textual instances to support the meaning potentials of the language systems of Chinese and English that lie higher up the cline of instantiation.

Outline of the Paper

The paper falls into four sections: First, this section which is the introduction outlining the aims, focus, and methods of the study. The second section concentrates on the ideational metafunction of the Chinese language. The author will first explore the inherent linguistic differences between English and Chinese in their transitivity structures, then suggest certain aspects of the lexicogrammar of the SFG model that could be adjusted for the study of Chinese translated texts. The third part is devoted to the interpersonal dimension of the Chinese language. The author will compare the systems of modalization and modulation between English and Chinese with examples selected from the parallel corpus compiled in her above-mentioned research as illustrations. The author will also provide a brief review of Simpson’s (1993) point of view model based on which the mini modality corpus was compiled. After that the author will propose the sets of Chinese modals that can be included under the categories of Positive Shading Modality and the Negative Shading Modality of Simpson’s (1993) model, and explore their applicability for the investigation of narrative point of view in Chinese translated texts. The paper ends with a conclusion restating the major observations from this study and provides some suggestions for future research.

Ideational Metafunction of the Chinese Language

As introduced above with regard to the transitivity corpus, the author compiled a total of 1,277 clauses of 52 sub-categories of the material (711 clauses, 15 subcategories), mental (257 clauses, 23 subcategories), behavioral (56 clauses, four subcategories), relational (206 clauses, eight subcategories), and existential processes (47 clauses, two subcategories) in the parallel corpus of the three-day battle in the novella. Regarding the translation of the transitivity system, the author found that all the sub-categories of the five process types as identified in English, indeed, have their similar counterparts in Chinese, except that because of the inherent differences between the two languages, particularly, with regard to: (1) the aspect and phase systems; and (2) the configuration of the participants in the process, sometimes some of the clause constituents of a particular process type in English may appear in a different form or expressed in a different process type in Chinese. The following are some examples selected from the transitivity corpus compiled as illustrations:

1. Differences in the aspect and phase systems, for example, the unmarked perfective phase in English is changed to the unmarked imperfective aspect in Chinese.

The unmarked phase of a verb in English is completive which implies the closure of the process while that
in Chinese is the inceptive/conative which assumes the unfolding of the process (Halliday & Matthiessen, 1999, p. 308). Therefore, sometimes the perfective phase in English is shifted to the imperfective verbal aspect in Chinese by the use of the progressive markers “” “zhe” and “” “zhu” (see Examples 1-3):

Example (1) and he steered with the tiller under his arms (512)²

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ta ba} & \quad \text{duobing} & \quad \text{jia zai} & \quad \text{gezhi guoli} & \quad \text{zhangzhe duo} \\
\text{he} & \quad \text{tiller} & \quad \text{put under} & \quad \text{his arms} & \quad \text{steered}
\end{align*}
\]

(HAI, 512)³

Example (2) and put his foot on the coils (406)

\[
\begin{align*}
yiji & \quad \text{jiao} & \quad \text{caizhu} & \quad \text{diaosi} & \quad \text{juan er} \\
\text{one foot} & \quad \text{stepped} & \quad \text{coil} & \quad \text{cords}
\end{align*}
\]

(HAI, 406)

Example (3) and he pushed against the wood to be warm (690)

\[
\begin{align*}
ta & \quad \text{jiu} & \quad \text{dizhe} & \quad \text{mutou} & \quad \text{qunuan} \\
\text{he} & \quad \text{then} & \quad \text{pushed} & \quad \text{the wood} & \quad \text{to be warm}
\end{align*}
\]

(2) Differences in the configuration of participants in the process of a particular process type, for example, quality attributes construed as “nominals” in intensive attributive clauses in English are changed to “verbals” in Chinese.

In English, while qualities of participants are realized by nominals in the form of adjectives in intensive attributive clauses, they are construed as verbals in the form of adjectival verbal groups in Chinese (Halliday & McDonald, 2004, p. 358), such as Examples (4)-(6):

Example (4) 1

He was sorry for the birds (1035)

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ta} & \quad \text{ti} & \quad \text{niaoquemen} & \quad \text{shangxin} \\
\text{He} & \quad \text{for} & \quad \text{birds} & \quad \text{was sad}
\end{align*}
\]

(HAI, 1035)

Example (5) 1 2

The old man’s head was clear and good now (1043)

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Laotouer} & \quad \text{xianzai} & \quad \text{de} & \quad \text{touao} & \quad \text{shiqingxingde} & \quad \text{zhengchangde} \\
\text{The old man now} & \quad \text{his} & \quad \text{mind} & \quad \text{was clear} & \quad \text{normal}
\end{align*}
\]

(HAI, 1043)

Example (6) 1

“You’re tired, old man,” he said. (1052)

² Examples are selected from the parallel corpus of The Old Man and the Sea, the author compiled to illustrate the differences between English and Chinese in the transitivity system. The number in parentheses beside each example given refers to the number of the clause labelled originally in the corpus.

³ There are altogether four Chinese translations in addition to the English original of The Old Man and the Sea included in the parallel corpus compiled. They are respectively the one produced by HAI Guan (1957), WU Lao (1987), LI Xi-yin (1987), and ZHAO Shao-wei (1987). The surname before the number in parentheses in each example quoted refers to the respective version of the four studied in the research.
(3) Differences in the construction of elements in the clause, for example, circumstantial elements construed as minor processes in English are changed to full processes in Chinese.

A circumstance, realized by a prepositional phrase, is construed as a minor process in English, whereas in Chinese, it can be constructed as a figure on its own, realized by a coverbal phrase (a coverb is a preverb—prepositive verb—similar to a prepositional phrase in English) plus a post-noun of position or facet or a verbal group as a full process (Halliday & Matthiessen, 1999, p. 308; Halliday & McDonald, 2004, p. 317) (see Examples 7-9). The following are some examples:

(a) A prepositional phrase in English is changed to a verbal group in Chinese:

Example (7)

1

and put the skiff on her course

(33)

and put the skiff on her course

(HAI, 33)

ranhou anzhao yuanlaide luxian ba chuan kaihuiqu

then following the original route the skiff sailed

Example (8)

1

and allowed himself to be pulled forward against the wood

(76)

and allowed himself to be pulled forward against the wood

(HAI, 76)

ta kaozhe muban rang ziji beituo xiangqianqu

he leaned on the wood allowed himself to be pulled forward

(b) A prepositional phrase in English is changed to a coverbal phrase plus a post-noun of position or facet:

Example (9)

1

and he loved to walk on them on the beach after a storm

(953)

and he loved to walk on them on the beach after a storm

(HAI, 953)

ta xihuan zaiyichang fengbao guohou zaihaitanshang caizai tamen shenshang

he loved after a storm on the beach walked on them

Despite the differences mentioned above, the author found the overall construction of the five process types and their clause constituents share many similarities between English and Chinese. As Halliday and Matthiessen (1999) remarked:

Chinese and English share many common features in the construction of the ideational base. Thus, if we consider how they construe happenings as “quanta of experience” the two languages are to a large extent congruent: Chinese sequences tend to correspond to English sequences, and Chinese figures to English figures. (p. 314)

Likewise, Halliday and McDonald (2004, pp. 312-313) observed that Chinese and English share a similar metafunction/rank matrix despite the notable differences in that the lowest rank operates in the group rather than the word in a clause, and the functions between certain ranks are sometimes indeterminate. Although there
are differences in some of the elements of the transitivity system between the two languages, generally the
author was still able to apply the model to categorize systematically five types of clauses of the English original,
on the basis of which the author managed to compile a corresponding profile of linguistic features for the
Chinese target texts for translation comparison. However, difficulties would be encountered if the author
applied the model the other way round to first categorize various types of clauses in a Chinese source text, and
then sought to identify shifts in an English target text. In such case, some sort of adjustments is needed in order
to make the model serviceable for the analysis of Chinese translated texts, particularly for corpus-based studies
which investigate patterns of choices instead of isolated instances. However, due to space considerations, in the
following, the author will just concentrate on explaining how the transitivity model would have to be adapted in
Chinese for the analysis of: (1) aspect and phase; (2) coverbal phrase; (3) the dispositive bā construction; (4)
circumstance preceding process; and (5) serial verbal construction, since all these are unique features in
Chinese that should be analyzed specially by a SFG model which is specific to the language studied. The
suggestions given are by no means exhaustive, but they are prominent features in the Chinese language that
appear to be notably different from English in the parallel corpus of The Old Man and the Sea compiled. The
author will first introduce under each category the concepts concerned, then provide the breakdowns of the
examples selected from the transitivity corpus as support. In addition, a list of 10 more examples from the
transitivity corpus for each category is outlined in the appendix as text instances for further reference.

Aspect and Phase

Chinese is non-inflectional; time is not construed grammatically as tense, but as aspect. A process is not
construed as past, present or future relative to the time of speaking, but as imperfective or perfective relative to
the context. There are two major temporal systems in Chinese: Aspect and Phase. They are essential for the
definition of process types since different types of process have different implications with regard to time. In
aspect, a process is construed as “imperfective” (ongoing), “perfective” (culminating indicating closure), or
“neutral” (an unmarked option). Perfective aspect includes: (1) perfective proper; and (2) experiential;
imperfective aspect includes: (1) durative; and (2) progressive (Halliday & McDonald, 2004, pp. 353, 380). The
system of verbal aspect is illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1

| Aspect type     | Chinese     |
|-----------------|-------------|
| Neutral         |  da “hits”  |
| Perfective      |  da le “has hit” |
| Experiential    |  da guo “has once hit” |
| Imperfective    |  da zhe “is (in the state of) hitting” |
| Progressive     |  zai da “is (currently) hitting” |

There are two separate aspect systems in Mandarin. The first is verbal aspect, marked by a particle or a
coverb ( zai) attached to the verbal group in the case of the progressive; the second is clausal aspect, marked
by a particle in the final position of a clause. In Chinese, the unmarked process is inceptive/conative (i.e., it
implies attempt and marks the phase of success), whereas in English, the unmarked process is completive (i.e., it
implies success and marks the process of attempt) (Halliday & Matthiessen, 1999, p. 308; Halliday & McDonald,
2004, pp. 9, 381-383). The following are the examples of verbal and clausal aspects (see Tables 2-4):
Table 2

Verbal (Perfective) Aspect

| Example (10) | Process (material) | Aspect (verbal: perfective) | Goal | Circumstance (manner) |
|--------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|------|------------------------|
| zou hit      | (HAI, 208)         |                             |      |                        |
| Process (material) | Aspect (verbal: perfective) | Goal | Circumstance (manner) |
| Example (11) | Women begged       | le                           | tade | kuanshu (HAI, 257)    |
| Actor        | Process (material) | Aspect (verbal: perfective) | Goal |                        |

Table 3

Verbal (Imperfective) Aspect

| Example (12) | Process (material) | Aspect (verbal: imperfective) | Goal |
|--------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|------|
| zhua held    | (WU, 2)            | sidiaosi the small line     |      |

Table 4

Clausal (Perfective) Aspect

| Example (14) | Process (mental) | Macrophenomenon (act) | Aspect (clausal: perfective) |
|--------------|------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| he           | gan dao felt     | ziji yaokua himself about to collapse | (WU, 231) |

As for the system of phase, it contains two categories: neutral and completive. Completive phase divides into two subtypes: directional and resultative, both types are realized by the addition of post-verb. The directional subtype of post-verb divides into vectorial (ascend/descend, enter/exit, cross, return, and rise) and orientational (come/go, i.e., towards/away from the speaker). Resultative post-verbs contain six classes: qualitative, mental, change of state, directional, phasal, and exhaustive, as proposed by MacDonald (1994, pp. 337-342, as cited in Halliday & McDonald, 2004, p. 383). Table 5 lists some examples of the two types of completive phase (see Examples 16-25).
### Table 5
**Phase System in Chinese**

| Phase type | Phase subtypes | Example (16) | Example (17) | Example (18) | Example (19) | Example (20) | Example (21) | Example (22) | Example (23) |
|------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Neutral    |                | (ZHAO, 90)   | (WU, 57)     | (WU, 49)     | (ZHAO, 407)  | (HAI, 717)   | (HAI, 55)    | (LI, 349)    | (HAI, 187)   |
| Compleive  | Vectorial (ascend/descend, enter/exit, cross, return, and rise) | keshi ni shou bu shanglai shengzi. but you cannot get the line | zhige dao duzi bian cut down to belly edge | ba zheyu tuo huigu this fish pulled back | pu kai shai gan spread open in the sun dry | kan pian see see | ba ta ge duan it cut away | ba duijiang de shou ya dedixia the hand of the counterpart forced down and down | cong duoshang ye diao from the tiller haul away |
|            | Resultative (realized by a post-verb) | | | | | | | | |
|            | Qualitative | | | | | | | | |
|            | Mental | | | | | | | | |
| Directional/Positional | | | | | | | | |
(Table 5 continued)

| Phase type | Phase subtypes | Example | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|------------|----------------|---------|---|---|---|
| Neutral    |                | Phrasal |   |   |   |
|            |                |         |   |   |   |
| Compleative| Resultative (realized by a post-verb) | Example | 1 | 2 |   |
| Exhaustive |                 |         |   |   |   |

Coverbal Phrase

Coverbal phrase is a unique class of phrase in Chinese. It is formed by a coverb and a nominal group, which is analogous to a prepositional phrase functioning as a minor process in English. The coverbs commonly used in Chinese are “” (gei), “” (gen), “” (zaï), “” (diao), and “” (xiang). They indicate circumstantial meanings related to place, accompaniment, means and so on. A locative phrase preceded by a coverb contains a nominal group modified by a post-noun of position. The coverb indicates the location or direction, and the post-noun the relative position or facet. A coverbal phrase follows a verb. It is circumstance that expresses the outcome of the process (Halliday & McDonald, 2004, pp. 317, 378). The following are several examples of coverbal phrases (see Examples 26-30 in Table 6).

Table 6

Coverbal Phrases

Example (26)

| Coverb | Nominal group |
|--------|---------------|
| gei    | lao tou er     |
| to     | the old man   |

Example (27)

| Coverb | Nominal group |
|--------|---------------|
| gen    | taliang       |
| with   | the two       |

Example (28)

| Verb   | Coverb          | Nominal group |
|--------|-----------------|---------------|
| kai    | zai             | chuanshao     |
| leaned | in              | stern         |
|        |                 | shang         |
|        |                 | above         |

Example (29)

| Verb   | Coverb          | Nominal group |
|--------|-----------------|---------------|
| tuo    | dao             | chuan         |
| pulled | to              | skiff         |
|        |                 | gen qian      |
|        |                 | front         |
The Dispositive *bā* Construction

The *bā* construction is unique in Chinese, and it has no counterpart in English (Li, 2005, p. 184). The word *bā* has changed from functioning as full-fledged verb to become a coverb of specific voice marking (Chao, 1968; Li & Thompson, 1981, as cited in Li, 2005, p. 196). Hopper and Thompson (1980) suggested that the *bā* construction is highly transitive, and that the “subject” has to behave actively (as cited in Li, 2005, p. 192). The coverb *bā*, meaning, “to grasp”, moves the object before the verb in the pattern of “subject + *bā* + object + verb”. The noun phrase or object following *bā* is particularly favored when the goal is clearly indicated and the process is extended by completive or non-completive phase, often completive by perfective aspect. The *bā* construction is mainly found in material clauses, and a few in verbal and mental clauses marked for completive aspect (Halliday & McDonald, 2004, p. 374). Li (2005, pp. 198, 200) proposed that there are two dispositive constructions in the system of VOICE in Chinese. One of which is the *bā* construction realizing the “operative” option, another is the *bèi* construction realizing the “receptive” option, which is similar but not identical to the “passive” in English. They are labeled “operative” and “receptive” instead of “active” and “passive” since there is no distinction between “active” and “passive” verb forms in Chinese as there is in English. Both the *bā* and *bèi* constructions are applicable mainly in the transitive material process, and they provide alternative means for making participants the “unmarked” topical theme (see Examples 31-33 in Table 7).

Table 7
The Dispositive *bā* Constructions

| Example (31) |  |
|---------------|------------------|
| *Ba*          | nagen diaosi      |
| Goal/Nominal group | ge           |
| Process (material) | duan      |
| Post-verb (resultative: change of state) | Le   |
| Aspect (clausal: perfective) |  |

| Example (32) |  |
|---------------|------------------|
| *Ba*          | shuanggu de shengzi |
| Goal 1/Nominal group | da           |
| Process (material) | Le   |
| Aspect (verbal: perfective) |  |
| Goal 2/Nominal Group |  |

| Example (33) |  |
|---------------|------------------|
| *He*          | madai            |
| Goal/Nominal group | an     |
| Process (material) | ping   |
| Post-verb (resultative: change of state) |  |
Circumstance Preceding Process

The basic order of elements in the ideational metafunction between English and Chinese is quite similar; the major difference is that in Chinese, most circumstances come before the Process rather than after it as in English (Halliday & McDonald, 2004, p. 313) (see Examples 34-36 in Table 8).

### Table 8
Circumstances Before Processes

| Example (34) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| and cut strips of dark meat longitudinally from the back of the head to the tail (56) | | | | | |

| Example (35) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|--------------|---|---|---|---|
| and he loved to walk on them on the beach after a storm (953) | | | | |

| Example (36) | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|--------------|---|---|---|
| He used both of his hands in a swinging motion (323) | | | |

| Example (37) | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|--------------|---|---|---|
| There were high cumulus clouds and enough cirrus above him (1249) | | | |

The circumstance preceding the process is most obvious in existential processes, in which the circumstantial element is moved to the initial position of the clause to become typically thematic (Halliday & McDonald, 2004, p. 355) (see Examples 37-38 in Table 9).

### Table 9
Circumstance Before Process in Existential Process

| Example (37) | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|--------------|---|---|---|
| There were high cumulus clouds and enough cirrus above him (1249) | | | |

| Example (38) | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|--------------|---|---|---|
| He has a lot of cirrus (HAI, 1249) | | | |
There were other boats from the other beaches going out to sea (1231).

**Examples (38)**

| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| --- | --- | --- |
| biechu haitan shang | ye and you | qita xie chuanji other boats |
| (HAI, 1231) | chu | hai |
| qu | to |

### Circumstance (spatial location)
- Adverb: Process (existential)
- Existent (nominal group): Process (material)
- Post-verb (directional: vectorial)

### Serial Verbal Construction

In Chinese, a number of verbal elements can be combined freely with no marking of the relationship between them. They are labeled “serial verbal construction”, which makes it difficult to differentiate verbal group from clause and verbal group complex from clause complex (Halliday & McDonald, 2004, pp. 311, 314). A serial verbal construction normally consists of two or more verbal groups which share the same subject and follow one another without any conjunctions (Yip & Rimmington, 1997, p. 126).

**Table 10**

**Serial Verbal Constructions**

| Example (39) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| He hit it with his blood-mushed hands driving a good harpoon with all his strength (201) | ta | gu | qi | quanshen de qili whole body strength | yong |
| Actor 1 | Process 1 (material) | Post-verb (directional: vectorial) | Range/nominal group | Coverb 1 |

| Example (40) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| I can do that a little later and lash the oars (265) | chiyihuier a little later | wo | keyi can | tongshi simultaneously | ba |
| Circumstance (temporal location) | Actor | Modal verb | Circumstance (temporal location) | | Coverb 1 Goal 1/nominal group |

| 3 | 4 | 5 |
| --- | --- | --- |
| chulai out | youba and | bang tied |
| Process 1 (material) | Post-verb (directional: vectorial) | Adverb + Coverb 2 Goal 2/nominal group | Process 2 (material) | Post-verb (resultative: change of state) |

In the above sentence (see Example 39 in Table 10), the minor processes realised by circumstances “with his blood-mushed hands” and “with all his strength” are changed to full processes as verbal groups in Chinese. The sentence is a serial verbal construction containing two material processes—“鼓起” (guqi) and “扎” (zha)—and two coverbs—“用” (yong) and “把” (ba)—strung together to refer to a series of actions
performed by the old man to harpoon the fish. The relationship between the series of verbal groups is not explicitly indicated.

The above clause (see Example 40 in Table 10) complex is a serial verbal construction containing a modal verb—

- (key),
- (qu),
- (bang)—and two occurrences of the coverb “

- (ba) used consecutively to describe the actions performed by the old man simultaneously to gut the dolphin and lash the oars.

**Interpersonal Metafuncton of the Chinese Language**

For the investigation of the applicability of the modality system in Chinese, the author employed Simpson’s (1993) point of view model built on the basis of a modal grammar to identify translation shifts in the rendering of a range of deontic, epistemic, and boulomaic modals and generic statements, coupled with DS (direct speech) and FDT (free direct thought) presentation and transitions of modes of point of view. The author compiled a total of 111 clauses (54 deontic modal operators, three generic statements, 46 epistemic, and eight boulomaic modal operators) in the mini corpus of the third day’s battle of the old man with the marlin, which accounts for approximately one third of the text studied relative to the corpus of the old man’s three-day battle compiled with reference to transitivity. However, for the study of the interpersonal metafunction with reference to the modality system, basically the author conducted the contrastive linguistic analysis more in a wider scope of the “system” rather than the “structure” at the “clause” rank. The author was interested in comparing the clause system of the interpersonal metafunction of the two languages from a paradigmatic perspective with regard to the use of different types of modal operators rather than looking into the clause structures from a syntagmatic aspect as she did in examining the relations of the clause constituents of process, participants, and circumstance for transitivity. Specifically, for the modality system, the author examined how a range of modal operators as used in the source text are instantiated in the given translated text for the realization of modalization (the expression of probability) and modulation (the expression of inclination and obligation). Since the author focused more on a more extensive unit of a sentence or a clause rather than a very delicate description of the lexicogrammatical features of Chinese modality, she observed a high degree of translation correspondence between Chinese and English in the broad system of modality. In the following, the author will provide a brief review of Simpson’s model of point of view, then she will present the findings of the translations of the deontic, boulomaic, and epistemic modal operators as identified in the original text. After that, the author will sketch the similarities and differences between English and Chinese with reference to the modulation and modalization systems of the interpersonal metafunction, and explore their applicability to comparative description of Chinese translated texts.

**Simpson’s (1993) Model of Point of View**

Simpson (1993) broadly divided modality into the deontic, epistemic, and boulomaic systems. Regarding the deontic system, he suggested that deontic modality is the modal system of “duty”, expressing a speaker’s sense of obligation towards the accomplishment of certain tasks. Deontic modality is often realized by the modal auxiliaries such as “may”, “should”, and “must”, showing varying degrees of commitment attaching to the performance of certain actions, as found in Example (41)-(43) given by Simpson (1990, p. 67):

Example (41) You **may** leave at ten o’clock. (permission)
Example (42) You should leave at ten o’clock. (obligation)
Example (43) You must leave at ten o’clock. (requirement)

The above examples illustrate a continuum of commitment of the deontic system ranging from “permission” (see Example 41) through “obligation” (see Example 42) to “requirement” (see Example 43). Deontic modality is concerned with human control over events. It is different from epistemic modality, which mainly deals with the belief of a speaker.

Contrary to deontic modality, epistemic modality expresses a speaker’s degree of confidence in the truth of a proposition stated. It is generally realized by the modal auxiliaries such as “could”, “may”, “must”, “might”, and “should”, representing a speaker’s assessment of the likelihood of events occurring (Simpson, 1993, pp. 48-49). Thus, epistemic modality is also viewed as “probability” modality whereas deontic modality as “obligation” modality (Simpson, 1993, pp. 11). Nevertheless, similar to deontic modality, there is an epistemic modality scale realizing a semantic continuum of probability ranging from uncertainty (1) through probability (2), certainty (3) to logical necessity (4) as illustrated by Examples (44)-(47) provided by HAN (2005, p. 12):

Example (44) They may be there now. (possible but uncertain)
Example (45) They should be there now. (probable)
Example (46) They will be there now. (certain)
Example (47) They must be there now. (logical necessity)

Regarding boulomaic modality, it is closely related to the deontic system, according to Simpson’s (1993) classification of modality. It is concerned with the wishes and desires of a speaker, as revealed in Examples (48)-(50) given by Simpson (1993, p. 48):

Example (48) I hope that you will leave.
Example (49) I wish you’d leave.
Example (50) I regret that you’re leaving.

The use of the modal lexical verbs “hope”, “wish”, and “regret” in the above sentences all express the speaker’s wishes and wants in the boulomaic system of modality. Simpson’s (1993) classification of modality is slightly different from Halliday’s (1994, pp. 356-358). Halliday categorized probability or epistemic modality under modalization, which he associated with propositions (statements and questions), while he grouped obligation or deontic modality together with inclination modality under modulation, which are associated with proposals (offers and commands). In addition, he suggested that there are three “values” of modality—high, median and low—attaching to the modal judgment.

In the study of modality, it is important to notice that the boundaries between deontic and epistemic modalities are often not discrete but tend to overlap since the same modal auxiliaries may express diverse meanings that cut across both deontic and epistemic categories. The notion of the basic indeterminacy of the deontic and epistemic meanings has been observed by Coates (1983), as reviewed by Simpson (1990). Coates (1983) suggested that in the study of deontic and epistemic modalities, there are often indeterminate cases where it is hard to decide which of the two meanings is intended. She provided Example (51) as an illustration (Coates, 1983, p. 16, as cited in Simpson, 1990, p. 68):

Example (51) He must understand that we mean business.
Coates proposed that the above sentence may include the epistemic meaning that “Surely he understands...” or the deontic meaning that “He will have to understand...” Thus, it appears that there are cases in which both epistemic and deontic meanings are “mutually compatible” and “have undergone a merger” in a specific context (Coates, 1983, p. 16, as cited in Simpson, 1990, p. 68).

Simpson’s (1993, pp. 55-81) model of point of view is built on the basis of three types of modality and two categories of narratives contributing to a total of nine polarities of point of view formed by the interaction between the type of modality and the category of narratives employed. In addition, the model includes various modes of speech and thought presentation, which intersect subtly with the nine modes of point of view as indispensable features to look at in a comprehensive study of point of view. In the following, the author will first briefly introduce the two categories of narratives proposed by Simpson, followed by the three types of modality and the nine polarities of point of view as devised in Simpson’s point of view model. Since the various modes of speech and thought presentation are not the main focus of this study, and thus they will not be reviewed.

**Category A, Category B(N), and Category B(R) Narratives**

In Simpson’s model of point of view, there are broadly two categories of narratives—category A narratives and category B narratives. Category A narratives are those narrated in the first person by a participating character within the story. This is viewed as “homodiegetic” narratives with internal focalization (in Genette’s (1980) term), where the narrator has restricted omniscience. Category B narratives are those narrated in the third person by a narrator situated outside the story. This corresponds to Genette’s “heterodiegetic” narratives with external focalization, where the narrator says less than a character knows. Category B narratives are sub-divided further into two modes, depending on whether events are situated outside or inside the consciousness of a particular character. Narratives told from a viewing position outside the story belong to the B(N) (Narratorial) mode, while narratives that take place within the consciousness of a particular character belong to the R (Reflector) mode. In addition, under each of the categories A, category B(N), and category B(R) narratives, there include the “positive shading”, “negative shading”, and “neutral shading” modalities to generate a total of nine polarities of point of view (A+ve, A-ve, A neutral; B(N) + ve, B(N)-ve, B(N) neutral; B(R) + ve, B(R)-ve, and B(R) neutral). In the following section, the author will introduce the characteristics of the positive shading, negative shading, and neutral shading modalities, and provide a brief overview of the distinctions in meaning among the nine modes of point of view which are contributed by the interaction between the type of modality and the category of narratives employed in a particular mode.

**Positive Shading, Negative Shading, and Neutral Shading Modalities**

“Positive shading modality” is characterized by the foregrounding of the deontic and bouloomaic systems, verba sentiendi (words denoting thoughts, feelings, and perceptions), evaluative adjectives and adverbs, and generic sentences, highlighting a narrator’s duties, obligations, desires, opinions, and judgment, and creating a narrative orientated towards the implied reader with little inferences drawn from the external stimuli. “Negative shading modality”, by contrast, is characterized by the foregrounding of the epistemic and perception modalities...
systems, supplemented with generalized “words of estrangement” such as “apparently”, “evidently”, “perhaps”, “as if”, “it seems”, etc. Moreover, epistemic modal auxiliaries, modal adverbs, and modal lexical verbs such as “I suppose”, “I imagine”, and “I assume” are commonly used to create distancing effects by expressing a character’s uncertainty, alienation, and bewilderment. “Neutral shading modality” is an objective style characterized by the complete absence of N modality, the dominance of unmodalized categorical assertions, few verba sentiendi and evaluative adjectives and adverbs. Rather than presenting qualified opinions and judgments on events and characters, a narrator withholds subjective comments and tells the story primarily through categorical assertions. Thus, the story often comprises sequences of merely physical description with few psychological portraits of characters.

The dominant features of the positive shading, negative shading and neutral shading modalities remain constant across the category A, category B(N), and category B(R) narratives; nevertheless, each type of modality interacts differently with the specific category of narratives to give rise to nine polarities of point of view. The three-way interaction among the three types of modality and the three categories of narratives are illustrated in Table 11 in which the peculiar properties of each of the nine modes of point of view are briefly outlined for reference.

Table 11

| Type of modality          | Positive shading modality | Negative shading modality | Neutral shading modality |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Category of narratives    |                           |                            |                          |
| Category A narratives     |                           |                            |                          |
| (homodiegetic)            |                           |                            |                          |
| B(N) + ve                 | B(N)-ve                   | B(N) neutral               |
| Category B narratives     |                           |                            |                          |
| (heterodiegetic) N mode   |                           |                            |                          |
| B(R) + ve                 | B(R)-ve                   | B(R) neutral               |
| Category B narratives     |                           |                            |                          |
| (heterodiegetic) R mode   |                           |                            |                          |

Simpson’s Model of Point of View Built on the Basis of a Modal Grammar (Adapted From Simpson, 1993, p. 75)

| A + ve | A-ve | A neutral |
|--------|------|-----------|
| first-person narrative via a participating character. Canonical example: Bronte’s Jane Eyre (1847) | first-person narrative via a participating character, creating distancing effect, alienation, and bewilderment. Canonical example: Beckett’s Molly (1950) | first-person narrative via a participating character, flat, journalistic style, characteristic of “hard-boiled” detective fiction. For example: Chandler’s Farewell, My Lovely (1940) |
| B(N) + ve | B(N)-ve | B(N) neutral |
| third-person narrative via a non-participating narrator, offering opinions and judgements. For example: Conrad’s The Secret Agent (1907) | third-person narrative via a non-participating narrator, creating distancing effect, alienation and bewilderment. Canonical example: Kafka’s The Trial (1925) | third-person narrative via a non-participating narrator, refusing access to thoughts and characters. Canonical example: Hemingway’s The Killers (1928) |
| B(R) + ve | B(R)-ve | B(R) neutral |
| third-person narrative located within viewing position of character, offering their opinions and judgments. Canonical example: James’s The Ambassadors (1903) | third-person narrative, “estrangement” situated in the mind of character: hence double focalization, distal deixics used to suggest spatial distance between viewer and object. For example: Kafka’s The Trial (1925) | third-person narrative situated in viewing position of character, evaluative modalities still withheld and categorical assertions dominant. For example: Flaubert’s Madame Bovary (1856) |
Findings of the Translations of Modality

The author found that Simpson’s model of point of view, overall, works well for the analysis of Chinese texts as it does for the English original text, including the range of modals and speech and thought presentation, and the similarities appear to be more striking than the differences between the two languages in the modality system. For the various types of modals used in the English original, the author found their similar counterparts in the four Chinese translations. Moreover, the use of the reporting clause such as “he said” in speech presentation and “he thought” in thought presentation also have their close parallels in Chinese. The whole multilayered point of view model that integrates different types of modals, narrative point of view, and speech and thought presentation as an analytical framework for discovering attitude in translations is demonstrated to be effective and applicable to Chinese translated texts. In Tables 12-13, the author outlined the corresponding translations of the lists of deontic, boulomaic, and epistemic modal operators uncovered in the mini corpus of *The Old Man and the Sea* compiled and their frequencies of occurrence as found in the four translations. After that the author will provide a sketch of the similarities and differences between English and Chinese in the modality system.

Table 12
The Chinese Translations of the Deontic and Boulomaic Modal Operators Uncovered in the Mini Corpus of *The Old Man and the Sea*

| Must/Mustn’t (No. of occurrence) | (yiding) | (bixu) | (de) | (kebuneng) | (gai) |
|----------------------------------|----------|--------|------|------------|------|
| 20                               | 11       | 9      | 14   | 4          | 5    |
|                                  | (juebuyao) | (jiu) | (yao) | (zhunshi) | (bu gai) |
|                                  | 3        | 1      | 4    | 1          | 1    |
|                                  | (jinkeneng) |       |      |            |      |
|                                  | 2        |        |      |            |      |
| Can/Could (not) (No. of occurrence) | (keyi) | (ke) (bu) (neng) | (de) | (bixu) | (gai) |
| 14                               | 9        | 10     | 4    | 1          | 1    |
|                                  | (bu) (hui) | (zhi) (zhun) (neng) | (zhiyi) | (zuodadao) | (ji) |
|                                  | 6        | 6      | 1    | 1          | 2    |
| Will/Would (No. of occurrence)   | (hai) yao | (ye) (hui) | (haide) | (jiu) (jiuyao) | (jiu) (neng) |
| 20                               | 13       | 11     | 1    | 11         | 6    |
|                                  | (jiude) | (jiushi) | (jiucheng) | (daoshi) | (yiding) |
|                                  | 1        | 2      | 1    | 2          | 2    |
|                                  | (na) (jiu) | (haihui) | (zhiyao) | (daoxiang) |      |
|                                  | 4        | 2      | 4    | 4          |      |
| Wish (No. of occurrence)         | (xiang) | (danyuan) | (zhentiwang) | (qingyuan) | (zhemanwang) |
| 8                                | 3        | 6      | 3    | 2          | 1    |
|                                  | (zaihao) | (haiburu) | (daoqingyuan) | (kerang) | (bawangdeshiyi) |
|                                  | 1        | 1      | 2    | 1          | 1    |
|                                  | (duohao) | (jiushao) | (xiangyao) | (wodeyuanwang) |      |
|                                  | 1        | 1      | 2    | 1          |      |
| Perhaps (No. of occurrence) 6 | Would rather (No. of occurrence) 2 | May (No. of occurrence) 4 | Maybe (No. of occurrence) 5 | Will (No. of occurrence) 4 | Might have (No. of occurrence) 1 | Should have (No. of occurrence) 2 | I do not know (No. of occurrence) 1 | I cannot know (No. of occurrence) 2 | I am not sure (No. of occurrence) 3 | But I am sure he would have (No. of occurrence) 2 |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| (yexue) 14                  | (diaoxiwang) 1                | (jiuhui) 1               | (yexu) 14                | (jiuhui) 1             | (yexu) 2                     | (yinggai) 6                       | (womobutou) 2                  | (wo meifaja zhidao) 2            | (wobuzenmoxianxin) 1            | (keshiwoxiangxin) 1               |
| (yexukeneng) 1             | (keshiqingyuan) 1            | (yexuhui) 4             | (zuoxing) 2              | (yao) 2                | (yexu) 2                     | (yexuhui) 4                        | (womobutou) 2                  | (wo meifaja zhidao) 2            | (wobuzenmoxianxin) 1            | (yexuhui) 2                     |
| (meizhuner) 1              | (daobumingbai) 1             | (yexukeneng) 1           | (huzhidao) 5             | (yao) 1                | (shuobuding) 1              | (yuangai) 2                       | (wobuzhidao) 2                  | (wo meifajar zhidao) 1           | (wobuzenmoxianxin) 1            | (yuhu) 2                         |
| (payeweibi) 1              | (wobuzhidao) 2               | (shuobuding) 1           | (bumingbai) 2            | (zonggai) 1           | (shuobuding) 1              | (zonggai) 1                       | (wobuzhidao) 2                  | (wo meifajar zhidao) 1           | (wobuzenmoxianxin) 1            | (jiuhui) 1                       |
| (huoxu) 2                  |                               | (haiku) 1                | (huoxu) 2                | (yehui) 1              | (nizenmo) 1                 |                               |                               |                               | (jiuhaow) 1                      |                               |
|                             |                               | (keyai) 1                | (meizhuner) 1            | (jiuhui) 1             |                               |                               |                               |                               | (jiuhaow) 1                      |                               |

**Table 13**

*The Chinese Translations of the Major Epistemic Modal Operators Uncovered in the Mini Corpus of The Old Man and the Sea*
According to Halliday and McDonald (2004, p. 339), in Chinese as in English, the system of modality comprises modalization (the expression of probability) and modulation (the expression of inclination and obligation). There is a continuum of values in the realms of modalization and modulation in both languages. In Simpson’s (1993) point of view model, modulation (modals expressing inclination, ability, and duties) together with the boulomaic system expressing desires and wishes are categorized under “positive shading modality”, while modalization (probability modals) coupled with perception modals, supplemented with generalized “words of estrangement” such as “apparently”, “evidently”, “perhaps”, “as if”, and “it seems” are grouped under negative shading modality. Overall, the author found English and Chinese share many similarities in the modality system. In both languages, modality can be expressed by modal verbs (may, must, will, shall, etc.); modal adverbs (probably, perhaps, surely, etc.); and verbs of knowledge, prediction, or evaluation (seem, believe, guess, etc.). Moreover, both languages share a semantic scale in the notions of probability, inclination, and obligation, ranging from “high”, “median” to “low” values according to Halliday’s (1994, p. 357) classification of modality.

Nevertheless, the major difference between English and Chinese with regard to modal verbs is that in English, all English modal verbs except “shall” can express both modality and modulation (ZHU, 1996, p. 206), whereas in Chinese, mainly “会” (hui) and “要” (yao) can be used respectively to express low and median degrees of probability other than obligation (Halliday & McDonald, 2004, p. 339), and there are only a few other modals that can be used for both modality and modulation (ZHU, 1996, p. 208). In addition, it is worthy of attention that the boundaries between deontic and epistemic modalities are not always clear cut, but tend to overlap. This is applicable to both languages as revealed in the original text and the four
translations of the modals as uncovered in the parallel corpus of modality. In compiling the mini parallel corpus of modality in this study, for the sake of convenience and coherence in counting the frequencies of a variety of modal operators used, the author put the modal verbs such as “must”, “can/could”, and “will/would” all under the deontic category, but in fact, some of them cut across the deontic and epistemic categories and can be used to convey both deontic and epistemic meanings; for example the modal “must” in “I must hold all I can” (1278) is used in a deontic sense to express the old man’s deontic duty/ability to catch the fish. But the modal “must” can also be used to mean the old man’s assessment of the possibility of the events occurring such as “they must have taken a quarter of him and of the best meat” (1293). It depends on the context to differentiate the meaning of the modal. In some cases, the same modal has undergone a merger and may have two possible meanings, allowing different interpretations. This is revealed in different translations of the modal “will” in the clause—“Then in two or three turns more I will have him” (1315), in which HAI (1957) translated “will” into “໡ ૆ ૘ (jiuyao) ૗ ૘ ૕ ૕ ૕ ૕” expressing a sense of deontic duty; while WU (1987) translated it into “໡ ૆ ૘ (jiuneng) ૗ ૘ ૕ ૕”, and LI (1987) translated it as “໡ ૆ (jiuneng) ૗ ૕ ૕ ૕”, which can be interpreted as the epistemic probability of the man hitting the fish. Likewise, the modal “will” in “This time I'll pull him over” (1318) is interpreted differently by different translators—HAI (1957) translated it into “໡ ૆ (hui) ૗ ૘ ૕ ૕ ૕ ૕” expressing the old man’s assessment of his probability of hooking the fish; while ZHAO (1987) translated it into “໡ ૆ (yao) ૗ ૘ ૕ ૕ ૕”, expressing the old man’s self-command to catch the fish.

As mentioned above pointed out by ZHU (1996, p. 206), there are only a few modal verbs among the Chinese modals that can be used for both modalization and modulation, while English modals except “shall” can express both modalization and modulation. Therefore, it is worthwhile to look into a proper categorization of a variety of modals for the realization of the networks of modality and modulation in Chinese. ZHU (1996, pp. 189-205) compared the systems of modalization and modulation in English and Chinese from Halliday’s systemic-functional approach. Based on the information he introduced, the author compiled a list of the modal operators of probability (see Table 14) and that of ability, inclination and obligation (see Table 15) as outlined below. Moreover, ZHU (1996, p. 208) attempted to match the English modals with their counterparts in Chinese as listed in Table 16. They serve as a useful reference for the study of the modality system in Chinese and research in contrastive linguistics.

Table 14

| Value  | Modal verbs                                      |
|--------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Low    | ૗ (keneng can) ૗ (hui can)                      |
| High   | ૗ (gai should)                                  |
|        | Modal adverbs                                   |
| High   | ૗ (yiding must) ૗ (kending must) ૗ (biding must) ૗ (zhun must) |
| Median | ૗ (dagai probably) ૗ (duoban probably)           |
| Low    | ૗ (yexu perhaps) ૗ (huoxu perhaps)               |
|        | Full verbs of knowledge, prediction, and evaluation |
|        | ૗ (xiangxin believe) ૗ (guji estimate) ૗ (kan think) ૗ (xiang reckon) |
Table 15

Modulation in Chinese (Realisation of Ability, Inclination, and Obligation)

| Value               | Modal verbs of ability                                      |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
|                      | ି (neng can) ି (nenggou can) ି (keyi can) ି (hui can)      |
|                      | Modal verbs of inclination                                  |
| High (insistence)   | ି (yao will)                                               |
| Median (intention)  | ି (xiang wish)                                             |
| Low (willingness)   | ି (yuanyi will) ି (ken will)                               |
|                      | Modal adverbs of inclination                                |
| High                 | ି (yiding must) ି (pian must) ି (fei must)                 |
|                      | Modal verbs of obligation                                    |
| High (compulsion)   | ି (yao must) ି ି (bisu must) ି (dei must, the most colloquial form) |
| Median (expectation) | ି (yimagai should) ି ି (yimagdang should)                 |
|                      | ି (gai should)                                             |
| Low (permission)    | ି (yiming may) ି (xu allow) ି (zhun allow) ି (de) should—always used in its negative form—“" bude should not—to indicate prohibition |
|                      | Full verbs and nouns of obligation                           |
|                      | Verbs such as ି ି (yaoqiu require) ି ି (qiang po compel) ି (rang let) ି ି (yunxu permit); nouns such as ି ି (yiwu duty) ି ି (zeren responsibility) ି ି (xuke permission) |

Table 16

Correspondence Between English and Chinese Modals (Adapted From ZHU, 1996, p. 208)

| English modals | Categories of modals | Chinese modals |
|---------------|----------------------|----------------|
| Can/Could     |                      |                |
| Probability   | ି (keneng)           |                |
| Ability       | ି (neng gou)         |                |
| Ability       | ି (keyi)             |                |
| Probability/Ability | ି (hui)       |                |
| Will/Would    |                      |                |
| Inclination   | ି (xiang)            |                |
| Inclination   | ି (yuanyi)           |                |
| Inclination   | ି (ken)              |                |
| Inclination   | ି (yao)              |                |
| Shall         |                      |                |
| Inclination   | ି (xiang)            |                |
| Inclination   | ି (yuanyi)           |                |
| May/Might     |                      |                |
| Probability   | ି (keneng)           |                |
| Permission    | ି (keyi)             |                |
| Permission    | ି (xu)               |                |
| Permission    | ି (zhun)             |                |
| Should/Ought to | Probability/Expectation | ି (gui)          |
| Probability/Expectation | ି (yimagai) |                |
| Probability/Expectation | ି (yimagdang) |                |
| Must          |                      |                |
| Compulsion    | ି (bisu)             |                |
| Compulsion    | ି (yao)              |                |
| Compulsion    | ି (dei)              |                |
According to ZHU’s (1996) categorization of the modalization and modulation modals as outlined in Tables 14-16, the few modals that can be used for both modality and modulation are “߶ (hui can)”, “_mtime (gai should)”, “"] (yiding must), and “ Firestore (zhun must, allow). Since compared to English in which all modal verbs except “shall” can express both modality and modulation (ZHU, 1996, p. 208), there is a relatively fixed set of modals used particularly for the realization of modalization and modulation, the author would suggest that Simpson’s (1993) model of point of view could be refined better by including a more defined set of modal operators each under the categories of positive shading modality and negative shading modality for the description of Chinese translated texts. Though the lists of both categories of modals are not exhaustive, they are useful reference and make the SFG model more serviceable for the categorization of translation shifts in Chinese texts. Nevertheless, it is worthy of attention as mentioned above that the boundaries between deontic and epistemic modalities are not clear cut but tend to overlap. The same modal can be interpreted differently from different angles, and carry both the deontic and the epistemic meanings. Moreover, Simpson’s model of point of view built on the basis of a modal grammar is basically English oriented. While it works effectively for the investigation of narrative point of view for English texts, it should better be adapted according to the typical characteristics of the Chinese modality system for the linguistic description of Chinese translated texts, particularly for corpus-based translation research which usually aims to investigate selected lexical items for the identification of linguistic patterns of choices. Based on ZHU’s (1996, pp. 189-205) categorization of modalization and modulation in Chinese as outlined in Table 14 together with the findings of the translations of a variety of modals collected in this study, the author proposed a list of modal operators that can be included in Simpson’s point of view model under the categories of positive shading modality and negative shading modality, which interact with the categories of narrative for the generation of the nine polarities of point of view. The two major types of modals are outlined in Tables 17-18.

### Table 17

**Positive Shading Modality in Chinese System With Reference to Simpson’s Point of View Model (1993)**

| Type of modality | Positive shading modality |
|------------------|---------------------------|
| Modal verbs of ability | ߶ (neng can) .Requires (nenggou can) |
| Modal verbs of inclination (high, insistence) | ߎ (yao will) |
| Modal verbs of inclination (median, intention) | ࡻ (xiang wish) |
| Modal verbs of inclination (low, willingness) | ફ (yuanyi will) .Require (ken will) |
| Modal adverbs of inclination (high) | ߶ (yiding must) .Require (pian must) |
| Modal verbs of obligation (high, compulsion) | ƙ (yao must) Requirement (bixu must) |
| Modal verbs of obligation (median, expectation) | ߶ (yingga must) .Require (yindang should) |
| Modal verbs of obligation (low, permission) | ߶ (keyi may) .Require (xu allow) |

Note: “bude” should not—to indicate prohibition
(Table 17 continued)

| Type of modality (Value) | Positive shading modality |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Full verbs and nouns of obligation | deontic, boulomaic systems foregrounded, generics, and verba sentiendi present |
| verbs such as ေူ (yaoqiu require) | |
| (Value) | |
| ٰ (yaoqiu require) | |
| ٰ (yaoqiu require) | |
| ٰ (yaoqiu require) | |
| nouns such as >): (yivo duty) | |
| (Value) | |
| ཅ (yivo duty) | |
| ཅ (yivo duty) | |
| ཅ (yivo duty) | |
| verbs such as ေူ (yaoqiu require) | |
| (Value) | |
| အ (yaoqiu require) | |
| အ (yaoqiu require) | |
| အ (yaoqiu require) | |
| Full verbs of knowledge, prediction, and evaluation | |
| verbs such as ေူ (yaoqiu require) | |
| (Value) | |
| အ (yaoqiu require) | |
| အ (yaoqiu require) | |
| အ (yaoqiu require) | |
| verbs such as ေူ (yaoqiu require) | |
| (Value) | |
| အ (yaoqiu require) | |
| အ (yaoqiu require) | |
| အ (yaoqiu require) | |
| nouns such as ယ (yivo duty) | |
| (Value) | |
| ཅ (yivo duty) | |
| ཅ (yivo duty) | |
| ཅ (yivo duty) | |
| verbs such as ေူ (yaoqiu require) | |
| (Value) | |
| အ (yaoqiu require) | |
| အ (yaoqiu require) | |
| အ (yaoqiu require) | |
| nouns such as ယ (yivo duty) | |
| (Value) | |
| ཅ (yivo duty) | |
| ཅ (yivo duty) | |
| ཅ (yivo duty) | |
| verbs such as ေူ (yaoqiu require) | |
| (Value) | |
| အ (yaoqiu require) | |
| အ (yaoqiu require) | |
| အ (yaoqiu require) | |

Table 18

Negative Shading Modality in Chinese System With Reference to Simpson’s Point of View Model (1993)

| Type of modality (Value) | Negative shading modality |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Modal verbs (low) | (epistemic and perception systems foregrounded, supplemented with generalised “words of estrangement”) |
| (Value) | |
| ၀ ) ၁ (he can) | |
| ၀ ) ၁ (he can) | |
| ၀ ) ၁ (he can) | |
| Modal verbs (high) | |
| (Value) | |
| ၀ ) ၁ (he can) | |
| ၀ ) ၁ (he can) | |
| ၀ ) ၁ (he can) | |
| Modal adverbs (high) | |
| (Value) | |
| ၀ ) ၁ (he can) | |
| ၀ ) ၁ (he can) | |
| ၀ ) ၁ (he can) | |
| Modal adverbs (median) | |
| (Value) | |
| ၀ ) ၁ (he can) | |
| ၀ ) ၁ (he can) | |
| ၀ ) ၁ (he can) | |
| Modal adverbs (low) | |
| (Value) | |
| ၀ ) ၁ (he can) | |
| ၀ ) ၁ (he can) | |
| ၀ ) ၁ (he can) | |
| Full verbs of knowledge, prediction, and evaluation | |
| (Value) | |
| ၀ ) ၁ (he can) | |
| ၀ ) ၁ (he can) | |
| ၀ ) ၁ (he can) | |
| verbs such as ေူ (yaoqiu require) | |
| (Value) | |
| အ (yaoqiu require) | |
| အ (yaoqiu require) | |
| အ (yaoqiu require) | |
| verbs such as ေူ (yaoqiu require) | |
| (Value) | |
| အ (yaoqiu require) | |
| အ (yaoqiu require) | |
| အ (yaoqiu require) | |
| nouns such as ယ (yivo duty) | |
| (Value) | |
| ཅ (yivo duty) | |
| ཅ (yivo duty) | |
| ཅ (yivo duty) | |
| verbs such as ေူ (yaoqiu require) | |
| (Value) | |
| အ (yaoqiu require) | |
| အ (yaoqiu require) | |
| အ (yaoqiu require) | |
Conclusions

In this study, the author conducted comparative descriptions of aspects of the transitivity and modality systems of the Chinese language on the basis of the description of the English lexicogrammar against the background of a general systemic functional theory of language. The descriptions are grounded on selected examples of text instances drawn from two parallel corpora of 1,388 clause complexes compiled from four Chinese translations of a narrative of a novella in English. The contributions of the present study lie in the attempts to treat and describe translated texts as a phenomenon in its own right, and to develop delicate lexicogrammatical analyses of the source text and its corresponding target texts mostly at the ranks of clause and group as the “units of translation”. The author found close resemblance between the two languages at the higher level of discourse semantics, but noticeable variations between them at the lower level of lexicogrammar. This is manifested particularly in the realization of the unique features of the transitivity system in Chinese with regard to: (1) aspect and phase; (2) coverbal phrase; (3) the dispositive “ba” construction; (4) circumstance preceding process; and (5) serial verbal construction. As for modality of the interpersonal metafunction, attempts are made to compare the modulation and modalization systems between English and Chinese, and propose a set of modals categorized under the positive shading modality and the negative shading modality of Simpson’s (1993) model for the investigation of narrative point of view in Chinese translated texts. The study supports that Chinese language displays specific linguistic features that should be explained and described in its own right within the system of the Chinese grammar. It also supports the applicability of systemic functional linguistics for the description of both English and Chinese languages even though modifications to the lexicographical features of the Chinese language would have to be made according to the purpose of study for the analysis of Chinese translated texts. With regard to research methodology, the accounts of the English and Chinese languages provided in this study are based primarily on descriptions of limited samples of text instances, which are qualitative in nature. Although the study also incorporates a quantitative profile to a limited degree such as by providing lists of ten more examples from the transitivity corpus (see the Appendix of this study) to contribute further textual instances for each category of the lexicogrammar proposed to be adjusted for the Chinese transitivity system, still, a larger sample of descriptions can be drawn to test the validity of the Chinese transitivity system network. Therefore, future research could consider conducting a computer-assisted corpus study on the basis of the parallel corpus of the 1,277 clauses of the five process types compiled to investigate systematically the total number of instances that are accumulated in support of each of the five categories of the lexicographical aspects of the transitivity system suggested to be adjusted according to the Chinese language for comparative translation description. Nevertheless, this empirical study demonstrates how translated texts are instantiation of the language system, and how the textual instances created from selected samples contribute further evidence to support the meaning potentials of both the English and the Chinese systems.

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ZHANG, M. F. (2005). *Fanyi yanjiu de gongneng tujing* (*Functional approaches to translation studies*). Shanghai: Shanghai Waiyu Jiaoyu.
Appendix: Selected Examples From the Transitivity Corpus of Hemingway’s *The Old Man and the Sea* Compiled by Ng (2010)

1. Examples of aspect and phase in Chinese

(1) Verbal (Perfective) Aspect
(a) [Chinese characters] (HAI, 7)
(b) [Chinese characters] (WU, 7)
(c) [Chinese characters] (HAI, 10)
(d) [Chinese characters] (WU, 10)
(e) [Chinese characters] (LI, 10)
(f) [Chinese characters] (ZHAO, 10)
(g) [Chinese characters] (WU, 14)
(h) [Chinese characters] (ZHAO, 14)
(i) [Chinese characters] (HAI, 34)
(j) [Chinese characters] (ZHAO, 40)

(2) Verbal (Imperfective) Aspect
(a) [Chinese characters] (WU, 41)
(b) [Chinese characters] (LI, 41)
(c) [Chinese characters] (ZHAO, 41)
(d) [Chinese characters] (HAI, 43)
(e) [Chinese characters] (ZHAO, 43)
(f) [Chinese characters] (HAI, 48)
(g) [Chinese characters] (ZHAO, 48)
(h) [Chinese characters] (HAI, 89)
(i) [Chinese characters] (HAI, 89)
(j) [Chinese characters] (HAI, 89)

(3) Clausal (Perfective) Aspect
(a) [Chinese characters] (WU, 83)
(b) [Chinese characters] (HAI, 85)
(c) [Chinese characters] (LI, 85)
(d) [Chinese characters] (HAI, 96)
(e) [Chinese characters] (LI, 101)
(f) [Chinese characters] (ZHAO, 101)
(g) [Chinese characters] (ZHAO, 172)
(h) [Chinese characters] (LI, 183)
(i) [Chinese characters] (LI, 198)
(j) [Chinese characters] (ZHAO, 198)

2. Phase System in Chinese

(1) Completive Phase—Directional (realized by a post-verb)
(a) [Chinese characters] (HAI, 201)
(b) *IDEATIONAL AND INTERPERSONAL METAFUNCTIONAL PROFILES* (WU, 201)
(c) *IDEATIONAL AND INTERPERSONAL METAFUNCTIONAL PROFILES* (ZHAI, 201)
(d) *IDEATIONAL AND INTERPERSONAL METAFUNCTIONAL PROFILES* (HAI, 202)
(e) *IDEATIONAL AND INTERPERSONAL METAFUNCTIONAL PROFILES* (WU, 204)
(f) *IDEATIONAL AND INTERPERSONAL METAFUNCTIONAL PROFILES* (HAI, 209)
(g) *IDEATIONAL AND INTERPERSONAL METAFUNCTIONAL PROFILES* (HAI, 217)
(h) *IDEATIONAL AND INTERPERSONAL METAFUNCTIONAL PROFILES* (ZHAO, 216)
(i) *IDEATIONAL AND INTERPERSONAL METAFUNCTIONAL PROFILES* (ZHAO, 219)
(j) *IDEATIONAL AND INTERPERSONAL METAFUNCTIONAL PROFILES* (ZHAO, 219)

(2) Completive Phase—Resultative (realized by a post-verb)
(a) *IDEATIONAL AND INTERPERSONAL METAFUNCTIONAL PROFILES* (WU, 237)
(b) *IDEATIONAL AND INTERPERSONAL METAFUNCTIONAL PROFILES* (ZHAO, 237)
(c) *IDEATIONAL AND INTERPERSONAL METAFUNCTIONAL PROFILES* (HAI, 242)
(d) *IDEATIONAL AND INTERPERSONAL METAFUNCTIONAL PROFILES* (HAI, 254)
(e) *IDEATIONAL AND INTERPERSONAL METAFUNCTIONAL PROFILES* (HAI, 244)
(f) *IDEATIONAL AND INTERPERSONAL METAFUNCTIONAL PROFILES* (HAI, 250)
(g) *IDEATIONAL AND INTERPERSONAL METAFUNCTIONAL PROFILES* (ZHAO, 254)
(h) *IDEATIONAL AND INTERPERSONAL METAFUNCTIONAL PROFILES* (LI, 305)
(i) *IDEATIONAL AND INTERPERSONAL METAFUNCTIONAL PROFILES* (LI, 341)

3. Coverbal Phrases
(a) *IDEATIONAL AND INTERPERSONAL METAFUNCTIONAL PROFILES* (WU, 337)
(b) *IDEATIONAL AND INTERPERSONAL METAFUNCTIONAL PROFILES* (ZHAI, 337)
(c) *IDEATIONAL AND INTERPERSONAL METAFUNCTIONAL PROFILES* (WU, 344)
(d) *IDEATIONAL AND INTERPERSONAL METAFUNCTIONAL PROFILES* (LI, 382)
(e) *IDEATIONAL AND INTERPERSONAL METAFUNCTIONAL PROFILES* (WU, 441)
(f) *IDEATIONAL AND INTERPERSONAL METAFUNCTIONAL PROFILES* (LI, 441)
(g) *IDEATIONAL AND INTERPERSONAL METAFUNCTIONAL PROFILES* (HAI, 468)
(h) *IDEATIONAL AND INTERPERSONAL METAFUNCTIONAL PROFILES* (WU, 507)
(i) *IDEATIONAL AND INTERPERSONAL METAFUNCTIONAL PROFILES* (HAI, 559)
(j) *IDEATIONAL AND INTERPERSONAL METAFUNCTIONAL PROFILES* (LI, 559)

4. The Dispositive *ba* Construction
(a) *IDEATIONAL AND INTERPERSONAL METAFUNCTIONAL PROFILES* (WU, 562)
(b) *IDEATIONAL AND INTERPERSONAL METAFUNCTIONAL PROFILES* (LI, 562)
(c) *IDEATIONAL AND INTERPERSONAL METAFUNCTIONAL PROFILES* (WU, 565)
(d) *IDEATIONAL AND INTERPERSONAL METAFUNCTIONAL PROFILES* (HAI, 627)
(e) *IDEATIONAL AND INTERPERSONAL METAFUNCTIONAL PROFILES* (WU, 642)
(f) *IDEATIONAL AND INTERPERSONAL METAFUNCTIONAL PROFILES* (HAI, 646)
(g) *IDEATIONAL AND INTERPERSONAL METAFUNCTIONAL PROFILES* (WU, 646)
5. Circumstance Before Processes

(a) (HAI, 1231)
(b) (WU, 1231)
(c) (HAI, 1249)
(d) (HAI, 756)
(e) (HAI, 757)
(f) (WU, 757)
(g) (HAI, 762)
(h) (WU, 762)
(i) (WU, 770)
(j) (HAI, 820)

6. Serial Verbal Constructions

(a) (HAI, 169)
(b) (HAI, 183)
(c) (HAI, 262)
(d) (WU, 312)
(e) (WU, 417)
(f) (HAI, 448)
(g) (WU, 448)
(h) (LI, 454)
(i) (ZHAO, 540)
(j) (HAI, 644)