

The Study of the Protagonist's Image in Namak Ka Daroga under the Theory of Interpersonal Grammatical Metaphor

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Abstract: Grammatical metaphor, proposed by the founder of Systemic Functional Grammar, Michael Halliday, can be applied to the deconstruction of various discourses. Among its components, interpersonal metaphor plays a significant role and consists of two main parts: mood metaphor and modality metaphor. This paper, based on Halliday's theory of grammatical metaphor, explores the mood and modality metaphors embedded in the conversations of three characters in Namak Ka Daroga (The Salt Inspector). The application of interpersonal metaphors has played a crucial role in characterizing the personalities and traits of the characters, offering a new perspective for the analysis of this work.

Keywords: Interpersonal grammatical metaphor; Mood metaphor; Modality metaphor; Namak Ka Daroga

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1. Introduction

Metaphor is an important way for people to understand the world. In the traditional sense, metaphor refers to the transformation of lexical meanings, where the same "signifier" is used to represent different "signifieds." The earliest studies on metaphor were initiated by the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle in his works *Rhetoric* and *Poetics*. Over the past 2,000 years, metaphor research has always been a hot topic among scholars in the East and West. Since the 1960s, interdisciplinary research on metaphor has gained momentum in Western academia. Cognitive linguistics, for example, posits that metaphor involves a structural mapping from one conceptual domain to another. However, both classical metaphor studies and modern interdisciplinary research on metaphor have remained confined to the lexical level, without addressing the grammatical level. Systemic Functional Linguist Michael Halliday proposed the study of metaphor from a grammatical perspective, introducing the concept of "grammatical metaphor" in his *Introduction to Functional Grammar*. Research shows that the theory of grammatical metaphor not only has important theoretical significance, but can also be applied to deconstruct various language texts. Grammatical metaphor has become an important theory of discourse analysis.

2. Interpersonal Grammatical Metaphor

Halliday argues that grammatical metaphor is a phenomenon in contrast to lexical metaphor.^[1] Grammatical metaphor does not mean replacing one word with another, but replacing one grammatical category or structure with another, without changing the meaning. Grammatical metaphor can be divided into conceptual grammatical metaphor and interpersonal grammatical metaphor. Interpersonal grammatical metaphor is one of the effective tools for realizing the interpersonal function of language.^[2] The interpersonal function of language refers to the capacity of language not only to express the speaker's personal experiences and inner activities but also to

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convey the speaker's identity, social status, attitudes, motivations, and inferences, judgments, and evaluations of various things. In other words, language is used to interact with others, establish interpersonal relationships, and simultaneously express one's views on both the external world and inner thoughts, even influencing others' opinions and actions. Mood metaphor is an important part of interpersonal grammatical metaphor.

Systemic Functional Linguistics posits that the fundamental task in interpersonal communication is the exchange between the speaker and the listener, which primarily involves giving and demanding. The objects of communication in this exchange are goods/services and information. These communicative roles and the exchanged goods form the basis for the four fundamental functions of language: command, statement, question, and offer. Typically, each language function is realized by a corresponding mood: statements are realized by the declarative mood, questions by the interrogative mood, and commands by the imperative mood. Offers, however, can be realized by various moods. This one-to-one correspondence between language functions and tone forms is called concord, but in actual language communication, the two are not always one-to-one. Sometimes a language function can be expressed in several tones, and a tone can also express different language functions. This phenomenon, where language function and mood form do not align in a one-to-one relationship, is referred to as mood metaphor.

3. Interpersonal Metaphor in the Dialogue of Characters in *Namak Ka Daroga*

Premchand is a modern Indian realist writer. In the Indian Hindi literary world, he is revered not only as the “king of novels” but also as the “king of short stories.”^[3] He pioneered the path of critical realism in novel writing, with his works addressing various aspects of Indian real life. Premchand excelled in creating vivid character portrayals and employed artistic techniques such as contrast and exaggeration. Scholars both in India and abroad have often studied his short stories from the perspectives of thematic concerns and artistic techniques. However, few have analyzed the short stories from the perspective of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL).

Namak Ka Daroga is one of Premchand's most representative short stories. The narrative depicts the conscientious salt inspector, Munshi Vanshidhar, who uncovers the deceitful Brahmin Pandit Alopideen's attempt to smuggle salt. Alopideen offers an increasing amount of bribe to buy off Vanshidhar, but the inspector remains steadfast, arresting him. However, when the case goes to court, Vanshidhar loses because the key witness is bribed by Alopideen, leading to Vanshidhar's dismissal. In the end, Alopideen, taking advantage of Vanshidhar's loyalty, hires him as the lifelong manager of his property. In this story, interpersonal metaphors play a significant role in shaping character interactions and highlighting the moral dilemmas each character faces. The brilliance of *Namak Ka Daroga* lies in the use of numerous interpersonal grammatical metaphors in the dialogue of its main characters. Analyzing the characters' dialogues from the perspective of interpersonal grammatical metaphor helps us better understand the personalities and complexities of the characters in the novel.

As mentioned above, mood metaphor reflects the complex relationship between speech functions and moods. Sometimes, a single language function can be realized through multiple moods, while at other times, a single mood can express different language functions. It is important to note that the type and number of speech functions realized by each mood are not always the same.

(1) Declarative mood metaphor

In the dialogue of characters, compared to sentences reflecting other speech functions through various moods, declarative sentences realizing the command function are more prevalent. For example, when Munshi Vanshidhar is preparing to look for a job, his father wants him to find one that offers extra income. However, rather than directly expressing this desire, his father initially uses a more persuasive approach, subtly guiding Vanshidhar toward finding a job with additional earnings.

"My son, you are aware of the wretched condition of our family; we have run heavily into debt, the girls are growing up fast": I am just like a tree on the bank of a river in flood, and don't know when I am going to fall; so now you must be the head and manager of the family.....Monthly pay is like the full moon which appears for one day only and then gradually disappears. The 'perks' are a running stream, from which thirst is always quenched. Monthly pay is given by a human agent, and that is why, it is never in abundance, while the other income is obtained from a superhuman source, and so is abundant.^[4]

In the dialogue, the father uses declarative mood metaphor to express his desire for his son, Munshi Vanshidhar, to find a job with extra income. The intended speech function is a command, which in its congruent form would be expressed in the imperative mood as "Find a job with extra income."^[4] On the surface, the father uses a series of declarative sentences to inform Vanshidhar that the family is in debt, the children need to be supported, and he is getting old, so the heavy responsibilities of the household must be shouldered by Vanshidhar. In reality, the father is subtly conveying that the family's various expenses require a large amount of money. Building on this, he then delves deeper into the topic—because a lot of money is needed, one cannot settle for a job without extra income. A regular salary is fixed, but extra income is continuous. Through this series of declarative sentences, the father is essentially guiding Vanshidhar to make a decision that aligns with his own viewpoint, which is to find a job that offers extra income.

For example, when the father talks about the importance of understanding people's intentions, he says, "It is beneficial to be strict with selfish people, but it is difficult to deal with those who are not selfish".^[4] Here, the father's use of declarative mood metaphor expresses the speech function of a command. The congruent expression of this would be in the imperative mood: "Do not be so strict with selfish people".^[4]

Having accumulated much social experience, the father understands that everyone has some degree of selfishness. By being a bit harsh with selfish individuals in the workplace, one can gain "extra income." However, being too harsh can backfire, leading to retaliation from these selfish individuals and putting oneself in a dangerous position. These two points are the father's requirements for Vanshidhar, yet he uses declarative sentences instead of imperative mood to express these commands. This indirect expression of his demands makes them more tactful and avoids the potential awkwardness or unpleasantness of direct orders. It helps to bridge the psychological distance between father and son and further reinforces the reasonableness and acceptability of his requests. This dialogue portrays the father as a shrewd, cautious, and well-spoken individual, shaped by the historical and social context of India at the time, who seeks wealth and employs sophisticated rhetorical strategies in his speech.

When Alopideen, the Brahmin, came to Munshi Vanshidhar's house after his dismissal, he insincerely praised Vanshidhar in front of his father for being willing to sacrifice everything for his career. Upon hearing this, Vanshidhar was deeply moved, and his previous anger towards Alopideen disappeared, replaced by shame and embarrassment. He then voluntarily said, "Whatever order you give, I will obey without question".

From the context, we know that Alopideen had merely praised Vanshidhar for his dedication to his work and asked whether he could make some requests, without giving him any direct commands. However, when we look at what follows—Alopideen's request for Vanshidhar to manage his lifelong property—we realize that Vanshidhar's statement, while phrased in the declarative future tense, actually functions as a question. His real intention was to ask Alopideen if there were any specific orders or instructions. Therefore, this declarative sentence actually serves the speech function of a question. The congruent form would be in the interrogative mood: "Do you have any orders? I will obey without hesitation!"^[4]

By using the declarative sentence, Vanshidhar is not providing information but is using the statement to inquire indirectly, while simultaneously expressing his willingness to fulfill any request Alopideen might have. This method of expression strengthens Vanshidhar's point and enhances the tone of his words, further expressing his trust and sense of alignment with Alopideen.

From the context, it is clear that Vanshidhar is portrayed as a kind, naive, and unassuming young man who does not hold grudges, reflecting his innocence and lack of worldly experience.

(2) Interrogative mood metaphor

In the dialogue of the novel, sentences where the interrogative mood functions to express a declarative meaning are also quite common, and most of these sentences are spoken by the Brahmin Alopideen. He first uses the interrogative mood when he is stopped by the young salt inspector, Vanshidhar, who prevents him from smuggling salt. In this instance, knowing the reason, he pretends to ask, "What crime have I committed that you stopped the carts?"

The second time he uses the interrogative mood is when the honest salt inspector explains that he is executing the government's order to ban the smuggling of salt. Alopideen then feigns intimacy and asks, "Could we ever be strangers to you?"

These two sentences, though in the interrogative mood, actually function to express a negative declarative meaning. The congruent form of these sentences in the declarative mood would be: "I haven't committed any crime; you cannot stop the carts." And "We are not strangers to you".^[4]

When Alopideen first learns that his carts have been stopped by Vanshidhar, he pretends to be confused and uses these interrogative sentences to question Vanshidhar, not seeking an actual answer but rather to express his innocence in an attempt to avoid the situation. Because he is questioning, the tone is somewhat harsh. However, when he realizes that Vanshidhar is not fooled, he changes his approach. He softens his tone, pretending to be friendly and intimate with Vanshidhar, saying that they are not strangers and that family matters should be resolved within the family, not escalated to the government. By using the question strategy, he emphasizes the closeness of their relationship, hoping that Vanshidhar will show leniency and allow the carts to pass.

This use of interrogative mood as a metaphor serves to ease the awkwardness, bringing the psychological distance between the two characters closer, and helps Alopideen subtly influence Vanshidhar's thinking, with the ultimate goal of persuading him to release the carts. Through these two interrogative sentences, the image of Alopideen as cunning, hypocritical, and opportunistic becomes vividly clear.

The interrogative mood not only expresses declarative functions but can also convey imperative functions. For example, when the salt inspector Vanshidhar first discovers the smuggling of salt, he does not yet know what goods are being transported, and his subordinates remain silent. He then loudly inquires, "Have you all gone deaf? I am asking, what is loaded in these carts?"^[4] Here, Vanshidhar is not genuinely asking a question but rather using the interrogative to express a command. The congruent form in the imperative would be: "Tell me! What is loaded in these carts?"^[4] By using the interrogative form instead of directly issuing an imperative, Vanshidhar intensifies the force of his words. The tone reflects his frustration at the lack of response from his subordinates. This use of interrogative mood as a metaphor for the imperative highlights Vanshidhar's anger and his desire for an immediate answer.

In addition to the image of Vanshidhar as an authoritative figure, this sentence also reveals his responsible and professional character. When faced with suspicious circumstances at work, he does not turn a blind eye or ignore the situation. Instead, he is portrayed as a dedicated, straightforward, strict, and upright individual who takes his duties seriously.

(3) Imperative mood metaphor

The use of imperative mood metaphor is less frequent in *Namak Ka Daroga*, and appears primarily in instances where imperative mood expresses a questioning function. After Munshi Vanshidhar is dismissed, Pandit Alopideen, recognizing his good character, decides to recruit him. He goes to Vanshidhar's home, initially adopting a humble

attitude, praising Vanshidhar for his selfless dedication to his job, and expressing admiration for his noble character. Then, he uses the imperative mood in the sentence: "Please give me permission to make a request of you!"

If we take Alopideen's sentence as a direct imperative, it contradicts his previous praise of Vanshidhar. How can he first commend someone and then suddenly start issuing orders? Therefore, the imperative mood here functions as a question, and the consistent form would be: "May I make a request of you?"^[4] While a normal interrogative could express the same meaning, it lacks the same impact. The effect of the imperative mood, which gives the illusion of a command, is much stronger. When the listener realizes that the speaker is actually making a request and not giving an order, this creates a psychological surprise, a sense of guilt on the part of the listener, and a shock from the misunderstanding of the speaker's intent.

With this brief sentence, Alopideen manages to break down Vanshidhar's psychological defenses, making him "forget all his resentment." This is a perfect example of Alopideen's hypocrisy and cunning, demonstrating his ability to exploit others' integrity and his sophisticated rhetorical skills.

4. Conclusion

This article, based on functional linguistics, analyzes the mood and modality metaphors in the dialogues of Namak Ka Daroga from the perspective of interpersonal grammatical metaphor. The study finds that in real-life language use, speakers choose different linguistic forms to achieve specific goals, making their expressions more suitable for the characteristics and personalities of the characters. For example, the father is portrayed as someone who pursues wealth, is smooth in his dealings, meticulous in his thinking, clear in his reasoning, and skilled in rhetoric; Vanshidhar is kind-hearted, straightforward, innocent, and devoted to his duties, but also serious and upright; Alopideen, on the other hand, is cunning, hypocritical, opportunistic, deceitful, shrewd, and manipulative.

In literary discourse, the application of grammatical metaphor helps us better understand the themes of the novel and the interpersonal significance of character dialogues. It provides a new perspective for appreciating the novel and, at the same time, deepens our understanding of functional linguistics and grammatical metaphors.

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