

A Study of the English Translation of Positive Emotions from the Perspective of Conceptual Metaphor

Xiaodong Wang*, Xueling Wei

School of Foreign Languages, Central South University, Changsha 410083, Hunan Province, China

*Corresponding author: Xiaodong Wang, wangxiaodong@csu.edu.cn

Copyright: © 2023 Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY 4.0), permitting distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is cited.

Abstract: Emotion is a complex and abstract experience shared by human beings, but it is often expressed in the form of conceptual metaphor which is pervasive in the concrete language. Drawing upon the theory of conceptual metaphor and emotion metaphors, this paper aims to study the translation of positive emotions in David Hawkes' version of *The Story of the Stone* and the related daily expressions as the corpus. According to the theories, this paper categorizes the positive emotions metaphors into body metaphors, sensory metaphors, entity metaphors, and orientational metaphors to discuss the process of English translation and the metaphorical mechanism, analyzes the similarities and differences between Chinese and English expressions of positive emotions and their cultural, physiological, and psychological motives, and lastly attempts to summarize the translation strategies of emotional expressions. The analysis of metaphorical mechanisms reveals that the common physiological and psychological experiences of human beings and cultural exchanges give rise to similarities, while the unique cultural environments, antecedents, and historical development of each nation give rise to their distinctiveness. This paper concludes that translators need to make full use of their subjectivity, understand the surface and underlying meaning of the text, and establish a high level of mental compatibility between themselves, the readers, and the author.

Keywords: Conceptual metaphor; Positive emotions; Translation of emotions

Online publication: October 19, 2023

1. Introduction

Based on Lakoff's Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Kövecses' Theory of Emotion Metaphors, this paper categorizes positive emotion metaphors into body metaphors, sensory metaphors, entity metaphors, and orientational metaphors. Positive emotions are accompanied by a series of physiological changes in the human body, and such physiological changes will enhance the experience of emotions. Besides, in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, physiology is also the most basic needs. It proves the importance of the human body's physiology in positive emotions, and can even have a direct impact on Chinese characters. In the beginning, people depict positive emotions from the parts of the human body or physiological changes involved in positive emotions, thus forming the body metaphors of positive emotion expressions, such as the metaphor of "the human face is a blooming flower" implied in the Chinese idiom "喜笑颜开" (*xixiaoyankai*, which means beaming with

pleasure), and “heart” and “bosom” in Chinese are often abstracted as emotional containers or emotional carriers to express positive emotions. Sensory metaphors originate from the sensory experience generated by specific body parts. The modification of inner emotions by specific sensory experiences is in line with the mapping relation, from concrete to abstract, in conceptual metaphors, such as the visual metaphor of “positive emotions are bright,” the gustatory metaphor of “positive emotions are sweet,” and so on. Entities as the source domain are also used in positive emotion expressions, such as animals and substances in containers, thus forming entity metaphors, such as the Chinese character “雀” (*que*, which means lark) in “欢呼雀跃” (*huanhuqueyue*, which means jubilant). Positive emotions are often associated with an upward orientation, such as “情绪高涨” (*qingxugaozhang*, which means be in high spirits), and one presents an upward and open posture when they are in a positive state. Under this classification, this paper analyzes the translation process and its metaphorical mechanism of positive emotion expressions from specific corpus, and explores the commonality and individuality of positive emotion expressions between English and Chinese, and their reasons to reveal the culture, psychology, and tradition behind the language of emotion, and lastly summarizes the strategies of emotion translation to correctly deal with cultural differences of emotion expressions.

2. Literature review

2.1. Foreign research status

Human emotion is the object of many disciplines. In foreign countries, the research on emotion has achieved certain results in the fields of philosophy, psychology, linguistics, translation, and computer science.

In the field of philosophy, the early research on emotion began with Plato and Aristotle, who are the founders of emotional rationality. Aristotle was the earliest to define “emotion” as a general concept, a type of movement, excitement, or impulse that causes a sense of pain, with the meaning of “disease of the mind,” which implies what psychology later called “mood and passion”^[1]. After Baumgarten-Tramer’s conversion of emotion from the aesthetic sense of touch into a word for sensory perception in clear opposition to the sense of reason^[2], Kant used it as a philosophical concept. Since then, humanistic thinking emerged, starting in the middle of the 19th century and developing in the 20th century, which took human beings as the central question of philosophy, emphasizing that the most fundamental things in human beings are human emotions and desires. Humanistic thinking provided sufficient justification for the rise of emotional linguistics later.

In the field of psychology, a series of concepts and categories have been generated in the process of emotion research. William James, the father of American psychology, and Carl Lange, a Danish physiologist, put forward the Peripheral Theory of Emotion. Cannon and Bard put forward Cannon-Bard Theory of Emotion. With the development of modern science, especially the latest results of neuropsychology and brain anatomy, new background information has been provided for the exploration of human emotions. Arnold’s Excitatory Emotion Theory, Fritz Heider’s Attribution Theory, and Schachter and Singer’s emotional state, all emphasize the cognitive factor in emotion. In this way, the exploration of emotion at the entry point of psychological and cognitive factors has put it on a truly scientific path^[3].

In the field of linguistics, people study emotion from speech behavior, cognitive perspective, and so on, and later form emotional linguistics. The Swiss linguist Bally, the founder of modern rhetoric, declared in his *Traité de Stylistique Française* (1909) that his rhetoric aimed to study the emotional content of speech acts^[4], that is, the linguistic manifestations of emotional activity and the role of the relevant linguistic facts in the emotional response. As a student of Saussure, Bally was interested in compensating for Saussure’s overemphasis on the rational role of language at the expense of its emotional role, arguing that language expresses both meaning and emotion. The British linguist Geoffrey Leech, in his book *Semantics*, categorized meaning into seven types,

one of which is “emotional meaning.” He believed that in the process of communication, human beings can easily take into account how language reflects the speaker’s personal feelings, including his attitude towards the listener and the contents he talks about. The publication of Lakoff and Johnson’s *Metaphors We Live By* in 1980 marked the beginning of the study of emotion from a cognitive perspective^[5]. The official introduction of the term “emotional linguistics” by Russian linguist V.I. Shakhovsky marked its formalization, which has gone through four main stages of development:

- (1) From the beginning of the 20th century to the 1950s, this was the budding stage of emotional linguistics, and its research was intertwined with that of grammar.
- (2) From the 1960s to the 1970s, this was the beginning stage of emotional linguistics, which was mainly concerned with the meaning of emotions.
- (3) From the 1980s to the mid-1990s, this was the formative stage of emotional linguistics, in which research was dominated by emotion metaphors and functional semantics.
- (4) From the end of the 20th century to the beginning of the 21st century, this was the vigorous development stage of emotional linguistics, the main research objects are emotion concepts, emotional discourse, and so on.

In the field of translation, Murry once pointed out that “there is no pure transmission of ideas in literature, but there is always an expression of emotions”^[6]. Additionally, Solomon said that “what we are to translate is not essentially a word, but a whole culture, and we can explore how an emotion fits into a systematic worldview, a language, and a particular social life”^[7].

In the field of computer science, Professor Picard has achieved some research results in emotion recognition in emotional computing. In the field of computer natural language processing, Dan Jurafsky and Chris Manning have also begun to study emotional analysis.

1.2. Domestic research status

Domestic philosophical and theoretical research on emotion provides ideological and theoretical guidance for the study of culture behind the emotions.

From the cultural and linguistic point of view, Liu Xie emphasized the importance of “emotion” for the context in “Emotion and Literary Expression” of *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*. Domestic research on emotional linguistics is at the level of vocabulary. For example, with the help of the theory of modern Chinese lexical construction, the composition of emotional words was analyzed in terms of subject-predicate and verb-object, partial form, and verb-complement, etc.^[8], or under the guidance of modern lexical semantics and psychology theories, the systematic comparison and research has been carried out on the synonymous elements and compounds of emotional expressions in the commonly used words^[9]. Other scholars compare Chinese and English emotional vocabularies from the perspective of cognitive linguistics, in order to explore the similarities and differences between Chinese and English cognitive metaphorical mechanisms. Liu introduces us to the fruitful results of Russian “emotional linguistics”^[10], which brings inspiration to the research of domestic emotional linguistics.

For the study of emotional expressions’ translation, Ma put forward the idea of “perfect translation” in the late Qing Dynasty^[11], emphasizing the problem of the translation of emotions. Lu Xun put forward the theory of “beauty in sound, beauty in form, and beauty in sense” when discussing articles, which conveys that the “beauty in sense” requires the transmission of feelings and emotions. When Liu discussed the translator’s orientation reference system, he took emotion as one of the elements: “Emotional orientation is very complex, including seven emotions and six desires”^[12]. It can be said that the translation of emotions is one of the keys to literary translation.

When Weng talked about the problem of translating Chinese poems into English, he mentioned that “the translator has to experience and cultivate the poet’s feelings like an actor entering into a role to express the same feelings in another language”^[13]. Xu also mentioned in his discussion of the aesthetic level of translation that “literature also has cognitive and expressive functions, but all of them are united in the aesthetic realm and realized through the mediation of emotions”^[14]. In recent years, scholars in China have made contributions to the translation of emotions: Professor Pan Zhen mainly studied the English translation of emotions in the literary corpus from the perspective of cognitive linguistics; Bao selected four basic emotions and verified the general applicability of the theory on the conceptualization of emotion and its linguistic expression derived from the English corpus through the English-Chinese comparative study^[15]. Other scholars analyzed the English translation of emotions from the perspective of interdisciplinary research combining translation theories and psychology^[16].

Foreign countries started earlier in the study of emotions in language. Russia has achieved fruitful results in emotional linguistics, but China has not paid enough attention to emotional linguistics, and there is still a lot of space for its research. Foreign countries mainly study emotional language from the perspective of speech behavior and cognition, and in recent years, China has also studied emotional vocabulary from the perspective of cognition, but it is not systematic. Plus, the comparative studies of emotion metaphors in China and abroad are mostly of a wholesale category in Chinese and English, without summarizing the types of metaphors, and little attention is paid to the cultural differences between Chinese and foreign emotions, and the contexts containing the emotions, etc. Therefore, this paper will study the positive emotions from four categories: body metaphors, sensory metaphors, entity metaphors, and orientational metaphors, and attempt to analyze the cultural motives for the differences and similarities between English and Chinese, and then discuss the implications for the strategies of the translation of emotions.

3. Research methodology

Under Lakoff’s Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Kövecses’ Emotion Metaphor Theory, this paper will analyze the process of translating positive emotion metaphors from a specific corpus, and mainly adopt synchronic study rich in variety of origin domains, which can be roughly divided into body metaphors (with the face, organs, and other parts of the human body as the origin domains), sensory metaphors (with the temperature, light, color, etc., as the origin domains), entity metaphors (with containers, animals, etc., as the origin domains), and orientational metaphors (with space and direction as the origin domains). It also explores the similarities and differences in the expression of positive emotions between English and Chinese, and the cultural and historical factors behind them. Cultural differences lead to the use of different cognitive metaphors by different ethnic groups, which further leads to differences in the form of linguistic expressions. Lastly, it summarizes the translation strategies for the English translation of emotions.

This paper mainly selects the dead metaphors in *The Story of the Stone*, one of the four famous Chinese novels, and Hawkes’ English translation as the corpus, which are commonly used stereotyped metaphors in daily life, in addition to the classic positive emotion expressions based on personal experience, with four main considerations: firstly, *The Story of the Stone* has a large amount of typical expressions of emotions, which are rich in facial expressions, gestures, and feelings; secondly, *The Story of the Stone* is an encyclopedia of Chinese language and art, and the language has not been influenced by Europeanization, thus it can achieve the purpose of analyzing the Chinese history and culture as well as the physiological and psychological aspects related to emotions, and enhance the accuracy of the study; thirdly, the English translation of Hawkes has been highly evaluated, and the translation takes into consideration of the audience by adopting the emotion expressions of native English speakers, which is

conducive to the analysis of different Chinese and Western metaphorical mechanisms of the same kind of emotion expression; fourthly, the death metaphor is helpful for more accurate and reasonable comparative analysis of the cultural and thinking similarities and differences between the two languages.

4. Research questions and significance

This paper attempts to answer the following three questions:

- (1) How to deal with the metaphorical mechanism in the process of English-Chinese translation of positive emotions?
- (2) What are the reasons for the dissimilarities and similarities in the conceptual metaphors of positive emotions between English and Chinese?
- (3) What are the implications for the translation of emotions by studying the positive emotion metaphors?

By studying the process of the English translation of positive emotions, the similarities and differences of English-Chinese positive emotion metaphors and the reasons for them, as well as the translation strategies of emotion expressions are discussed. Firstly, we can deepen the analysis of positive emotions in our country; secondly, we can analyze the cultural motives behind it and deepen the mutual understanding between the two cultures, which will help to reduce the friction in emotion expressions, communicate better, and assist the construction of our country's international discourse capacity; lastly, this paper is conducive to language learners to learn the expressions of emotions in English, which can assist the learning of translation of emotional expressions and improve the transmission accuracy of emotion and attitudes in translation.

5. English translation analysis of positive emotion metaphors

Positive emotions are pursued by all countries and nations, especially in China. From the perspective of cultural psychology, due to the relatively mild geographic environment, the ancient Chinese people showed optimistic attitudes towards natural forces, which formed the unique "joyful culture" of the Chinese people in the long run^[17]. Unlike the Western "sin culture," it guides the Chinese people to pursue a positive life and cultivates an attitude of optimism and self-improvement. In this paper, we categorize the metaphorical mechanisms commonly used to express positive emotions into body metaphors, sensory metaphors, entity metaphors, and orientational metaphors, and discuss the process of their translation, the similarities and differences between the English and Chinese metaphors, and the cultural motivations.

5.1. Body metaphors

When people are in a state of positive emotion, it is usually manifested on the face, such as the color of the face, the eyes, the eyebrows, and so on, and these physiological effects are often used to describe positive emotion. In Chinese, red color is often used to describe changes in facial color due to excitement, because when people feel joy, shyness, or anger, their blood circulation increases and their body temperature rises, which is directly manifested as a reddening of the face. However, there is a difference between the reddening of the cheeks in the case of joy or shyness and the cheeks reddening in the case of anger. In short, facial redness is a physiological phenomenon extended to the conceptual metaphor of emotions, while in English, it generally uses brightness rather than color to describe positive emotions. Chinese puts emphasis on the shape of the eyebrows. In ancient Chinese culture, eyebrows are the first of the five senses, symbolizing health and lifespan in physiognomy. Women also emphasized the importance of eyebrow painting, which was prevalent. However, the eyebrows are less frequently depicted in the expression of emotions in English and the overall depiction of the face or

the brightness of the eyes is generally emphasized, in which the brightness and color are also involved in the sensory metaphors. In addition, the ear is mentioned when describing positive emotions in English, while in Chinese, it is hardly mentioned, and usually describes the shape of the mouth. **Table 1** shows the first example.

Table 1. Example 1

Source text ^[18]	Target text ^[19]
“只见满院里丫头老婆都是笑容满面” (page 1224)	“...their loyal <u>faces</u> beaming with pleasure and excitement.” (page 127)
“宝玉听说，喜的眉开眼笑，忙说道：‘刘姥姥有年纪的人，一时错记了也是有的。’” (page 589)	“Bao-yu’s <u>face</u> beamed with pleasure.” (page 59)
“贾蓉喜得眉开眼笑，忙说：‘我亲自带了人拿去，别由他们乱碰。’” (page 236)	“Jia Rong’s <u>face</u> lit up, his <u>eyes</u> twinkled.” (page 32)

Influenced by the theory of Chinese medicine, each organ of the human body has its specific function, which is related to emotions, for example, “heart,” “bosom,” and “stomach” are often regarded as containers carrying emotions, which is also a container metaphor, and emotion is an object in the container, which belongs to entity metaphors. When the volume of the object in the container increases, it represents the amplification of the emotions, and this kind of emotion expression is often related to the character “满” (*man*, which means full) in Chinese, which embodies the amount of emotions in the container. In Chinese, positive emotions are expressed with the help of the organs and parts of the body, the examples are shown in **Table 2**.

Table 2. Example 2

Source text ^[18]
“满怀喜悦”
“宝钗一见，满心欢喜，便叫自己使的丫鬟来吩咐” (page 812)
“沁人心脾,” “沁人肺腑”
“笑破肚皮,” “捧腹大笑”

It is impossible to translate the above Chinese expressions word-for-word. We can translate “捧腹大笑” (*pengfudaxiao*) into “have somebody in stitches” in English. In addition, “heart” is often used as the source domain, for example, “my heart leaps up,” the word “heart” is also a container metaphor.

5.2. Sensory metaphors

Positive emotions are closely related to light, temperature, and color. The image of temperature, vision, and even taste is consistent with that of abstract emotions, resulting in sensory metaphors.

In terms of brightness and temperature, firstly, light and temperature nurture life so that animals can survive, plants can grow, and nature can function normally. From Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, light and temperature satisfy people’s most basic physiological needs, and they are the most basic substances necessary for generating positive emotions. Secondly, China and the West worship the sun, which has generated related myths and stories, and the Sun God is the most important god in both Chinese and Western culture. Lastly, people’s physiological manifestations of positive emotions include brightening of the face and eyes, rising body temperature, and a feeling of warmth in the heart. Therefore, these three aspects are closely related to the light or warmth metaphors of positive emotions, and “bright” and “warm” are used to express positive emotions in both Chinese and English (**Table 3**).

Table 3. Example 3

Source text ^[18]	Target text ^[19]
“心中升起暖意,”“暖心话”	warm my heart
“贾母笑容灿烂”(page 151)	“... and her face radiated pride and delight.”(page 22)
“贾蓉喜得眉开眼笑,忙说:‘我亲自带了人拿去,别由他们乱碰。’”(page 236)	“Jia Rong’s face lit up, his eyes twinkled.”(page 32)

The above sensory metaphors also contain body metaphors, such as “heart,” “eyes,” and “face,” with similar metaphorical mechanisms in English and Chinese.

Weather and seasons related to light and temperature are derived from metaphors of light or warmth, which can also cause people’s emotions to change. For example, people are in a good mood when it is sunny, and people are in a poor mood when it is cloudy. However, the imagery of “autumn” is different between China and the West as “autumn” in Chinese poetry and prose mostly represents the meaning of “sadness,” while “autumn” in English represents the meaning of “peace.”

In the process of translating color words, it is especially important to pay attention to their different meanings in different cultures. Although there are similarities in human psychology and physiology, all nationalities have different cultural backgrounds, values, and beliefs, and their feelings towards the same thing may also be different. For example, color words have their unique cultural imprints, formed in the course of their unique historical development, and have an agreed meaning. However, different people have different feelings about colors. In China, “red” represents joy and many positive words are associated with “red,” whereas in the West, “red” represents things related to blood or death. The color “blue” is more complex, with the Chinese word “blue” more often denotes “comfort,” “tolerance,” “serenity,” “tranquility,” and other positive emotions, while “blue” in English mostly means “depressed,” which is more inclined to negative emotions. With the deepening of exchanges between Chinese and Western cultures, nowadays “blue” in both Chinese and English has the meaning of “melancholy.” Different nationalities understand each other, with more and more similarities in their ways of thinking, and the metaphorical mechanisms are also converging. “White” in English mostly stands for “goodness and purity,” “integrity,” and “holiness,” while “white” in Chinese generally represents “death,” “sickness,” “horror,” “cunningness,” and “meanness,” as presented in **Table 4**.

Table 4. Example 4

Colors	Source text	Target text
Red	“大红大紫”(positive)	See red (negative)
	“碧血丹心”(positive)	Red battle (negative)
	“披红戴花”(positive)	Blue in the face (negative)
Blue	“碧空如洗”(positive)	Black and blue (negative)
	“蓝调”(negative)	Blue fear (negative)
		Blue-sky (negative)
White	“小白脸”(negative)	White lie (positive)
	“唱白脸”(negative)	White spirit (positive)
	“白眼狼”(negative)	White day (positive)
	“白色恐怖”(negative)	
	“白事”(negative)	

In the above sensory metaphors for color, Chinese is combined with body metaphors, such as “face” and “heart,” while English is less often associated with human body parts.

5.3. Entity metaphors

As mentioned above, human organs are often regarded as containers for emotions, which is a type of container metaphor. Specifically, an emotion can be regarded as a substance in a container, and in Chinese the language related to positive emotions is often paired with the characters representing the quantity of the substances, such as “充满” (*chongman*), “涌起” (*yongqi*), “一股” (*yigu*), etc., which are related to liquids. Thus, the metaphor of “positive emotion is a liquid in a container” is implied in both Chinese and English (Table 5).

Table 5. Example 5

Source text	Target text
“一股喜悦涌入他的心中”	Happiness <u>poured</u> into his heart.
“她满心欢喜”	Her heart <u>is full of</u> joy.

In addition, the container metaphor for positive emotions in Chinese and English is often used in conjunction with the word “heart,” which is also a body metaphor.

Human beings have long used the animals to represent their tribes and nations. In ancient times, tribal totems were usually animal images, and the Chinese were “the descendants of the dragon.” The symbolism of animals still exists today, and the implicit meaning of animals is often used to describe emotions today, serving as a source domain in emotion metaphors, the example is shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Example 6

Source text ^[18]	Target text ^[19]
“平儿见如此有趣，心中雀跃，……” (page 233)	“Considering the idea of cooking outdoors a great <u>lark</u> ,” (page 31)

In Chinese and English, birds, especially “lark,” are often associated with positive emotions, which shows that Chinese and Western countries and nations have similar feelings about birds, whose clear and melodious chirping sounds, like singing happily, can easily make people associate them with positive things.

There are also differences between Chinese and English entity metaphors for positive emotions, such as the word “flower,” which generally represents positive emotions in Chinese, while “flower” in English generally represents “prosperity.” Chinese flower culture is characterized by pan-humanism, and influenced by Taoism, which believes that flowers and trees are the same living organisms as human beings, with the same joy, anger, sadness, and happiness, while Western flower culture is not as rich, and its model flower is the rose. Table 7 shows the example of the use of the word “flower.”

Table 7. Example 7

Source text ^[18]	Target text ^[19]
“贾琏听到这里，心花都开了。” (page 920)	“Jia Lian was so <u>enraptured</u> by the main part of what Jia Rong had been saying.” (page 265)

5.4. Orientational metaphors

Human perception of orientation is one of the most basic human experiences. The shape of the human body

is closely related to emotions. In a positive state, the human body is in an upward and upright posture, and in a sad state, the human body is in a downward and curled-up posture. The metaphor of orientation is also implied in the language of emotions. For example, in the word “高兴” (*gaoxing*), “高” (*gao*) and “兴” (*xing*) imply an upward orientation. More examples are presented in **Table 8**.

Table 8. Example 8

Source text ^[18]	Target text ^[19]
“宝玉又兴头起来，也打发个小丫头子家去” (page 865)	“Baoyu, <u>in high spirits</u> , sent a young maid home with the instructions,” (page 243)
“振作起来”	cheer <u>up</u> ; give somebody a <u>lift</u>
“心里轻松了许多”	feel <u>light-hearted</u>

In both English and Chinese, “positive emotion is an upward direction” is a common metaphorical mechanism. In the Chinese idiom “情绪高涨” (*qingxugaozhang*), the character “涨” (*zhang*) meaning the rise of water level also implies the metaphor of liquid in a container, which is also an entity metaphor. In addition, the orientational metaphor of “up” also includes other derived metaphors, such as “jumping” and “light,” all of which essentially contain upward force. However, there is a subtle difference between the orientational metaphors of positive emotions in Chinese and English. In English, when expressing positive emotions, we are inclined to describe the state of a person leaving the ground and being in the air, such as “walking air,” but in Chinese culture, the word “飘” (*piao*, which means float) contains the meaning of “to be complacent,” and Chinese culture advocates people to stay on the ground.

In short, both Chinese and Western cultures use the human body, sensation, entity, and orientation as the source domain to express positive emotions. By analyzing the four categories vertically, we conclude that “face,” “eye,” “light,” “warmth,” “container,” “lark,” “upward force,” etc., are the common source domains of China and the West. In addition, there are also differences between them. Internal organs are often used in Chinese such as “spleen,” “lung,” “liver,” and eyebrows as the source domains, whereas in English they do not use internal organs, but rather the face, eyes, heart, and other upper parts of the body and does not often depict the eyebrows; in China, autumn represents sadness, red is celebratory, blue is soothing, and white represents negative things, while in English autumn represents serenity, red is danger and death, blue is negative, and white is purity; for the imagery of the “flower,” in Chinese, the flower represents positive emotions, while in English, the flower represents prosperity; in English, the metaphorical mechanism of “floating upwards off the ground” is used to represent positive states, while Chinese culture believes that keeping one’s feet on the ground is a traditional Chinese virtue.

By comparing the four metaphor types horizontally, we can find that “heart” belongs to the high-frequency source domain under each metaphor type, and is a highly cognitive body part. This is because, before the emergence of modern science, the heart is regarded as the thinking organ. After all, the heart is a being that is clearly felt beating in the body, and the heartbeat also varies rhythmically according to the changes in emotions. Moreover, the heart is in the center of the body, and things in the middle of the body have had special significance since ancient times, thus the ancients attached special importance to the heart, and most of the characters related to emotions in Chinese have the radicals meaning the heart. With the progress of science and technology, people gradually realize that the brain is the organ of the mind. Therefore, the formation of the Chinese and Western body metaphors of “heart” is partly due to the fallacy of the perception of “heart.” In addition, these four metaphor types are not isolated, but integrated and in cooperation, and a positive emotion

expression may belong to more than one metaphor type at the same time.

6. Strategies for English translation of emotions

Chinese and Western emotional communication is not only the transmission of emotions themselves but also the communication of national culture behind it. To truly promote Chinese culture and thinking, we should not delete or change the words arbitrarily in translation, nor increase a tinge of westernization in its meaning. We should not only be faithful to the surface words, but also be faithful to the deep elements, such as emotions, thoughts, ideas, and so on.

Firstly, the translation of emotions should grasp the historical and cultural factors embodied in the metaphor, and master the similarities and differences between the two languages, not only to analyze the surface meaning of the language but also the deeper culture, which requires the translator to have a deep knowledge of traditional culture and profound literary cultivation. If the connection between the metaphor and the source is weak, we should avoid following the original words exactly. If we need to show the national culture, we can directly translate the relationship between the source domain and the target domain. For instance, the example in **Table 9** below.

Table 9. Example 9

Source text ^[18]	Target text ^[19]
“贾蓉喜得眉开眼笑，忙说：‘我亲自带了人拿去，别由他们乱碰。’” (page 236)	“Jia Rong’s <u>face</u> lit up, his <u>eyes</u> twinkled.” (page 32)

Since eyebrows do not have significant meaning in Western culture, the readers may not understand easily or face ambiguity if eyebrows are used in translation. Instead, we can use “face,” “brightness of the eyes,” and other common images in Western culture. Other examples are “笑破肚皮” (*xiaopodupi*) and “捧腹大笑” (*pengfudaxiao*) in Example 2, it is not possible to directly translate the “broken belly” or “holding the belly,” we usually use the more authentic expression “have somebody in stitches.”

Secondly, the translation of emotions should grasp the degree of emotions. A simple smile, a hearty smile, and a rude smile produce completely different characters in the minds of readers. The character characteristics cannot be changed or confused in translation. **Table 10** shows the examples.

Table 10. Example 10

Source text ^[18]	Target text ^[19]
“湘云只站在黛玉一边，拍手笑着说：‘宝哥哥可输了。’” (page 742)	“..., <u>a hearty laugh</u> , ...” (page 180)
“众人听了大笑起来，连邢德全也喷了一地饭。” (page 1298)	“..., including Xing, who <u>guffawed</u> so hard that he sprayed rice all over the floor” (page 233)

In this example, Hawkes used the word “hearty” to describe Xiang Yun’s laughter, which shows Xiang Yun’s simplicity, cheerfulness, and generosity, while Hawkes used the word “guffaw” to describe Xing Dequan laughing so hard that he sprayed rice all over the floor, which shows Xing Dequan’s rudeness, and the two people show different images.

Thirdly, the translation of emotions should be added with explanations in places that are easy to cause

misunderstandings, to enhance the dissemination of traditional Chinese culture. The word “醍醐” (*tihu*) in the Chinese idiom “醍醐灌顶” (*tihuguangding*) refers to pure ghee, which is a metaphor for the highest Buddha’s teachings. Hawkes’ translation includes both meanings of ghee and Buddha, as shown in **Table 11**.

Table 11. Example 11

Source text ^[18]	Target text ^[19]
“宝玉听了，如醍醐灌顶” (page 1386)	“The scriptures tell us that <u>the revelation of the Buddha truth comes ‘like ghee poured upon the head.’</u> ...” (page 316)

Translation of emotions should pay attention to aesthetic distance. For example, there are many different interpretations of the Mona Lisa’s smile, which are still inconclusive and stimulate more artistic appreciation. Whether there is fear and disgust in the smile is left to the audience’s imagination. The same applies to the translation of emotions in the original text. When there are multiple interpretations of a certain emotion, we can leave room for the reader’s imagination when translating. The example is shown below in **Table 12**.

Table 12. Example 12

Source text ^[18]	Target text ^[19]
“李纨听说，只看着尤氏笑。尤氏也只看着李纨笑” (page 1845)	“Li Wan and Madam You exchanged <u>smiles</u> at this” (page 369)

In the original text, the content of this example takes place on the second day after Mrs. Wang searched the Prospect Garden, when Xue Baochai was leaving, Li Wan and Madam You exchanged smiles at this, the meaning of which is very rich, helpless, misery, and so on. Hawkes’ translation only uses a simple smile, which is enough, and leaves room for the reader’s imagination.

In short, the translation of emotions needs to give full play to the translator’s subjectivity with an in-depth understanding of the original text, and the inner world of the author and the reader, to achieve a high degree of compatibility between the translator, the reader, and the author.

7. Conclusion

Based on the conceptual metaphor theory, this paper mainly analyzes the process of translating positive emotions in body metaphors, sensory metaphors, entity metaphors, and orientational metaphors, the similarities and differences in the expression of positive emotions between English and Chinese and the cultural motives, and lastly discusses the translation strategies for translating emotions into English. The “heart” in the body metaphor belongs to high cognitive body parts in both English and Chinese, and it is used frequently. There are also differences between English and Chinese, such as “eyebrow,” “lung,” and “liver,” etc., in Chinese and “ear” in English. The metaphors of temperature and light are similar in sensory metaphors in both English and Chinese, but there is a big difference between English and Chinese in terms of color. In entity metaphors, the English translations of container metaphors, animal metaphors, and flower metaphors are analyzed, in which the human body is treated as a container and emotions are the substances in the container. The image “lark” represents positive emotions, but “flower” in English represents prosperity instead of positive emotions. In the orientational metaphors, there is the same metaphorical mechanism of “positive emotions are upward direction” in Chinese and English. The common physiological and psychological experience of human beings and

cultural exchanges lead to the commonality of metaphorical mechanisms, and the unique cultural atmosphere, background, and historical development of each nation lead to the individuality of metaphorical mechanisms, such as “traditional Chinese medicine,” “physiognomy,” and so on. Lastly, the translation strategy of emotions is discussed, i.e., giving full play to the translator’s subjectivity, grasping the surface and deep meaning of the text, and achieving a high degree of compatibility between the translator, the reader, and the author. However, this paper still has limitations, such as the classification of metaphors is not fully comprehensive, and the Chinese and Western cultures behind positive emotions are not deeply explored.

Funding

- (1) “Comparative Study of the Cultivation of Chinese-English Translation Ability in China Mainland, Hong Kong SAR, and China Taiwan” of Hunan Provincial Philosophy and Social Science Foundation (Project number: 18JD71)
- (2) “Research on Xi Jinping’s Overseas Signed Articles Based on Comparable Corpus” of Hunan Provincial Philosophy and Social Science Foundation (Project number: 21YBA016)
- (3) “A Practical Exploration of Translation Theory Talents in Universities Based on Enterprise Training” of Industry-Academy Cooperative Educational Project of Ministry of Education in 2023

Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References

- [1] Schmitz L, 1976, Embodiment and Situation: Charles Taylor’s Hegel. *The Journal of Philosophy* 73(19): 710–723.
- [2] Baumgarten-Tramer F, 1950, “Gratefulness” in Children and Young People. *Journal of Genetic Psychology*, 1950(53): 53–66.
- [3] Eysenck HJ, 1983, *I Do: Your Guide to a Happy Marriage*, Century, London.
- [4] Bally C, 1909, *Traité de Stylistique Française*, C. Winter, Heidelberg, 16.
- [5] Lakoff G, Johnson M, 1980, *Metaphors We Live By*, University of Chicago Publisher, Chicago.
- [6] Murry J, 1922, *The Problem of Style*, OUP, Oxford.
- [7] Solomon R, 1995, The Cross-Cultural Comparison of Emotion, in *Emotions in Asian Thought: A Dialogue in Comparative Philosophy*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 253–308.
- [8] Cao Y, 2007, The Composition of Emotional Narrative Phrases in The Story of the Stone. *Studies on “A Dream of Red Mansions,”* 2007(02): 203–222.
- [9] Li Y, 2009, *The Study of Emotional Category Synomorphemes in Parallel Compounds*, dissertation, Jilin University.
- [10] Liu J, 2009, Emotional Linguistics in Russia. *Social Sciences Abroad* 2009(02): 34–39.
- [11] Ma J, 2009, Proposed Establishment of Translation Academy, in *Translation Essay Collection (Revised)*, Commercial Press, Beijing.
- [12] Liu M, 1987, On the Skill Consciousness of Translation. *Chinese Translators Journal*, 1987(05): 7–11.
- [13] Weng X, 1982, Imagery and Sound Rhythm–Talking About Poetry Translation. *Chinese Translators Journal*, 1982(06): 34–38.
- [14] Xu J, 2003, Creative Treason and the Establishment of Translational Subjectivity. *Chinese Translators Journal*, 2003(01): 8–13.

- [15] Bao Z, 2003, A Contrastive Study of the Linguistic Expression of Emotions Between English and Chinese, dissertation, Fudan University.
- [16] Shang C, Leng H, 2021, An Emotion-Focused Analysis of the English Translated Diplomatic Discourse from the Perspective of Emotional Intelligence. *Journal of Qiqihar University (Philosophy & Social Science Edition)*, 2021(02): 142–145 + 149.
- [17] Lin W, 2009, Mythological Interpretation of “Culture of Joy” and “Culture of Sin.” *Social Science Research*, 2009(06): 183–187.
- [18] Cao X, Gao E, 1979, *The Story of the Stone*, People’s Literature Publishing House, Beijing.
- [19] Hawkes D, Minford J, 1973, *The Story of the Stone (Vol. II)*, Penguin Publishing Group, London.

Publisher’s note

Bio-Byword Scientific Publishing remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.