Communication and Conflict: Interpersonal Metaphor in the Movie *Carnage*

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Abstract

Interpersonal metaphor, as one constituent of grammatical metaphor in systemic-functional grammar, is mainly represented by metaphor of mood and metaphor of modality. The language of the movie *Carnage* is abound with interpersonal metaphors in diverse context of "communication" and "conflict" respectively. By summarizing the application of two types of interpersonal metaphor in specific contexts of "communication" and "conflict", interlocutors' purposes of using interpersonal metaphor in communicating with others and the communicative effects they intend to achieve can be analyzed to further reveal the functions of interpersonal metaphor and contribute to people's better understanding of the art of language.

Keywords: *Carnage*, communication and conflict, interpersonal metaphor, metaphor of mood, metaphor of modality

1. Introduction

The movie *Carnage* directed by Roman Polanski tells the story of two married couples in a luxurious Manhattan condo to deal with a fight between their sons, as afternoon fades into evening. The "perpetrator" Zachary's parents Nancy and Alan go to visit victim Ethan's parents Penelope and Michael, with whom they have a talk about the solutions to the fight. This part of sharing their ideas and experiences can be called "communication". Although the meeting starts civilized, it rapidly disintegrates after a series of catalysts including Nancy's vomiting, their dissension about the hamster, Alan's constant phone calls and a bottle of whisky they drink, they all get out of control, which marks a new stage of their talking which is called "conflict". They forget their actual purpose to come together and accuse each other in the most direct language. As a result, the language they use changes according to the contexts.

In communication, interpersonal metaphor "organizes discourse in a way that conforms to the interpersonal intention of discourse by regulating the appropriate assignment of grammatical resources" (Miao, 2004). The movie *Carnage* is a good example of applying interpersonal metaphor in daily communication. A systematic analysis of four main characters' dialogues in this movie can be of great help for people to get familiar with the art of speaking and the effective ways to communicate with others. With a description of the distinctive features of two different contexts of "communication" and "conflict" in the movie and a functional analysis of interpersonal metaphor in two contexts,, the functions of interpersonal metaphor can be revealed.

2. Interpersonal Metaphor and Its Classification

In *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*, Halliday explains metaphor from the perspective of how meaning is expressed. He defines grammatical metaphor as the use of different wordings to express the same meaning. Among all these different wordings, only one is congruent and others are metaphorical wordings (Halliday, 2004). Therefore, there are congruent form and metaphorical form of a given meaning. Halliday further classifies grammatical metaphor into ideational metaphor and interpersonal metaphor. To build and maintain interpersonal relationships, people use metaphorical wordings to communicate with others, express their subjective judgments or evaluations of things and events, or change other people's views (Halliday, 2004). And this kind of interpersonal matafunction is expressed by mood and modality. Consequently, interpersonal metaphor can be further divided into metaphor of mood and metaphor of modality.

2.1 Metaphor of Mood

Mood is used by people to indicate their attitudes and achieve interpersonal purposes when communicating with others (Chang, 2001, p. 7). There are four primary speech functions carried out by mood, including offer, command, statement and question (Halliday, 2004, p. 108). Based on this, Fan (2000, p. 29) concludes that in English language, declarative mood usually realizes the speech function of statement, interrogative mood often achieves the speech function of question, and the speech function of command is mostly realized by imperative mood. When the realizations of speech functions are in accordance with their typical moods, that is, when the meanings they intend to express are the same as their forms, this kind of realization is marked as congruent form.

However, in actual language use, the relationship between speech functions and mood is so complicated that a speech function can be achieved by different moods and a mood can realize different speech functions because of people's complicated feelings, purposes, interpersonal relationships and different contexts, as illustrated by the mood types for command:

Table 1. Mood types for command function

Interrogative for command	*Declarative for command*	*Imperative for command*
Could you do it by yourself?	*You should do it by yourself.*	*Do it by yourself!*

These three moods all express the speech function of command, while the first two are metaphorical forms and more polite than the last one, which is more direct. In another example, declarative mood in sentences like "So you are from France?" shows the speech function of question and "We don't put those glasses in the dishwasher." shows the speech function of command, not statement, which means that they are metaphorical forms of mood. In a word, interrogative mood, declarative mood and imperative mood used to realize different speech functions are considered as implicit types of metaphor of mood.

In addition, tag question is frequently applied in people's daily communication as an explicit type of metaphor of mood with its explicit form. According to Fan (2000, p. 32), metaphor of mood signifies a combination of two different speech functions, and tag question is regarded as a subtype of metaphor of mood in that tag question always bears a combination of the speech functions of question and either offer or statement. In terms of tag question, there are typical realization forms of "finite operator + subject" such as "…, isn't it?" and "…, don't you?" and other realization forms of "…, right?" "…, okay?" and "…, you know?" They all appear frequently in spoken English. To summarize, this linguistic phenomenon of a shift from one mood to another or a combination of different speech functions is called metaphor of mood (Fan, 2000, p. 30).

2.2 Metaphor of Modality

Modality refers to the intermediate ground between positive and negative polarity (Halliday, 2004, p. 618). Modality reflects the speaker's judgement or evaluation of a proposition or proposal (Halliday, 2004, p. 143). The meaning expounded by modality is another way to realize interpersonal metafunction. Generally, there are two types of modality. The indicative type, also known as modalization, views the reliability of given information from the perspective of probability or usuality (Halliday, 2004, p. 618). Sentences of modalization are often in the form of proposition, taking the sentences "They must surely have realized that something happened." and "I usually go to school on foot." for example. The former indicates possibility and the latter usuality. And the second one, imperative type, also called modulation, takes on the form of proposal to indicate the speaker's order to the listener in obligation and the speaker's personal inclination in proposal (Halliday, 2004, p. 618). For example, "You should do that." indicates obligation and "They are willing to join the party." indicates inclination.

According to Halliday (2004, p. 619), it is the system of orientation that determines how the modal meaning is embodied. And system of orientation in modality can be divided into subjective, objective, explicit and implicit form, which can be combined to form different ways of expression to show the speaker's idea and will, leading to four kinds of forms including forms of explicitly subjective, explicitly objective, implicitly subjective and implicitly objective, which is shown in the following table.

Table 2. System of orientation in modality

Orientation	Subjective	Explicit: I think Mary is right.
		Implicit: It's likely that Mary is right.
	Objective	Explicit: Mary must be right.
		Implicit: Mary is probably right.

Among them, only explicit subjective form and explicit objective form are metaphorical. The main reason is that only these two kinds of form are expressed by projecting clause, like "I think Anna knows." and "It's likely that Anna knows." to mean Anna knows. So this kind of linguistic phenomenon is called metaphor of modality. And there are six realizations of metaphor of modality, proposed by Halliday and other scholars. The first one is projecting clause (Halliday, 2004, p. 626) like "I think that" and "It's usual that". The second one is the nominalization of modal meaning such as the structure of "There is a possibility/likelihood/certainty that" to make the modality take on the form of objectivity (Chang, 2001, p. 8). Extended form of predicate like "be required/supposed/determined to do" and prepositional phrase expressing the modal meaning such as "in my opinion" and "to my mind" can also function as metaphor of modality (Wang, 2010, p. 120). Finally, the first verb phrase in a hypotactic verbal group complex like "tend to/decline/be willing to/want to do" (Huang, 2000, p. 229) and modifiable relative clause like "It'd be lovely to do" (Chang, 2001, p. 7) can also be regarded as realization forms of metaphor of modality. To summarize, interpersonal meaning can be conveyed through these six ways, and this is how metaphor of modality is formed.

3. Interpersonal Metaphor in the Movie *Carnage*

To describe and analyze the use of interpersonal metaphor in the movie *Carnage*, dialogues between four characters are collected as linguistic data for further analysis. Based on the classification of interpersonal metaphor, the dialogues are analyzed in terms of metaphor of mood and metaphor of modality. As a result, the statistics of the distribution of interpersonal metaphor in contrastive parts of "communication" and "conflict" can help to provide data support for the study on the dynamic changes of the use of interpersonal metaphor in the movie, which paves the way for functional analysis of interpersonal metaphor in the context of "communication" and "conflict".

3.1 Distribution of Interpersonal Metaphor in the Movie Carnage

As mentioned above, the movie *Carnage* takes place in two different contexts divided by the turning point of the story, that is, Nancy's vomiting (Note 1). After they clean up, Nancy proposes a new way to solve the problem. However, Penelope resolutely disagrees about that. So they have a new round of debate over their children, which sets on fire and leads to a mess. Therefore, based on an overall statistics and generalization (Note 2), the distribution of interpersonal metaphor in the movie Carnage is shown below Table 3, from which the changes of language in different contexts of "communication" and "conflict" can be analyzed and concluded.

Table 3. The distribution of interpersonal metaphor in *Carnage*

Interpersonal metaphor	Context		Total
	Communication	Conflict	
Metaphor of mood	51	40	91
Metaphor of modality	37	26	63
Total	88	66	154

From this table, the number of interpersonal metaphors in "communication" exceeds the number of interpersonal metaphors in "conflict". This is because in "communication", people are inclined to frequently use interpersonal metaphor to build a good relationship with others with courtesy to achieve their communicative purposes. On the contrary, in "conflict", especially in the extreme condition of anger and insobriety, their language tends to be more direct, resulting in less implementations of interpersonal metaphor. However, there are still a great number of interpersonal metaphors used in "conflict", which is due to the fact that when becoming embroiled in a battle of words with each other, communicators often have a roundabout way of talking and make oblique accusations to each other in an implicit way (Chen, 2009, p. 30).

Meanwhile, it can be concluded from the language of the movie that the number of congruent forms in "conflict" is more than that in "communication", as it can be seen from the movie that in "conflict", four characters frequently blurt out imperative sentences to show their command without deliberation, which is congruent, while

in "communication", they are apt to metaphorically use interrogative and declarative mood to show their command to each other (Note 3). Those changes can help people know more about how to speak, react and respond when faced with different people, situations and purposes. In this way, their communication will be smoother and more effective, making it easier to achieve their communication goals.

3.2 Classification of Interpersonal Metaphor in the Movie Carnage

Metaphor of mood and metaphor of modality together play an important part in the movie. As the distribution of metaphor of mood and metaphor of modality is shown clearly above, some typical uses of metaphor of mood and metaphor of modality in the movie are expounded apiece, which lays the groundwork for better understanding of interpersonal metaphor and further analysis of the functions of interpersonal metaphor in different situations.

3.2.1 Metaphor of Mood in the Movie

Metaphor of mood can be realized by tag questions and other implicit types such as interrogative mood, declarative mood and imperative mood to realize different speech functions. Some concrete examples of metaphor of mood are shown according to its category so as to give a clear demonstration of metaphor of mood in the movie.

Tag questions are often found in the dialogues of characters in the movie, especially the realization form of "…, right?" For example, the sentences "Luckily, some of us still have a sense of community, right?" and "That's why we are here, right?" take on the form of "a declarative + a tag question", by which speakers invite listeners to participate in the interaction. Because the whole communication takes place during the two couples' first meeting after their kids' fight, they are not familiar with each other and they don't know what each other thinks. Therefore, they politely express their ideas and want to get a positive reaction from others. So they employ the tag question of "…, right?" to provoke a common response so that they can reach agreement. Meanwhile, typical forms of tag question like "…, isn't it?" and "…, don't you?" are used in the metaphorical form in the movie. In a conversation between Penelope and Alan, Alan calls Penelope Mrs. Longstreet for several times to show his affectation of politeness. Actually, this is because Alan doesn't think the fight between their sons is a serious problem so all he wants to do is to talk with Penelope in a perfunctory way and leave her house quickly. Finally, Penelope can't stand this anymore and then she says "I think we'll do better if we're on a first name basis, don't you?". Here she means "You should call me Penelope instead of Mrs. Longstreet and this will be good for our negotiation." which shows her irritation and expresses her command for Alan to call her name directly. In this way, she is able to avoid conflict and maintain a polite and harmonious conversation with him.

In addition, there are also many implicit types of metaphor of mood in this movie. First, interrogative mood can metaphorically realize speech functions of command, statement and offer. In the example of interrogative to realize command, when Penelope throws Nancy's bag away, Nancy snarls "Alan, do something! She broke my make-up mirror and my perfume! Stand up for me. Why don't you stand up for me?" Collapsed and annoyed, Nancy turns to Alan for help, asking Alan to do something eye for eye. She first uses imperative mood in the congruent form to show her anger, and then she implements interrogative sentence to command Alan to stand up for her metaphorically, which strengthens her words and shows her extreme rebuke and exasperation. In the example of interrogative to realize statement, Nancy says "Do you realize how crude that is?" to respond to Michael's verbal attack to her. In its congruent form, it means that what Michael says is very crude and upsetting. In this way, Nancy implicitly expresses her feelings in the hope that Michael can change his prejudice against her. And in the example of interrogative to realize offer, Penelope wittily offers her suggestion by saying "Shouldn't she go to the bathroom?" instead of shouting "Go to the bathroom!" to ask Nancy to go to the bathroom after her vomiting. This is because although Penelope has already been filled with anger at Nancy's vomiting on her favorite book, she still tries to refrain herself from making the situation worse.

Second, declarative mood can metaphorically realize command, question and offer. For instance, when Alan finds that Michael listens to his call, Alan says "Nobody said you should listen to my conversation." to warn Michael not to listen when he is answering the phone. Here, he implements declarative mood to command Michael, which will sound more courteous compared with imperative mood. And there are lots of implementations of declarative mood to realize question in the movie, taking "You got rid of the hamster?" and "You left it on the street?" for example. These two sentences take on the form of declarative mood but actually they function as questions to involve others into the conversation. Declarative sentences like these cannot be easily declined by listeners since they are not real questions.

Third, imperative mood can metaphorically realize statement and question. For example, Nancy says "Don't you have to go?" to ask Alan why he doesn't go after he says he is going to leave. The words add some sense of command to it. Nancy implicitly means that in fact she wants Alan to leave because she thinks Alan is useless in

this meeting since he doesn't say anything good to help reach a settlement of the problem.

3.2.2 Metaphor of Modality in the Movie

Modality plays an important part in human communication because it can find a balance and intermediate between two polarities such as *yes* and *no*, *right* and *wrong*, *positive* and *negative*. As mentioned above, the explicitly subjective and explicitly objective forms of modality are strictly classified as the metaphorical form pf modality. In the actual utilization of language, the number of the realization forms of explicit subjectivity usually outreaches explicit objectivity in that there are more situations which request speakers to give a subjective response in daily communication. The same is true in the language of this movie.

To achieve certain purposes or effects, explicitly subjective form of modality is usually employed to show the speaker's uncertainty towards his/her opinion or judgement. Sometimes this kind of metaphor of modality also reflects the power relationship or emotional involvement of both parties in their conversation. For example, it is believed that when people say they are sure about something, actually they don't. This kind of grotesque phenomenon can be further illustrated by dialogues in the movie. To cite an example, when Penelope and Alan argue about whether Zachary should require accountability skills, Penelope says "I'm sure your son is not a maniac." to Alan and Nancy. However, she is not sure about that because she is not acquainted with Zachary. All she knows for sure is Zachary hits her son. As a consequence, she says these words only to persuade Alan and Nancy to educate their son and make him understand the great importance of taking responsibility.

The effect of explicitly objective form of modality is to make the speaker's assertion more objective and weaken the speaker's subjective modality, thus making it difficult for the listener to suspect the motive, as the following example shows. When Penelope is unable to restrain herself from beating her husband Michael, Alan fans the flames by saying "Morally, we're supposed to overcome our impulses." which takes away some sense of subjectivity, so as to let him sound more convincing. Alan's words make it impossible for Penelope to disavow him, thus increasing her anger, which can be seen from her subsequent yelling and deranged actions like throwing Nancy's bag.

4. Functional Analysis of Interpersonal Metaphor in the Movie *Carnage*

So far, the distribution and classification of interpersonal metaphor and its practical application in the movie have been discussed. Behind this linguistic phenomenon there must be some definite functions which are influenced by the relationship, social status, attitude and mentality of the speaker and listener. Since the whole movie has been divided into two contrastive parts of "communication" and "conflict" based on its plot and language, the functions of specific types of interpersonal metaphor in these two parts are illustrated and concluded respectively, from which the functions of interpersonal metaphor in different contexts can be seen.

4.1 Functions of Interpersonal Metaphor in "Communication" of the Movie

To achieve their goals, interlocutors tend to communicate with others friendly and politely, so interpersonal metaphor is frequently employed to establish a good relationship with others. In the part of "communication", also their first meeting to solve the problem between their children, the two couples involved all behave and speak with courtesy and restraint. However, they all think there is nothing wrong with their own boy, especially Zachary's father Alan, whose phone constantly rings, interrupting their conversation. In this seemingly harmonious but actually tense atmosphere, they are all careful about what they say so as to avoid unnecessary arguments and quickly reach a settlement. Therefore, the language they use is euphemistic and indirect, which can realize the interpersonal functions of making a suggestion in a tactful way and showing the speaker's uncertainty.

4.1.1 To Make a Suggestion in a Tactful Way

In the part of "communication", declarative mood in a rising tone and interrogative mood are used metaphorically to make a suggestion in a tactful way. Compared with command, statement or offer is a good way of giving advice. Under the circumstances of two parents' first meeting and their purposes of meeting, there is no way for them to communicate unscrupulously with each other and tell each other what she or he is supposed to do directly. They know that only kind and friendly talk can make sense. Therefore, metaphor of mood is employed to hide their real intentions and suggest others in a mild way.

For example, saying "But he realizes he disfigured his schoolmate?", what Penelope really means is that Zachary should realize this or Nancy and Alan should tell Zachary the seriousness of his conduct, that is, he makes Ethan disfigured, so that he can apologize to Ethan. By doing so, Penelope wisely avoid showing her anger towards Zachary and making the situation worse. This kind of declarative mood in a rising tone helps to ease the tension between the two sides and make proposals more acceptable.

There is another typical example, that is, Nancy says "Why are you saying that?" when her husband Alan says he agrees with Penelope that his son is a maniac. Actually, Nancy does not intend to ask Alan the reason why he thinks Zachary is a maniac and what she wants is to ask Alan not to talk about this because this discussion about Zachary is meaningless and she thinks this will do nothing good for achieving an agreement between them. Since Penelope and Alan have been at odds, Nancy doesn't wish her husband to stand against her, so she tenderly use interrogative mood to hint Alan, instead of saying "Don't say that, Alan" directly, which sounds like a cold order.

Metaphor of modality also has the function of expressing the speaker's suggestion in a euphemistic way. In the movie, on the verge of an argument about whether Zachary disfigures Ethan, Penelope says "You don't like the word but I'm afraid the word is appropriate." to Alan who thinks his son doesn't disfigure Penelope's. Penelope tactfully uses the clause "I'm afraid" to suggest that Zachary indeed disfigures Ethan. With explicitly subjective form, Penelope gently offers her suggestion to Alan and Nancy that they should bring Zachary to their house to apologize to Ethan, which is both polite and acceptable. Otherwise, if she just says the word is appropriate and ask Zachary to make an apology directly, Alan and Nancy will feel offended.

In summary, there are three ways to make suggestions metaphorically, namely, declarative mood in a rising tone, interrogative mood and the explicitly subjective form of metaphor of modality. These ways of making suggestions can make it much easier for people to accept without letting the situation become awkward and tense, especially when people want to build a good relationship with others and solve the problem between them.

4.1.2 To Show Speaker's Uncertainty

The movie is about two couples meeting each other for the first time, and therefore they are not familiar with each other and the aim of their meeting is to resolve the contradiction between their children. In the part of "communication", they want to put their negotiation forward and identify the best solution. That's the reason why they frequently use tag question to indicate their doubts and uncertainties about what they are saying. In this way, they can conceal their real intentions and gain an advantage in negotiation.

For instance, after Alan and Nancy eat Penelope's cobbler, Nancy doesn't feel well and says she is going to throw up. Then they have a brief discussion about the reason for her vomiting. At that time, Alan has become impatient and he thinks it might be the cobbler made by Penelope that makes Nancy uncomfortable, but he is not very sure about that. So he says "It can't be the cobbler, can it?" to show his uncertainty and suspicion to the cobbler. By adding tag question after the declarative sentence, Alan passes his judgement indirectly and tactfully and takes Penelope into conversation. In this way, he can express his uncertainty implicitly, without breaking up the seemingly harmonious relationship with Penelope.

Metaphor of modality can also be used to show the speaker's uncertainty. In order to achieve a certain purpose in conversation, speakers sometimes intentionally use the metaphorical form of explicit subjectivity by employing modal clause such as "I think" and "I believe" in their discourses, which can clearly express their attitudes or wills and emphasize that what they say is their own opinions and viewpoints, thus showing their uncertainties of the judgments. A case in point is when Nancy asks Penelope and Michael to take their son Ethan to her house, Michael expresses his opposition to her by saying "I think Zachary should come over here." Instead of just pointing out that Zachary should come to their house to apologize to Ethan because Ethan is the victim, Michael deliberately adds the clause "I think" to show his opinion of this controversial problem, which also highlights his uncertainty about the idea so that no one can explicitly show disagreement with him, thus avoiding the unnecessary argument and showing his politeness.

In a word, tag question and explicitly subjective form of metaphor of modality can be used to show one's uncertainty in the situation where one does not know about each other. With the help of interpersonal metaphor, the way people show their uncertainties can be expressed naturally and appropriately without letting anyone feel embarrassed. By doing so, one can keep on good terms with unfamiliar people.

4.2 Functions of Interpersonal Metaphor in "Conflict" of the Movie

It is common that when people feel irritated and affronted, they almost get out of control with no rationality in their minds. Therefore, their language can achieve different functions by means of interpersonal metaphor. In the part of "conflict", the four characters are in conflict with each other. In the chaos of this situation, all four characters can't help yelping at each other and saying something to draw their attentions and trigger their responses, or to show their refutations towards others' words or actions.

4.2.1 To Draw Listener's Attention and Trigger Listener's Response

In the part of "conflict", four characters are all on the verge of exasperation and collapse, shouting at each other

and breaking each other's favorite things to engage them in communication for fear that they are ignored by others. Therefore, they frequently employ declarative mood to function as question in the hope that the listener can react and respond to their words, and also function as statement to lay stress on the importance of information.

After an argument broke out between her and Michael, Penelope says "We should've never had this meeting." and Michael tells her that he has told her so. Then Penelope speaks out a series of declarative sentences with interrogative intonation, including "You told me so?" "You told me we should've never had this meeting?" and "You told me you didn't think this was a very good idea?" to emphasize her strong dissatisfaction with Michael, which shows the fact that Michael has agreed to have this meeting. Three sentences metaphorically function as questions, which are apt to arouse their interaction, especially Michael's, to make them think about the situation around here and do something to change this unhappy condition. With three sentences together, Penelope expresses her strong emotions and arouses the other three people's attention. This way of communication can demonstrate how declarative mood has the function of question to express the speaker's purpose of attracting the listener's attention and showing his/her moods of anger, impatience, and discontent, etc.

Meanwhile, tag question can also function like this since it can help the speaker to invite the listener into conversation and seek the listener's response. Taking Michael's words for example, he says "It's excellent, isn't it?" to describe the wine they are drinking. He adds the tag question to trigger Alan and Nancy's response because it is he who asks them to savor the wine. This can be seen from Alan's reply that the wine is so excellent.

And if a speaker wants to attract others' attention, he can realize this by employing explicitly subjective form of metaphor of modality. By saying "I think" or "I believe", he implicitly invites others to share their opinions with him so that they can all engage in the conversation. For instance, with his words "I didn't think it was a very good idea." Michael expresses his opinion toward this meeting, which leads to a heated discussion about the meaning of the meeting.

In sum, there are three ways of implementing interpersonal metaphor to subtly invite people to participate in the conversation, including declarative mood, tag question and explicitly subjective form of metaphor of modality. Therefore, interpersonal metaphor functions as an implicit impetus to let the conversation go on smoothly.

4.2.2 To Show Speaker's Refutation

In real communication, the politeness of utterance is influenced by the situation of utterance, the position, the distance, and the power and influence of both sides. In the tense atmosphere of conflict, people's language is inclined to be more aggressive and ironic, and that's the reason why they implement interpersonal metaphor to show their refutations to others' statements or actions so that they are able to keep their options open and not lose too badly or lose face in the argument.

In the case of four people losing their nerves and being diametrically opposed to each other, they frequently use interrogative mood to force others to do something, which apparently shows their refutations to what others are saying. For example, after a quarrel happened between Penelope and Michael, Alan talks about his opinion towards their marriage, that is, he thinks their marriage is going downhill. Hearing these words, Penelope becomes angrier and she shouts to Alan with "What gives you the right to say our marriage is going downhill?" to convey her denial to Alan's words, which metaphorically asks Alan to shut up with no more talk about their marriage.

Explicitly objective form of metaphor of modality can also function like this in that it usually shows the objectivity of the speaker's words so that the addressee is more likely to believe the speaker's words are neutral. In this way, the speaker's refutation is acceptable and cannot be denied. Therefore, implementing explicitly objective form of metaphor of modality can help the speaker avoid taking responsibility for speaking. For instance, finding that Nancy is still drinking after her vomiting, Alan tries to stop her by saying "Nancy, it's absurd to drink in your condition." meaning he doesn't want Nancy to go on drinking. The explicitly objective form of metaphor of modality makes what Alan says more like a public idea, sounding more objective and persuasive. By doing so, Alan shows his refutation to Nancy's behavior and makes Nancy not contradict him.

As a matter of fact, in extreme cases where the contradiction between people is hard to reconcile, people usually deny each other's words and actions and try their best to prove what they say is right with interrogative mood and explicitly objective form of metaphor of modality. In short, the use of interpersonal metaphor is conductive to having more rights of speech.

5. Conclusion

A general statistic distribution and a comprehensive and detailed analysis of dialogues in the movie *Carnage* have been carried out from the perspective of interpersonal metaphor. Specific examples of every kind of interpersonal metaphor further contribute to the functional analysis which explains how interpersonal metaphor realizes interpersonal metafunction and how people can avoid embarrassment and conflict in communication with the help of it. Interpersonal metaphor can express a combination of literal meaning and metaphorical meaning in different contexts, such as making suggestions in a tactful way, showing one's uncertainty, triggering one's response and showing one's refutation.

To conclude, the use of language is so diverse that different choices of linguistic forms can bring about different meanings and functions. People are proficient in changing linguistic forms to suit their communicative purposes. Knowing and understanding the dynamic usage of interpersonal metaphor is beneficial for people to utilize it so as to achieve intended communicative effects and thus to maintain a friendly and polite relationship with others.

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Notes

Note 1. The part of "communication" is ended by Penelope's words "No, I behave poorly." and the part of "conflict" is started by Nancy's words "In the bathroom I was thinking." which divides the movie into two contrastive parts. The two contrastive parts have similar quantities of words and sentences.

Note 2. The authors first download the movie lines from the Internet and then collate them with words in the movie to avoid any mistake. Finally main dialogues are selected from the movie lines. On this basis, the application of interpersonal metaphor in the movie is judged according to the definition and classification of interpersonal metaphor described in this paper. The implementations of interpersonal metaphor in the part of "communication" and "conflict" are detailed in the Appendix A.

Note 3. According to the statistics, there are fifteen examples of interrogative and declarative mood to realize command in "communication", while there are thirty-three examples of imperative sentences in "communication", which shows that people's words are more direct when they have a contradiction between them.

Appendix A

Interpersonal Metaphor in *Carnage*

Communication:

Penelope: You don't like "armed"? (*metaphor of mood: declarative to realize question*)

Penelope: Carrying a stick (is okay)? (*metaphor of mood: declarative to realize question*)

Penelope: I always thought the Brooklyn Bridge Park was so safe compared to Hillside. (*metaphor of modality: explicitly subjective form*)

Penelope: I don't think there's any reason for us to thank each other. (*metaphor of modality: explicitly subjective form*)

Penelope: Luckily, some of us still have a sense of community, right? (*metaphor of mood: tag question*)

Alan: I mean our kid (hasn't got that notion straight yet). (*metaphor of modality: explicitly subjective form*)

Penelope: You know the one? (*metaphor of mood: declarative to realize question*)

Michael: They wanna give the tooth a chance. (*metaphor of modality: explicitly subjective form*)

Penelope: Yeah, we'd so love to avoid root canal. (*metaphor of modality: explicitly subjective form*)

Penelope: He didn't wanna tell on Zachary. (*metaphor of modality: explicitly subjective form*)

Michael: No, he didn't wanna tell. (*metaphor of modality: explicitly subjective form*)

Penelope: It was incredible to see this child with no face left, no teeth. (*metaphor of modality: explicitly objective form*)

Michael: Well, he didn't wanna tell on the kid. (*metaphor of modality: explicitly subjective form*)

Penelope: We told him if we were this child's parents, we would wanna know about this. (*metaphor of modality: explicitly subjective form*)

Michael: So you're like a...? (*metaphor of mood: declarative to realize question*)

Nancy: You got rid of the hamster? (*metaphor of mood: declarative to realize question*)

Nancy: You left it on the street? (*metaphor of mood: declarative to realize question*)

Michael: I figured it was a gutter-sewer kind of animal. (*metaphor of modality: explicitly subjective form*)

Michael: I don't know where you're supposed to put them. (*metaphor of modality: explicitly objective form*)

Nancy: So you just left him outside? (*metaphor of mood: declarative to realize question*)

Alan: And this morning the hamster was gone? (*metaphor of mood: declarative to realize question*)

Alan: Sure. It would be good if they talked. (*metaphor of modality: explicitly objective form*)

Michael: You want some coffee or tea? (*metaphor of mood: declarative to realize question*)

Alan: You got espresso? (*metaphor of mood: declarative to realize question*)

Alan: I wouldn't mind having a cup. (*metaphor of modality: explicitly subjective form*)

Michael: I didn't mean to rush you out. (*metaphor of modality: explicitly subjective form*)

Penelope: I don't know what language I'm supposed to speak to that woman in. (*metaphor of modality: explicitly objective form*)

Michael: They're nice, right? (*metaphor of mood: tag question*)

Penelope: Do you tell everybody I'm a writer? (*metaphor of mood: interrogative to realize command*)

Nancy: When you saw that a hamster was terrified, why didn't you bring it home? (*metaphor of mood: interrogative to realize command*)

Penelope: You have to cut the pear thicker than the apples because they cook faster. (*metaphor of mood: declarative to realize command*)

Alan: At least we get a new recipe out of this, right? (*metaphor of mood: tag question*)

Penelope: It would have been so much nicer if we'd met some other way. (*metaphor of modality: explicitly objective form*)

Michael: She doesn't wanna be buried next to my father. (*metaphor of modality: explicitly subjective form*) She wanna be cremated and put upstate next to her mother who's all alone. (*metaphor of modality: explicitly subjective form*)

Nancy: If Ethan had broken two of Zachary's teeth, I'm thinking Alan and I might have had more of a knee-jerk reaction. (*metaphor of modality: explicitly subjective form*)

Nancy: I'm not sure we would see the big picture. (*metaphor of modality: explicitly subjective form*)

Nancy: (He is) a little overwhelmed, I guess. (*metaphor of modality: explicitly subjective form*)

Penelope: But he realizes that he disfigured his schoolmate? (*metaphor of mood: declarative to realize question*)

Nancy: Why do you say that? (*metaphor of mood: interrogative to realize command*)

Penelope: You don't like the word but I'm afraid the word is appropriate. (*metaphor of modality: explicitly subjective form*)

Alan: As for the teeth, if he needs it, we'd be willing to chip in for the best dental care. (*metaphor of modality: explicitly subjective form*)

Nancy: Maybe it's better if we weren't there, right? (*metaphor of mood: tag question*)

Alan: Women always think you need the man, you need the father, like it would do any good. (*metaphor of modality: explicitly objective form*)

Michael: I think Zachary should come over here. (*metaphor of modality: explicitly subjective form*)

Nancy: You're useless, right? (*metaphor of mood: tag question*)

Penelope: Seriously, I think it's important for his father to come. (*metaphor of modality: explicitly subjective form*)

Michael: You have business in Washington? (*metaphor of mood: declarative to realize question*)

Penelope: I'm sure your son is not a maniac. (*metaphor of modality: explicitly subjective form*)

Nancy: Why are you saying that? (*metaphor of mood: interrogative to realize command*)

Alan: I'm sure you're much more evolved than we are. (*metaphor of modality: explicitly subjective form*)

Michael: You want some more coffee? (*metaphor of mood: declarative to realize question*)

Nancy: Your children are (interested in art)? (*metaphor of mood: declarative to realize question*)

Penelope: We really believe that culture can be such a powerful force for peace. (*metaphor of modality: explicitly subjective form*)

Michael: You have other kids? (*metaphor of mood: declarative to realize question*)

Penelope: Ethan has a gang? (*metaphor of mood: declarative to realize question*)

Michael: You got five or six guys who like you and they're willing to sacrifice themselves for you. (*metaphor of modality: explicitly subjective form*)

Penelope: I guess Zachary wasn't quite as silent as you first said. (*metaphor of modality: explicitly subjective form*)

Penelope: Forget it, (it's a) silly question, right? (*metaphor of mood: tag question*)

Penelope: I mean this is not a fair fight. (*metaphor of modality: explicitly subjective form*)

Nancy: Why did you say that? (*metaphor of mood: interrogative to realize command*)

Penelope: I think we'll do better if we're on a first name basis, don't you? (*metaphor of modality: explicitly subjective form*) (*metaphor of mood: tag question*)

Alan: (It's) the difference between what and what? (*metaphor of mood: declarative to realize question*)

Alan: That's why we're here, right? (*metaphor of mood: tag question*)

Alan: So why do you feel you need to slip in the word "deliberately"? (*metaphor of mood: interrogative to realize command*)

Michael: (It's) the worst, right? (*metaphor of mood: tag question*)

Alan: Nobody said you should listen to my conversation. (*metaphor of mood: declarative to realize command*)

Michael: Nobody said you should have it under my nose. (*metaphor of mood: declarative to realize command*)

Michael: They just peddle this shit, right? (*metaphor of mood: tag question*)

Penelope: You two can have your plumbing discussion some other time. (*metaphor of mood: declarative to realize command*)

Penelope: We get some Reglan, right? (*metaphor of mood: tag question*)

Alan: It's more for diarrhea, isn't it? (*metaphor of mood: tag question*)

Michael: You don't agree about what? (*metaphor of mood: declarative to realize question*)

Alan: What's wrong with you, screaming at me like that? (*metaphor of mood: interrogative to realize command*)

Alan: You should be thanking me for agreeing to come here. (*metaphor of mood: declarative to realize command*)

Michael: You wanna use the bathroom? (*metaphor of mood: declarative to realize question*)

Alan: Hey, you can see part of the el from here. (*metaphor of mood: declarative to realize command*)

Penelope: Shouldn't she go to the bathroom? (*metaphor of mood: interrogative to realize offer*)

Alan: It can't be the cobbler, can it? (*metaphor of mood: tag question*)

Penelope: Why do you take their side all the time? (*metaphor of mood: declarative to realize command*)

Michael: What's that supposed to mean? (*metaphor of modality: explicitly objective form*)

Nancy: Why do you argue with her? (*metaphor of mood: declarative to realize command*)

Penelope: I mean when you know that you're gonna toss your cookies, you know you take some precautions. (*metaphor of modality: explicitly subjective form*)

Michael: I held my own, right? (*metaphor of mood: tag question*)

Penelope: I'm sure it's worse, right? (*metaphor of modality: explicitly subjective form*) (*metaphor of mood: tag question*)

Penelope: You cleaned up? (*metaphor of mood: declarative to realize question*)

Conflict:

Nancy: Well I mean name-calling is a kind of abuse. (*metaphor of modality: explicitly subjective form*)

Nancy: You think my son is a snitch? (*metaphor of mood: declarative to realize question*)

Nancy: You think my son is a snitch? (*metaphor of mood: declarative to realize question*)

Penelope: I don't think I can stand this tone any more. (*metaphor of modality: explicitly subjective form*)

Nancy: Do you realize how crude that is? (*metaphor of mood: interrogative to realize statement*)

Penelope: Why should we be fair-minded at all? (*metaphor of mood: interrogative to realize command*)

Alan: I'm afraid Pen doesn't see things that way. (*metaphor of modality: explicitly subjective form*)

Michael: I killed the hamster? (*metaphor of mood: declarative to realize question*)

Michael: I thought the hamster would be happy to be free. (*metaphor of modality: explicitly subjective form*)

Michael: I thought he'd go running around in the gutter, happy as a clam! (*metaphor of modality: explicitly subjective form*)

Michael: Because I can't touch those things, okay? (*metaphor of mood: tag question*)

Nancy: So you have no remorse? (*metaphor of mood: declarative to realize question*)

Michael: Their son beats the shit out of Ethan and you're in my face over a hamster? (*metaphor of mood: declarative to realize question*)

Michael: I'm a short-tempered son of a bitch, okay? (*metaphor of mood: tag question*)

Penelope: Why are you being so aggressive with me? (*metaphor of mood: interrogative to realize command*)

Penelope: You let me recruit you? (*metaphor of mood: declarative to realize question*)

Penelope: You think it's better to be a tempered son of a bitch? (*metaphor of mood: declarative to realize question*)

Penelope: What was I supposed to do? (*metaphor of modality: explicitly objective form*)

Penelope: (I'm supposed to) never talk to you and tear you apart through the insurance company? (*metaphor of mood: declarative to realize question*)

Penelope: You told me so? (*metaphor of mood: declarative to realize question*)

Penelope: You told me we should've never had this meeting? (*metaphor of mood: declarative to realize question*)

Michael: I didn't think it was a very good idea. (*metaphor of modality: explicitly subjective form*)

Penelope: You told me you didn't think this was a very good idea? (*metaphor of mood: declarative to realize question*)

Nancy: Don't you have to go? (*metaphor of mood: imperative to realize question*)

Penelope: You look me in the eye and you tell me that we didn't both agree on this! (*metaphor of mood: declarative to realize question*)

Nancy: I thought the role model was Ivanhoe. (*metaphor of modality: explicitly subjective form*)

Michael: You see that? (*metaphor of mood: declarative to realize question*)

Penelope: We don't get a drink? (*metaphor of mood: declarative to realize question*)

Michael: I don't think that will be necessary. (*metaphor of modality: explicitly subjective form*)

Penelope: It's very hard to live with a man who's walled himself inside that idea. (*metaphor of modality: explicitly objective form*)

Penelope: We have to believe, we have to believe in some possible correction. (*metaphor of mood: declarative to realize command*)

Nancy: She's still in pain? (*metaphor of mood: declarative to realize question*)

Alan: Sure, we'd all like to believe in some possible correction. (*metaphor of modality: explicitly subjective form*)

Penelope: Why can't things be easier, you know? (*metaphor of mood: tag question*)

Nancy: There's an original response? (*metaphor of mood: declarative to realize question*)

Michael: You agree with me, don't you? (*metaphor of mood: tag question*)

Penelope: Ethan getting two of his teeth busted out is related to our marriage? (*metaphor of mood: declarative to realize question*)

Michael: It's excellent, isn't it? (*metaphor of mood: tag question*)

Alan: I won't smoke it because I don't wanna upset Penelope who's already on edge, to put it mildly. (*metaphor of modality: explicitly subjective form*)

Penelope: How am I supposed to know? (*metaphor of modality: explicitly objective form*)

Penelope: I mean we're already set up to handle this now. (*metaphor of modality: explicitly subjective form*)

Alan: We don't have to try to compete with them. (*metaphor of mood: declarative to realize command*)

Penelope: What gives you the right to say our marriage is going downhill? (*metaphor of mood: interrogative to realize command*)

Alan: You're interested in Africa, right? (*metaphor of mood: tag question*)

Alan: Morally, we're supposed to overcome our impulses (*metaphor of modality: explicitly objective form*)

Alan: But there are times you don't wanna overcome them. (*metaphor of modality: explicitly subjective form*)

Alan: Nancy, it's absurd to drink in your condition. (*metaphor of modality: explicitly objective form*)

Penelope: Mr. Cowan, can you please put an end to this nerve-racking conversation? (*metaphor of mood: interrogative to realize command*)

Michael: You wanna use the phone? (*metaphor of mood: declarative to realize question*)

Nancy: So Michael, I guess you are happy now. (*metaphor of modality: explicitly subjective form*)

Nancy: This almost feels good, in my opinion. (*metaphor of modality: explicitly subjective form*)

Michael: Yeah, well in my opinion, some people can handle their liquor better than others. (*metaphor of modality: explicitly subjective form*)

Penelope: And why are you telling him your whole life story? (*metaphor of mood: interrogative to realize command*)

Michael: We had a goddamn hamster, didn't we? (*metaphor of mood: tag question*)

Penelope: I guess I'm the only one who doesn't see things with pleasant serenity. (*metaphor of modality: explicitly subjective form*)

Nancy: I think this is the unhappiest day of his life, too. (*metaphor of modality: explicitly subjective form*)

Penelope: That's what you really think? (*metaphor of mood: declarative to realize question*)

Penelope: He shares the blame? (*metaphor of mood: declarative to realize question*)

Nancy: Why don't you stand up for me? (*metaphor of mood: interrogative to realize command*)

Nancy: I wanna drink some more. (*metaphor of modality: explicitly subjective form*)

Nancy: I wanna get drunk off my ass. (*metaphor of modality: explicitly subjective form*)

Nancy: I wanna be blind drunk! (*metaphor of modality: explicitly subjective form*)

Alan: You had known her 15 minutes and you already knew she was fake? (*metaphor of mood: declarative to realize question*)

Nancy: I don't want to listen to this. (*metaphor of modality: explicitly subjective form*)

Nancy: Why do you put me through this, Alan? (*metaphor of mood: interrogative to realize command*)

Penelope: She doesn't scream? (*metaphor of mood: declarative to realize question*)