

# A Metafunctional Study on Traditional Chinese Medicine Instruction: A Case Study of Lianhua Qingwen Capsule

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**Abstract:** *Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) is an excellent representative of Chinese civilization, and drug instructions, as a key part of popularizing and promoting medicine, play an important role in the dissemination of TCM. TCM has also made a unique contribution to the global fight against the virus during the ongoing pandemic. Drug instruction is a kind of legal document carrying drug information, and is a special scientific discourse. However, the current research on drug instructions mainly focuses on English translation, and few scholars have conducted in-depth analysis on it from the perspective of functional linguistics. Therefore, this research analyzes the language features of instruction of Lianhua Qingwen capsule with the aid of Meta-function theory. These features reflect that TCM instruction has the experiential function to explain, promote products and spread Traditional Chinese Medicine knowledge, the interpersonal function to guide consumption, maintain brand image and establish harmonious interpersonal relationships with the target readers, and textual function to make the discourse coherent and complete. The study also proves the practicality and applicability of meta-function theory.*

**Keywords:** Traditional Chinese Medicine, Instruction, Lianhua Qingwen capsule, Metafunctions, Functional grammar.

## 1. Introduction

Lianhua Qingwen capsule has played an important role in the response to COVID-19. Studies have shown that for patients with mild symptoms, Lianhua Qingwen capsule can make the symptoms subside and inhibit the continued development of the virus effectively. It significantly inhibits the SARS-COV-2 replication, affects virus morphology and exerts anti-viral and anti-inflammatory activity against novel coronavirus (Runfeng Li et al., 2020). As the drug instructions of the capsule were translated into various languages and spread to the world, Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), such as Lianhua Qingwen capsule, has played an important role in fighting the epidemic abroad. Traditional Chinese Medicine has provided assistance to many countries with serious epidemics, reflecting China's humanitarian and internationalist spirit and proving that the China-centered soft strength is capable of shining on the international stage.

The spread of Traditional Chinese Medicine to the outside world owes first to translators' accurate translation of the TCM instructions into English, so that foreign people can understand and use these medicines correctly, thus giving full play to the important role of Traditional Chinese Medicine. Drug instructions carry basic information related to drugs, and provide the scientific basis for medical staff and patients to use drugs correctly. They are also the main media for drug manufacturers and suppliers to publicize and introduce drug knowledge to the masses, and provide medication guides. Therefore, based on the theory of systemic functional linguistics, this paper analyzes the ideational function, interpersonal function and textual function to explore the language features of the English version of drug instructions of Lianhua Qingwen capsule.

## 2. Brief Introduction of TCM Instructions and Relevant Studies

### 2.1 TCM Instructions and its Language Features

Drug instruction, also called package insert, is an indispensable medium between the drug manufacturer and the public, as the basis for rational usage of medication. It is a kind of scientific discourse, which is composed of drug name, description, pharmaceutical actions, indications, contraindications, dosage and administration, precautions, adverse reactions, package, storage, drug interactions, overdosage, pharmacokinetics, expiry date, and manufacturer. Drug instructions are simple in structure, precise in wording, and professional and clear in content.

### 2.2 The Relevant Studies of TCM Instructions

As TCM is attracting more and more people's attention and has a substantial potential for market, how to make them known to consumers becomes the sticking point. TCM instruction is the carrier which assumes the responsibility to convey the vital information of this product to the consumers and stimulate them to buy it. First of all, TCM instruction is the scientific guidance and guarantee for doctors, pharmacists and other medical workers in the process of disease prevention and treatment. Moreover, it provides important reference for patients to take medicine properly. Finally, it is the crucial and primary medium whereby drug manufactures and drug supply department introduce and publicize drug characteristics to our medical and health workers and the public.

However, it is known that TCM are far from being accepted by foreign consumers on a large scale. It is not because that the quality of TCM is poorer than that of foreign ones but in most cases because its function and indications have not yet been fully recognized and accepted by foreign consumers. Therefore, more and more medical scholars and experts focus on the drug instruction researches.

Some researches focus on vocabulary, structure and syntactic

of the drug instructions. Besides, as TCM gained increasing popularity in overseas market, some scholars point out that there are many existing problems in the translation of drug instructions (Li, 2014), and the non-standard translation version will do harm to the patients' benefits as well as the brand image. Li (2014) points out that, one of the important reasons for the large number of detained Chinese exported drugs in the United States is that the drug instructions do not meet the requirements and regulations of Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Some scholars seek effective translation strategies to improve the quality of TCM translation (Li, Shen & Que, 2021). In recent years, some scholars analyze the language of drug instruction from the perspective of Halliday's systemic functional grammar. Zhang (2013) analyzes the genre features of a specific package insert and reveals that as a text of stage and goal orientation, a package insert carries certain social-cultural functions. Lu (2013) and Wang (2014) studied the mood system, modality system and appraisal system of drug instruction based on interpersonal function in their graduation theses for MA degree. However, none has studied TCM instructions from the perspective of three metafunctions. Considering the equal importance of three metafunctions, this research carried out in three metafunctions to cultivate people's functional awareness while they are writing TCM instructions and enrich the special field.

### 3. Theoretical Framework

#### 3.1 Experiential Function

The experiential function shows the meaning of language: including the world of the speaker's own consciousness, the world of thoughts, feeling, etc (Halliday, 2014).

##### 3.1.1 Transitivity system

The system of transitivity is an important part of the experiential function, which indicates different types of process and structures in language. Halliday divides the verbs into six groups, which includes material, relational, verbal, mental, behavioral and existential processes. The material process is defined as "the process of doing, happening, creating or changing", usually consists of an actor, a process and a goal. The relational process is regarded as "the process of having attribute, having identity and symbolizing". The mental process is concerned with the process of sensing, often expressed by verbs like "see", "feel", "like", etc, and consists of sensor and phenomenon. The verbal process refers to "saying" something, accompanied by sayer, verbiage and receiver. The behavioral process means the process of behaving, often related to physiological and psychological activities. Existential process can be interpreted as the process of existing and happening.

**Table 1:** Analysis on six types of processes (Halliday, 2000)

Types of process	Category meaning	Participants
material	doing, happening	actor, goal
mental	sensing	sensor, phenomenon
relational: attributive identifying	being: attributing identifying	carrier, attribute identified, identifying
behavioral	behaving	behavior
verbal	saying	sayer, receiver, verbiage
existential	existing	existent

Table 1 shows the corresponding meanings and participants of each type of processes.

##### 3.1.2 Voice

In SFG, voice should be classified into two parts: middle voice and non-middle voice (also called effective voice).

According to Halliday, non-middle voice is a process of happening. The agent, process and medium should be included in it; while middle voice is a process of doing, and only one process and medium are embodied. In a clause of middle voice, the relationship between the process and the actor (or goal) is active in form but passive in meaning. In a clause of non-middle voice, it can be divided into active voice and passive voice.

#### 3.2 Interpersonal Function

According to Halliday, interpersonal function is the function "to interact with other people, to establish and maintain relations with them, to influence their behavior, to express our own viewpoint on thing in the world, and to elicit or change theirs"(Thompson, 2000).

##### 3.2.1 Mood types of mood system

According to Halliday, when people are interacting, the commodity being exchanged may either be goods and services or information, and speech role can either be giving or demanding (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). Based on the discussion of speech roles and commodity exchanged, speech functions can be divided into four categories: statement, question, offer and command. Besides, there are three main types of mood in the grammatical category: declarative mood, imperative mood, and interrogative mood. Interrogative mood can be further divided into two types: yes/no interrogative mood and wh-interrogative mood. Declarative clause is most frequently used to express statement, interrogative clause to express question, and imperative clause to express command.

##### 3.2.2 Modality system

In mood system, polarity is a choice between yes and no, without an intermediate state between two poles. While in the modality system, there are intermediate degrees that possibility starts from 0% to 100% between the positive and negative pole. Based on different content being exchanged, modality can be divided into two categories: modalization and modulation. Modality can be realized by modal adjuncts, modal verbs, or the expansion of predicator.

#### 3.3 Textual Function

Textual function means how speakers organize their message in a way which makes them perfectly match the unfolding language event. It can be realized by thematic structure and cohesion.

##### 3.3.1 Thematic Structure

In thematic structure, two concepts -- Theme and Rheme, deserve much attention. According to Halliday (1985), Theme

is the element which appears in the first position in the clause and Rheme is the new information about the point of departure. Thematic structure is the classification of choices of Theme.

Theme can be divided into three categories: simple Theme, multiple Theme and clausal Theme. Since the clausal Theme is too complicated in nature which is not in accordance with the characteristics of drug instruction, there hardly exists clausal Theme since it is intricate and difficult to apprehend. Simple Theme consists of one experiential element and cannot be divided into even smaller functional units. Multiple Theme includes more than one semantic element and can be divided into smaller functional elements. Furthermore, depending on the consistency between Theme and Subject, Theme is characterized with markedness and unmarkedness.

### 3.3.2 Cohesion

“Cohesion occurs where the interpretation of some element in the discourse is dependent on that of another.” The concept of cohesion is a semantic one which refers to relations of meaning that exist within the text and that define it as a text (Halliday & Hasan, 1976).

There are basically two kinds of cohesive devices, namely, grammatical cohesion and lexical cohesion. The grammatical cohesion gets realized mainly by reference, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunction while lexical cohesion gets realized by repetition, synonymy, hyponymy (superordinates and subordinates) and collocation.

## 4. Metafunctional Analysis of English Instruction of Lianhua Qingwen Capsule

### 4.1 Analysis on the Experiential Metafunction

Experiential metafunction is to reflect people, things, and the environmental factors such as time and place related to them in the objective and subjective world.

#### 4.1.1 Transitivity

Transitivity is a semantic system which can be reflected by six kinds of process: material, mental, relational, behavioral, verbal and existential process. Each of the six processes consists of three parts: process, participant(s) and circumstantial element(s).

#### (1) The analysis of the material process

Material process can be interpreted as “the process of doing, happening, creating or changing” (Halliday, 2014). Material process acts as the main force in expounding precautions of the drug. Table 2 shows some examples of material process in the text.

**Table 2: Examples of Material Process in the Instruction**

(1)	Patients with hypertension or heat disease	should use		with caution.
(2)	Patients with chronic disease such as diabetes, liver disease, kidney disease	should take	medicine	under doctor's direction.
(3)		Put	this	beyond the

			medicine	children's reach.
(4)		Avoid	receiving nourishing Chinese medicine	during the period in this product.
	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Process: Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>

These examples are used to describe different actions. These actions are mainly about guidance of taking reasonable medicine. Example (1) and example (2) are typical material processes that indicate the precaution of drug use, so the actors are patients and the goal of material process is “medicine”, which can be eliminated in example (1) with mutual understanding. In example (3) and (4), there are two material processes: “put” and “avoid”. The actors are omitted to create a sense of objectivity.

#### (2) The analysis of the relational process

The relational process means “the process of having attribute, having identity and symbolizing”. (Halliday, 2014) Each relational process has two elements, namely, carrier and attribute. In the relational process, the speaker could convey the abstract concepts to the audience. In drug instruction, relational process is used to narrate the administration, quality, and characteristics of the drug, as seen in Table 3.

**Table 3: Examples of Relational Process in the Instruction**

(5)			For oral administration.
(6)			Contraindicated for the patients allergic to this product.
	<b>Carrier</b>	<b>Process: relational: attributive</b>	<b>Attribute</b>

Both of these two examples of relational process omit the carrier and process, which should be “The drug is”. By doing this, the manufacturer condenses the information and saves room to highlight the most important information.

#### (3) The analysis of the verbal process

Verbal process is the process of “saying”, so it can be used to refer to the exchange of information. Table 4 shows some examples of verbal process in the text.

**Table 4: Examples of Verbal Process in the Instruction**

Clause	Transitivity structure	Participant (s)	Circumstance	Clause complex
1	Consult with (verbal)	doctors or pharmacists (receiver)	before administration (time)	<clause 1> Consult with doctors or pharmacists before administration <clause 2> if other medicines are received during this time.
2	are received (material)	other medicines (Goal)	during this time. (time)	

The verbal process of clause 1 is “consult”, the omitted sayer is “the patient”, and the receiver is “doctors or pharmacists”. This example recommends patients to seek for more information in special cases.

Thus, in the instruction of Lianhua Qingwen capsule, material process plays the main role in explaining drug's precaution, assisted by relational process in illustrating drug's administration and characteristics, and verbal process in arousing patients' subjective initiative to seek for more necessary information from medical experts. There is no mental, behavioral and existential process. It is worth noting that a drug instruction often contains a lot of words describing the physiological and psychological actions of human, especially when explaining the indications, which is closely related to behavioral process. The analysis reveals that there are a large number of grammatical metaphors in the instruction of Lianhua Qingwen, and ideational metaphor, mainly through nominalization, accounts for a large proportion. For example:

Used in treatment of epidemic influenza and lung heat, symptom as fever or high fever, aversion to cold, muscular soreness, rhinostegnosis and nasal discharge, cough, headache, dry and sore throat, flushing tongue, or yellow or greasy fur of tongue.

The frequent use of nominalized words is an outstanding feature in this case. The nouns "aversion", "cough", "headache" are the metaphorical forms, whose congruent forms should serve as the verbs in behavioral process.

#### 4.1.2 Voice

As mentioned in chapter 3, the voice system includes two subtypes: middle voice and non-middle voice. And non-middle voice can be further divided into active voice and passive voice. In the instruction of Lianhua Qingwen capsule, passive voice is used commonly. There are several reasons for this.

For one thing, this contributes to the objectivity of drug instruction, which is a highly prized characteristic of scientific discourse. Scientific discourse focuses on things, substances and processes rather than the implementers of actions. So the use of passive voice in drug instruction is necessary and preferable, which helps to express a professional, neutral, and objective tone. And in drug instruction, the agent is clearly implied. It is often eliminated for the sake of conciseness, which increases the impersonality of the expression. Thompson(2014) points out that "the objectivity in the medical text is primarily achieved by a process of depersonalization. The researchers never appear explicitly in the text; and the patients frequently appear in circumstances (i.e. backgrounded, not in the core of the clause)." For example:

**Table 5:** Examples of Passive Voice in the Instruction

This product	should not be used	in treatment of wind-cold.
This product	should be administered	strictly in accordance with dosage and administration.
<b>Medium/ Goal</b>	<b>Process</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>

In these two clauses, the receiver of the action is "this product", which functions as the primary topic throughout the text. The agent is removed due to a tacit understanding or to avoid a sense of subjectivity. To put the object in a prominent position with the functional configuration of Medium/ Subject/Goal can better highlight the objective facts to be

expressed and construct a more concise and rigorous structure.

For another, the passive voice places less emphasis on the responsibility of the agent and more emphasis on the receiver of the action, so the passive voice can be used to express commands in a softer, less authoritative tone than those expressed through the active voice. It is known that drug instructions are prescriptive, often used to constrain the behavior of patients. Therefore, it conveys the attitude of the drug manufacturer and has a commanding and forcible character, especially when describing precautions. For example:

**Table 6:** Example of Passive Voice in the Instruction

Children	should be administered	under adults' supervision.
<b>Medium/Goal</b>	<b>Process</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>

In this example, if the passive voice is changed into the active voice, it will lose the meaning of prohibition and become a subjective statement. And the expression effectiveness will be reduced.

## 4.2 Analysis on the Interpersonal Metafunction

### 4.2.1 Mood analysis

In the instruction of Lianhua Qingwen capsule, only two mood types are adopted. That is, declarative and imperative. The interrogative clauses are absent.

It is well-known that drug manufacturer has the moral accountability as well as legal enforcement to ensure the health and safety of patients. So drug instruction has the obligation and responsibility to convey necessary information concerning the drugs and offer guidelines to the public. By its very nature, drug instruction has always emphasized substance and fact above rhetoric and speech technique. So declarative clauses are used to give drug's information and imperative clauses are used to demand consumers to take the medicine according to the package insert.

For one thing, declarative mood can be used to realize the instructive and authoritative function of package insert. For example:

- 1) *Children should be administered under adults' supervision.*
- 2) *This product should not be used in treatment of wind-cold.*

In these two examples, the manufacturer tries to provide the information which concerns the cautions and indication of this drug.

For another, the extensive use of imperative clauses is a prominent feature of the syntax of TCM instructions. Imperative clauses do not have a subject. Instead, they use predicative verbs such as "clear", "remove", "avoid", "don't take", "put", "consult", "preserve", etc. as the starting point, followed by an object. Drug instructions often adopt the imperative mood when describing the functions, indications, precautions and storage of drug. For example:

- 3) *Please protect from moisture after opening the moisture proof bag.*

- 4) *Preserve in tightly closed containers.*  
 5) *Go and see the doctor if the symptom is not alleviated 3 days after administration.*  
 6) *Don't take this medicine if the description has changed.*

In these four examples, imperative mood gives a tone of instruction and command, so they are suitable for providing patients with some authoritative information. Since the use of drug is closely related to people's health and life, the instruction must be serious and meticulous to avoid potentially harmful effects of drug misuse, and imperative clauses can call on consumers to pay more attention to the key information. In addition, if-clauses in example (5) and (6) help to mitigate imperative mood and inform consumers of potential risks.

To sum up, drug instruction mainly adopts declarative clauses to inform others of the objective information of the medicine; it also employs the imperatives to send moderate command to the consumers.

#### 4.2.2 Modality analysis

Halliday defines Modality as "the area of meaning that lies between yes and no, the intermediate ground between positive and negative"(Halliday, 2004). Table 7 shows the modal verbs in the text.

**Table 7:** Finite Modal Verbs in the Instruction of Lianhua Qingwen Capsule

Verbs	Should/ Should not	May
Values	Median	Low
Number	8	1
Percentage	88.89%	11.11%

As is demonstrated in Table 7, two modal verbs are used in package insert of Lianhua Qingwen capsule, that is, "should/should not" and "may". The table provides the statistics regarding the number and frequency of modal verbs. It is clear from the table that "should" is most frequently used in the text.

The use of "should" is to realize modulation of positive or negative obligation. The common modal types of drug instructions are obligation, which can help the drug manufacturer build a guiding and authoritative image and increase objectivity in the text. When reading the instruction, the consumer is willing to learn more facts about the drug. For example:

- 1) *Patients with body temperature higher than 38.5°C should see the doctor.*

Since caution is closely concerned with patients' health and life, so the drug manufactures are inclined to show the firm determination and intention. By using the modal verb "should", which has a strong allure to the consumers, the manufacturer places a certain degree of obligation on the patients to carry out the command. Moreover, "should" is a modal verb of median value, which helps to soften the directive, making it gentler, thus building a friendly and harmonious atmosphere between the manufacturer and consumers.

Besides, "may" is adopted to realize the modalization of potentiality in this text. For example:

- 2) *Interaction may appear if administered accompanied with other medicine, consult with doctors or pharmacists for details.*

In this example, the modal verb "may" is of low value talking about the potential drug interactions. The key information in this clause is what may happen in the future if patients take more than one medications at the same time. And the interactions will not necessarily happen. The use of high value modal verb may lead to unnecessary panic and a feeling of rejection, which can undermine the brand image and hinder the spread of Traditional Chinese Medicine. Instructions also have the characteristics of advertising. So it is enough for the manufacturer not to mention it with absolute certainty and the consumer can grasp the main idea in this declarative clause with a modal verb of low value in a milder tone, which makes an instruction meet the requirement of being both objective and reliable. In this way, a great brand image is maintained and the customers can rest assured to use the drug.

#### 4.3 Analysis on the Textual Metafunction

##### 4.3.1 Thematic structure

Marked Theme and Unmarked Theme are two basic components of Theme. The choice of Theme reflects the speaker's standpoints. Through analysis, all Themes in the clauses in the instruction of Lianhua Qingwen are unmarked Themes, for the reason of the plain, simple and direct characteristics of drug instruction. And Themes in the text all belong to simple Themes, which makes the instruction short in length, normal and simple in word order, and most easily understood in content.

In English, the thematic structure can be analyzed in three types of clauses: imperative clause, declarative clause, and interrogative clause. Due to the objectivity of drug instruction, only imperative clause and declarative clause are adopted in this text. Thus, the discussion mainly focuses on unmarked Theme in the imperative clause and declarative clause.

**Table 8:** Unmarked Theme in the imperative clauses

	Theme	Rheme
(1)	Avoid	cigarettes, alcohol and keep from eating spicy, raw, cold or greasy food.
(2)	Don't take	this medicine if the description has changed.
(3)	Go and see	the doctor if the symptom is not alleviated 3 days after administration.
(4)	Put	this medicine beyond the children's reach.
(5)	Preserve	in tightly closed containers.

In imperative clause, the natural starting point is the Predicator, which expresses the action. The unmarked Theme is adopted to present new information at the beginning of the clause. The emphasis of new information can allow the consumer to capture what the drug manufacturer wants to convey.

**Table 9:** Unmarked Theme in the declarative clauses

	Theme	Rheme
(6)	Children, pregnant woman, nursing mother, senile and infirm patients or those with weak, spleen	should take medicine under doctor's direction.

(7)	Patients with hypertension or heat disease	should use with caution.
(8)	Patients with body temperature higher than 38.5°C	should see the doctor.
(9)	Athletes	should use with caution.
(10)	Children	should be administered under adults' supervision.
(11)	This product	should be administered strictly in accordance with dosage and administration, and is not for long-term use.
(12)	Interaction	may appear if administered accompanied with other medicine, consult with doctors or pharmacists for details.

In declarative clauses, Theme and Subject are the same. Subject is the “normal” Theme choice in this kind of clauses and is therefore said to be the unmarked Theme choice. The nominal group acting as Subject may include a long post-modifier, such as example (7) and (8). In these cases, it is the whole nominal group that is Theme.

From example (6) to example (10), the unmarked Themes are nominal groups such as “athletes”, “children”, “pregnant woman”, “nursing mother”, which attract the consumer’s attention to the special groups that should carefully about the drug use.

To summarize, since the drug instruction employs the concise, rigorous and informative language to convey the basic information, the thematic structure is also easily and simply arranged in the text to decrease the difficulty in reading.

#### 4.3.2 Cohesion

Cohesion, a concept beyond the syntax, is about the discourse or the text. In Halliday’s words, “this concept of cohesion is a semantic one; it refers to relations of meaning that exist within the text, and that define it as a text.”(Halliday & Hasan, 1976) The grammatical cohesion in the instruction of Lianhua Qingwen capsule gets realized mainly by reference and ellipsis while lexical cohesion gets realized mainly by repetition, synonymy, hyponymy and collocation.

##### (1) Grammatical cohesion

###### a. Ellipsis

Ellipsis is used to avoid repetition, to highlight main information, and to connect context. Ellipsis can be regarded as a special kind of substitution -- substitution by zero. Ellipsis can also be called “zero substitution”. In other words, substitution is replacement of something by another while ellipsis refers to the omission of something. Ellipsis makes it possible to leave out parts of a structure when they can be presumed from the context. For example:

- 1) (**The medicine is**) Used in treatment of epidemic influenza and lung heat, symptom as fever or high fever, aversion to cold, muscular soreness, rhinostegnosis and nasal discharge, cough, headache, dry and sore throat, flushing tongue, or yellow or greasy fur of tongue.
- 2) (**The medicine is**) Contraindicated for the patients allergic to this product, be cautious about patients with allergic

constitution.

3) Please protect (**the medicine**) from moisture after opening the moisture proof bag.

In these three examples, the noun that refers to the product is omitted since it is not prominent in understanding. In a sheet of drug instruction, the space is limited and tight, so the manufacturer have to distill and clarify the message to make the text brief.

###### b. Reference

Reference can signal the same entity in the text to make the text highly connected, which mainly includes personal reference, demonstrative reference, comparative reference and clausal reference. In the instruction of Lianhua Qingwen capsule, reference is achieved by demonstrative reference through the use of “this”. For example:

- 1) Avoid receiving nourishing Chinese medicine during the period in **this** product.
- 2) **This** product should be administered strictly in accordance with dosage and administration, and is not for long-term use.
- 3) Don't take **this** medicine if the description has changed.
- 4) Put **this** medicine beyond the children's reach.

In these four examples, “this” in the text refers to the medicine, which is concise and comprehensive, making the discourse more compact in structure and the text a cohesive whole.

Another two devices for grammatical cohesion, substitution and conjunction, are hardly used in the instruction of Lianhua Qingwen capsule. Conjunction is a practical device to build up the inner logical relationship for the discourse. Drug instruction carries a lot of valuable and logically independent information, so these two kinds of cohesive devices are rare in the text.

##### (2) Lexical cohesion

###### a. Repetition

Repetition is the most direct form of lexical cohesion. It means the choice of the lexical item that is in some sense similar to the preceding one. For example:

1) **Patients with** hypertension or heat disease **should** use with caution, **patients with** chronic disease such as diabetes, liver disease, kidney disease **should** take medicine under doctor's direction.

In this example, there are two chains of lexical cohesion: “patients with” and “should”, which gives some suggestions for patients with special physical conditions. The prepositional phrases “with + certain diseases” as postpositive attributes of “patients” specify who should be the focus of the directive, and the repeat of these words makes the discourse more powerful.

###### b. Collocation

Collocation refers to a syntagmatic relation between words being used together frequently. In the text of TCM instruction, some special collations that reflects the unique diagnostic

method of Traditional Chinese Medicine can be found. For example:

1) [Functions and Indications] **Clear heat** and detoxify, **remove lung hotness**.

In this example, “clear heat” and “remove hotness” are collocations that used frequently in medical literature of TCM but rarely in that of western medicine. Different from western medicine, TCM has specific understanding both in the physiological functions of human body and in the diagnosis and treatment of disease, which is the result of being highly affected by the concept and views of ancient Chinese philosophy.

### c. Hyponymy

Hyponymy refers to a relation between two words, in which the meaning of one word includes the meaning of another word. For example:

1) Patients with **chronic disease** such as **diabetes**, **liver disease**, **kidney disease** should take medicine under doctor's direction.

In this example, “chronic disease” is a superordinate, while “diabetes”, “liver disease” and “kidney disease” are its several hyponyms. Since drug instruction involves a lot of professional medical knowledge that is unfamiliar and sophisticated for ordinary people, hyponymy can not only elaborate the information, but also help to achieve medical knowledge propagation.

## 5. Conclusion

According to the three parts of analysis with the aid of the Meta-function theory, the author finds some features of drug instruction of Lianhua Qingwen capsule.

First, the results of the study show that the experiential function is achieved by the transitivity system and voice. Among the six processes, the material process, relational process and verbal process occupy the top three place in this text, while behavioral process, mental process and existential process are absent in the instruction. Second, the interpersonal function of instruction of Lianhua Qingwen capsule is fulfilled by the mood and modality system. In the mood system, the declarative and imperative clauses are the main types of mood without interrogative clauses. In the modality system, two modal verbs (“should” and “may”) are utilized in the text. Third, the textual function is realized by thematic structure and cohesion. All Themes in the clauses of this instruction are unmarked Themes, which contributes to the informative and authoritative function of drug instruction and makes the text easily understood. What's more, cohesive devices are applied to make the text fluent and connected to some extent.

However, it goes without saying that the brief text of Lianhua Qingwen capsule gives us far too little data to be able to make any valid generations about metafunctions of TCM drug instruction. In the future research, a corpus of more analyzed texts need to be built up by including many other TCM drug

instructions.

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