Discourse Analysis of *Father's Grassland Mother's River* Based on Register Theory

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Abstract: Based on the framework of register theory, this paper uses the song *Father's Grassland Mother's River* which is collected from the website of w*edding poetry* as the analysis material. Different linguistic theories to analyze discourses can reveal the linguistic approaches used by the speaker for the realization of speaking intention from the different perspectives. The purpose of this paper is to explore the merits of register theory in the discourse analysis of lyrics and to verify the applicability of register theory in the analysis of lyrics. Though literature research method, quantitative analysis and qualitative analysis, this paper focuses on the register of lyric, including field, tenor, and mode, studying three meta-functions and its meanings of systemic functional linguistics which refers to the field and discussion of ideational function; the tenor and discussion of interpersonal function and the mode and discussion of textual function. The study shows the nationality and musicality of the song, and elucidates the reason for its widely spread among the public. The results of analysis prove that: i) the transitivity, logical relationship and the modal system are all influenced by the vocabularies used in the lyrics; ii) the two kinds of tenor in lyrics reflect the interpersonal relationship; iii) comprehensive analysis of the thematic structure, the information structure and the rhyme and other stylistic characteristics reflects the uniqueness of the lyrics from other types of discourse.
Keywords: systemic functional linguistics, register theory, meta-functions, Father's Grassland Mother's River

Introduction

Grassland song is one kind of artistic form formed by nomadic descendants in the long history of nomadic culture based on the picturesque nature and local customs and culture of the grassland[1]. Being dissimilar from long narrative traditional Mongolian folk songs, the majority of the lyrics of grassland songs are written in Chinese. *Father's Grassland Mother's River* is a kind of Mongolian long tune, written by Taiwanese Mongolian poet Xi Murong, composed by Ulantoga and sung by Dedema. This song is prevailing and deeply loved due to its beautiful folk music melody and prosperous grassland connotation with its nationality, musicality, and the romance behind it which flows with the infinite yearning and deep attachment of uprooted people to the grassland since it has been released in 2001[26]. The famous bel canto singer Liao Changyong paid a compliment to this song as inspiring work for Chinese people to express nostalgia for finding their roots.

In *Father's Grassland Mother's River*, the first verse tells us the fuzzy impression of the scene of the grassland in the mind; the second verse focuses on the scene when the author returns to the hometown, and draws people from memories back to reality; the third verse is the catharsis of the emotions buried in the heart for decades[31]. In the 1980s, cross-strait relations have made innovative developments and the mainland and compatriots have carried out a large number of economic and cultural activities. The studies of Taiwanese literature have been developing in the dialogue of cross-strait and innovating in the integration of cross-strait. As the song created in such background, *Father's Grassland Mother's River* represents the emotional experience of a group of people. At the same time, the song also concerns the inheritance of grassland culture under the natural environment and the cultural diversity of hometown. According to the comparison with other English translated versions, this English translated version from the website of *Wedding Poetry* has not only a high level of scientific research quality, but also the more than high reliability and credibility. Thus, the paper chooses this English translated version as the analysis corpus. After in-depth analysis of this corpus, it can be seen that there is the high consistency and integrity of the raw text and the target text, which means that the corpus has great application prospect of scientific research and irreplaceable unique value.

In recent years, the analysis of the song *Father's Grassland Mother's River* has emerged from different viewpoints. These studies finds that most of these researches are under the perspective of art appreciation while the analyses guided by linguistics theory are infrequent. Nevertheless, the analysis process of the lyrics which is a type of discourse, will be inevitably subjective without the exact linguistic theory for guidance. Quite a few scholars in China, such as Huang[19], Wang[40], Xie[44], Jiang[22] and Li[28] have discussed the use of register theory in the discourse analysis, translation and stylistics and language teaching. Based on the framework of systemic functional linguistics of Hallidy, this study uses the theoretical framework of register, choosing the translation of the song *Father's Grassland Mother's River* as the discourse analysis material, studying field, tenor and mode which could be helpful to analyze the three metafunctions

of systemic functional linguistics for discussing the ideational function, interpersonal function, and textual function in the discourse and exploring the evaluation of lyrics.

The significance of this study lies in the more scientific and systematic discourse analysis of *Father's Grassland Mother's River* through the literature research method, quantitative and qualitative analysis method, based on the framework of register theory using the song *Father's Grassland Mother's River* which is collected from the website of *Wedding Poetry* as the analysis material. The consequences of study not only reveal that the prevalent spread of the song is inseparable under the specific social background, but also reflect a kind of emotion and values. At the same time, the characteristics "father" and "mother" represent the value of family and family bond, while "grassland" and "river" represent natural, cultural and historical values. Additionally the analysis of this study is beneficial to further improve the study of register theory and provide a reference for the analysis of lyrics based on register theory.

Literature Review
Systemic Functional Linguistics:
Systemic functional linguistics is proposed by Halliday, a contemporary British linguist, is composed of "system grammar" and "functional grammar" which explains that language is a way of social interaction[9]. Matthiessen and Halliday take into account systematic functional linguistics should not only narrate the language system, but also combine the system and discourse for description and analysis[34]. Systemic functional grammar emerged in the 1960s. Halliday explicitly states that the purpose of constructing systemic functional grammar is to construct a grammatical framework for discourse analysis[15]. Huang says that systemic functional grammar is the maneuverable and practicable discourse analysis theory, which is more suitable for discourse analysis than other theories[18]. Functional grammar explains that language is a way of social interaction[26]. Discourse is the core of systemic functional linguistics research which provides a context for studying vocabulary, grammar, and so on. Halliday proposes three meta-functions of language: ideational function, interpersonal function, and textual function[13]. Ostovar Namaghi Seyyed Ali intends to explore the use of modality in a random sample of expository essays written in an EFL context[36]. Cabrejas Peñuelas Ana Belén explores the interplay of evaluation and transitivity in an American and Spanish parliamentary debate by President Obama and PM Rajoy aiming at legitimizing their actions and at convincing candidates to vote for them in the upcoming elections[5]. Zhan and Ma conducts a contrastive analysis of song lyrics Yu Lin Ling and its two English versions from the perspective of transitivity system based on self-built corpus[45]; Lai explores the features of linguistic and literary knowledge based on a comparative analysis of definition types in linguistics and literary theory from the perspective of specialization, a dimension in the legitimation code theory[24].

Register Theory:
Register theory, one of the most significant theories in systematic functional grammar, was originated from "British Contextualism" put forward by Malinowski, an anthropologist, in 1923. In the 1930s, Malinowski believed that the language analysis must break through the limitations of language context and extend to the specific context, culture, and psychology of language use. Firth further developed Malinowski's concept into the theory of "Semantics in Context"[9]. In 1956, Reid first proposed the concept of "Register" while studying bilingual phenomena[39]. In the 1960s, Halliday divided the language environment into society behavior, the role structure, and the symbol organization and further proposed three variables of discourse including three variables, namely the discourse scope (field), the discourse tone (tenor) and the discourse mode (mode). They are corresponding to the three meta-functions of language: ideational function, interpersonal function and textual function which determine three parts of the meaning system: ideational meaning, interpersonal meaning, and textual meaning.
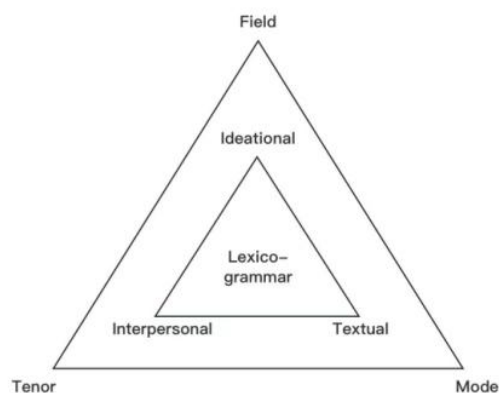

Figure 1: Triangle of register

Register theory has been interested for a long time since it has been put forward. Many foreign scholars, such as Halliday, agreed to generalize the teaching of register and modified the description of register constantly in *Language as Social Semiotic*[14], *Learning How to Mean*[12] and *Language Teaching*[3]. In 1979, Brumfit and Johnson hold the view that language teaching is to expect the learners to make the proper selection from meaning potential[4] and Margarer tried to apply the register theory[33]. The register is the semantic variety of the discourse which may be regarded as an instance[14]. This paper mainly introduces the application of the register theory in China.Zhu introduced the register theory briefly, and proposed some constructive proposals for guiding pedagogical study of register theory[48]. Zhang Delu[46], Hu Zhuanglin[20], Cheng Xiaotang[6] et al. were successively contributed to the introduction of theory of foreign language teaching and register.

Accordingly, it is necessary to analyze discourse based on Chinese text using the register theory. Wang explored the implication of the three components of the register theory in journalistic English discourse and the application of register analysis of journalistic English discourse[42]. There are many other scholars, such as Gao Shengwen and Yuan Zengjin[11], Li Jiayuan[27] and Wang Xingzi[41] who paid their attention on the field of translation from the perspective of register theory. Li clarified the applicability and guiding significance of the register theory in systemic functional linguistics for the teaching of discipline-based English[30]. Meng and Zhang interpreted the feasibility of discourse studies on traditional Chinese opera on the basis of register theory and pointed that field analysis had illustrated the importance of subject matter and subject setting of the opera and tenor analysis reveals the relationship among the participants and change of their social status[35].

Discourse Analysis and Discussion:

Register could be analyzed by field, tenor and mode. These three variables act together as determinants of discourses; meanwhile they are connected to the register, as language varieties, associating with particular situational or contextual parameters of variation and defined by the special characteristics of linguistic. Therefore, this study analyzes the discourse characteristics of *Father's Grassland Mother's River* from the three dimensions of field, tenor and mode (see Table 1).

Register Variables	Discourse Implicature	Representation of Functional Grammar
Field	ideational Function	transitivity; lexical meaning of words; the logical relationship of language structure
Tenor	interpersonal Function	mood system; modality system; attitudinal meaning of words
Mode	textual Function	theme; cohesion

Table 1: Register variables and embodiment

Field and discussion of ideational function

Field refers to the social activities that are taking place in communication[16], that is, "what is happening", including the participants, the subjects, and the whole activity. According to the text typology of Reiss, texts can be classified into expressive, informative, and operative discourses[47]. Ideational function includes experiential function which is chiefly reflected by the transitivity system and logical function. The transitivity patterns are the types of processes and the empirical components of the semantic system. They are the indispensable information for the analysis of the field.

Vocabulary Analysis of Lyrics:

There are two kinds of field of discourse, and one is technical, another is non-technical. The technical fields of discourse exist in some specific occupations like scientist, teacher, scientist and lawyer. On the contrary, the non-technical fields of discourse are shown in casual conversations or personal letters. It is obvious that *Father's Grassland Mother's River* is non-technical which tells a story about a descendant of the grassland who has left the hometown for a long time and has heard of the picturesque scenery of the grassland for countless times being full of the yearning for the grassland of the hometown. In terms of the struggle, the narrator returned to back to the hometown ultimately. While standing on the fragrant grassland, narrator's tears fell like rain. Therefore, the content of this story is enlarged to the individuals who left home in youth and return in age suffering from homesickness. In *Father's Grassland Mother's River*, many words related to father, mother and home, so it can be seen that the field of lyrics is the process of going back to homeland. In order to achieve the communicative purpose as well as the communicative function, the activities of language should be contacted to the subject matters, so does the lyrics of grassland. The words using varies in different settings and subjects which means vocabularies are restricted by field and the restricted vocabularies reflect the conceptual function of the lyrics. The two major classifications of the conceptual function are experiential function and logical function. The experience function is that people could use language to talk about their experience of the world and describe surrounding events or situations[21] while logical function indicates the relationship between clauses[38].

In views of above, this paper will analyse the field of the discourse by the choice of words. *Father's Grassland Mother's River* was created after the special year of "the Return of Hong Kong to China" and there are a lot of subjects matching with the background of society at that time. Lyrics in this song will be analyzed one by one in the following analysis and the vocabulary classification of lyrics is shown in Table 2.

Parts of speech of Content words	Noun (28)	Concrete noun	father, grassland, mother, river, plateau, land, grassland, rain, ancestors, children, way, kid, song, prairie, heart
		Abstract noun	Fragrance, ends, world, hometown, blessings, tongue, sorrow, joy
		Pronoun	I, my, him, other, their
	Adjective (6)		mighty, remote, Mongolian, vast, fragrant, wandering
	Adverb (9)		once, never, always, now, finally, although, already, home, also
	Verb (15)		describe, let, forget, loves, trace, rushing, see, standing, cry, singing, bless, find, cannot, speak, accept
	numeral		———
Parts of speech of function words	Article (2)		the, a
	Preposition (6)		of, at, to, on, in, from
	Conjunction (2)		like, and
	Interjection (1)		ah

Table 2: Vocabulary List of Lyric

Experiential function refers to the way that clauses represent the type of experience. Language allows humans to construct a real psychological picture and understand people around them. Clauses here play a central role, in that it embodies a universal fundamental of empirical modelling, in which reality consists of processes. Based on the analysis of the part of address through Table 1, it is apparent that there are some characteristics of the choice of vocabularies.

Firstly, nouns are the crucial part of the organization of the discourse, with 40.6% of the lyrics, which usually directly represents a person, a place, or a material entity. In this song, the nouns include "father" "grassland" "mother" "river" "plateau" and so on. Among them, "father" and "mother" represent the closest kinship of human beings, while "grassland" "river" and "plateau" represent the natural landscape. Obviously, the song expresses the yearning of the hometown through the description of the natural landscape. Secondly, verbs and adjectives could express the affection and literary imagery of the discourse. To name only a few, the adjective "vast" is used in the song to vividly show the vastness of the grassland, forming a life-some picture, so that the audience can be immersive when they are listening to the song. Additionally the song also uses some emotional words, such as "cry like rain", "let him never forget each other" and so on. These emotional words allow the audience to better understand the emotional expression of the narrator, so as to have the better emotional resonance. In general, we could understand the use of various parts of speech in this classic folk song through quantitative analysis. These words and expression images are all close to the subject, expressing the deep attachment for hometown, family and nature. It also reveals the reason why folk songs are loved is that they evoke deep emotions and resonate us more strongly.

In conclusion, nouns, verbs, adjectives and pronouns account for 71.01%. These words mainly reflect the field of the lyrics, that is, narrator's deep love of the hometown; the mood system expressed by adverbs reflects the modality of the lyrics, which will be analyzed in the *tenor and discussion of interpersonal function* section; the conjunctions reflect the mode of lyrics, which will be analyzed in the *mode and discussion of textual function* section.

Transitivity Analysis of Lyrics:

The function of transitivity system is to show individuals' social and psychological experiences in language through the choice of process participants and circumstances[23]. The system of transitivity processes can convey experiential meaning[9]. There are six types of processes in the transitivity system and each of them has its own participants. They are the material process, mental process, relational process, verbal process, behavioral process and existential process. This study classified and counted the six processes of transitivity contained in the discourse. The number and percentage of each process are listed in table 2, illustrating the distribution of processes of *Father's grassland mother's river*. The results represent that existential processes: 8, accounting for 36.4%; material processes: 4, accounting for 18%; mental processes: 3, accounting for 13.7%; relational processes: 3, accounting for 13.7%; verbal processes: 3, accounting for 13.7%; behavioral processes: 1, accounting for 4.5%.

Processes	Material Process	Mental Process	Relational Process	Behavioral Process	Verbal Process	Existential Process
Number	4	3	3	1	3	8
Percentage	18%	13.7%	13.7%	4.5%	13.7%	36.4%

Table 3: The distribution of processes of transitivity

Material processes mean "do" processes, including an indispensable actor and feasible goals, reflected by dynamic verbs, such as "build" "kick" "make" "play" etc.. The logical subject of this process is called the *actor* and the logical object is called the *goal*. For example, in order to reflect the fact that "the river is singing", language users can achieve this goal through the combination of "is singing", the material process and "the river", the participant. There are samples of material process in Table 3.1 and Table 3.2. The case in Table 3.1 expresses the memories of homeland of

narrator's fathers. Under the influence of his parents, the narrator returned home. The case in table 3.2 shows "the children" as an *actor* is "wandering" and expresses the best wishes of narrator who hope the wandering children find their way home. Although the *actor* is blurry in table 3.3, we could infer that the narrators want to show the sorrow and joy of herself.

My father	once	described		the fragrance of the grassland	
Actor		**Process: Material**		**Goal**	

Table 3.1

Bless	the wandering children	find	their way home
	Actor	**Process: Material**	**Goal**

Table 3.2

Please	accept	my sorrow and my joy
	Process: Material	**Goal**

Table 3.3

The mental process is the process of "understand", which is the process of perception, thinking and emotion[37]. This process will be reflected by not only the existence of mental verbs that express the perception, such as *seeing, hearing*; but also the emotion, such as *like, fear* and cognition, such as *thinking and understanding*. There are samples of mental process in Table 3.4, Table 3.5 and Table 3.7. The relational process is a "mean" process showed in Table 3.7 which identifies the child's identity.

let	him	never	forget		each other	at the ends of the world
	Sensor		**Process: Mental**		**Phenomenon**	

Table 3.4

Mother	always	loves		to	trace	the mighty river
Sensor		**Process: Mental**				**Phenomenon**

Table 3.5

Now	I		finally		see		the vast land
	Sensor				**Process: Mental**		**Phenomenon**

Table 3.6

I	am		also	a	kid	from	the	plateau
Carrier	**Process: Relational**				**Attributive**			

Table 3.7

Existential process accounts for the largest proportion for two reasons, one is that the chorus is repeated, so the same lyrics emerge twice, the other is that the existential sentence "there be" guide the whole sentence. It will reflect that the hometown scenery is established in the mind and as the non-human living body is to be the initiator, it accommodates to the natural ecological view of "all things are equal".

Eg.(1)

..., rushing in my remote hometown on the Mongolian plateau... standing on the fragrant grassland... there is a song in my heart... in the song there is my father's grassland and mother's river.

Here, "rushing" "standing" and "there is" are existential; "a song" and "my father's grassland mother's river" are existent; and "in my remote hometown on the Mongolian plateau" "on the fragrant grassland" "in my heart" and "in the song" are circumstances. "Rushing" gives life to river which could enhance the sense of picture. The non-finite verb "standing" reflects the state of people of returning hometown. "There is" objectively shows that these feelings have come together in the song.

Logical Function:

Logical function reflected in lyrics is that language can reflect the logical and semantic relationship between two or more language units. The perspective of research includes interdependency and logical-semantic relation[25]. Here, we mainly analysis lyric through parataxis and hypotaxis in interdependence and three ways of expansion in logical semantic relations. Expansion, on the other hand, can be worn out into relations of "elaboration" (reiteration), "extension" (addition) and "enhancement" (qualification). Generally speaking, the most typical manifestations of logical functional are conjunctions, but there is no need to use connectives for expressing a logical relationship.

However, it is not difficult to analyze the internal logic of the function and the logical function of the lyrics which is shown in Table 4.

Interdependency	Parataxis	Ah, father's grassland; ah mother's river.
	Hypotaxis	Standing on the fragrant grassland, I cry like rain.
Logico-semantics	Elaboration	Mother always loves to trace the mighty river, rushing in my remote hometown on the Mongolian plateau.
	Enhancement	Although already can't speak in one's mother tongue, please accept my sorrow and my joy.
	Extension	My father once described the fragrance of the grassland, (which) let him never forget each other at the end of the world.

Table 4: Logical Functions of Lyrics

Parataxis is the linking of elements of equal status, and hypotaxis is the binding of elements of unequal status. In "ah, father's grassland; ah mother's river", both clauses are free and equal, while hypotactic relation exists between two clauses of unequal status: the dominant clause and the dependent clause. In "standing on the fragrant grassland, I cry like rain", "I cry like rain" is a dominant clause which is free, but the dependent clause "standing on the fragrant grassland" is the elaborating clause which could restate, comment, exemplify, and specify the dominant one. "Rushing in my remote hometown on the Mongolian plateau" modifies "the mighty river". The enhancing clause provides circumstantial features of time, place, cause, reason, condition and result, etc. Extension means the clause will add something new and provide an exception, or offer an alternative. "Let him never forget each other at the end of the world" replenishes the topic clause.

Tenor and discussion of interpersonal function

Interpersonal function means that people use language to interact with other people and to establish and maintain appropriate social relations with them[38]. Halliday believed that interpersonal function was mainly reflected by mood and modality system which reflected the relationship between the speaker and the recipient in conditions and the attitude of the speaker to what is said or written[15]. Li took into accounted the intonation system was also essential in the analysis of tenor[29].

Mood System:

The mode system is judged by the type of sentence which is advantageous for the speaker to achieve different communicative purposes through different mode. There are four important language functions including "offer" "statement" "command" and "question". We can give information through declarative clauses and use questions to express the need for information.

The mode of statement is manifested on the declarative clause; the mode of command is reflected on the imperative clause; the mode of question is reflected on the interrogative clause and the mode of offering is reflected on the imperative clause. In the lyrics, the declarative sentence is directly expressed in the specific discourse. There are 27 sentences in *Father's Grassland Mother's River* including declarative clauses: 20, accounting for 74.07%; exclamatory clauses: 5, accounting for 18.52%; imperative clauses: 2, accounting for 7.41%.

Eg.(2)

Standing on the fragrant grassland, I cry like rain. (Declarative clause)
Ah! Father's grassland. (Exclamatory clause)
Please accept my sorrow and my joy. (Imperative clause)

Depending on the characteristics of the lyrics, the lyrics are used to elaborate personal views and personal actions and the role of declarative clause is giving information, so most statements are used in the lyrics. In contrast, other grammatical structures are in a minor proportion in lyrics. The purpose of the exclamation clause is to attract the attention of audiences and to achieve the ideological resonance. The imperative clause, with a minimum proportion of 7.41%, is used for realizing the language function of *command*, which is generally solely used for close communicators.

Modality System:

Regarding the modality system, it includes modality and modulation, which embodies the speaker's cognition of the effectiveness of the *proposition* and the attitude towards the *proposal*[10].

Modality is the speaker's evaluation of the authenticity of the proposition, including possibility and usuality while the modulation includes obligation and inclination, indicating different degrees of liability and inclination. The modality and the modulation are mostly realized by modal verbs and adverbs such as "will" "should" "probably" "always" etc. and the expansion of predicator such as "be allowed to". Both modulation and modality have three values: high, moderate and low. The restricted modal verbs in the two verb phrases in lyrics have diverse probabilities and frequencies. The rank of modal verbs from high to low are as follows: must, can, could, need, will, would, may, might. The rank of the probability of modulation adverbs from high to low are as follows: probably, always, never, finally, already.

According to statistics, although there are rare 7 modality operation words in the song, all of them are high modality operation words. See Table 5 for the specific distribution.

Clauses	Modal operation words	Value
Let him never forget each other at the ends of the world.	never	
Mother always loves to trace the mighty river.	always	high
Now I finally see the vast land.	finally	
Can not speak in one's mother tongue.	can not	

Table 5: Distribution of modal operation words and value domain

According to table 5, this paper finds that the author uses high modality words to describe the content which is relevant to the hometown scenery, such as "forget each other" with "never", "trace the mighty river" with "always", and "see the vast land" with "finally". It can be deduced that the author's family has deep feelings for their hometown.

The declaration represents the highest level of modality value, where the speaker narrates it as a fact. The declarative descriptions stand for the highest recognition or opposition to events. The combination of the value and the conceptual meaning can realize different ecological meanings. The declarative descriptions represent the highest recognition or opposition to events. From the modality system analysis, we can know that the type of ideational meaning of *Father's Grassland Mother's River* is the "ecological protection", because the song expresses the author and her parents' love, assimilation and trend towards the hometown (see Table 6 and Table 7).

Communicators	father, mother, I
Communicative content	My father once described the fragrance of the grassland, let him never forget each other at the end of the world. Mother always loves to trace the mighty river, rushing in my remote hometown on the Mongolian plateau. Now I finally see the vast land, standing on the fragrant grassland, I cry like rain.
Communicative formality	recounting
Communicative relationship	child with his parents
Communicative mood	statement
Modality operation words	never, always, finally

Table 6: Tenor I (The narrator & the parents)

Communicative participants	the river, children, father's grassland, mother's river, plateau
Communicative content	The river is singing the blessings of the ancestors. Bless the wandering children find their way home. Although already can't speak in one's mother tongue, please accept my sorrow and my joy. I am also a kid from the plateau. There is a song in my heart.
Communicative formality	monologue
Communicative relationship	children and nature
Communicative mood	statement and imperative
Modality operation words	although already

Table 7: Tenor Ⅱ (man & nature)

The tenor of discourse is mainly expressed through the status and relations. There are two species of tenor in *Father's Grassland Mother's River*. Communication mode Ⅰ is the narrator's statement of the grassland and river in father and mother's mind. Communication mode Ⅱ is the the monologue of the nature of narrator. According to Table 6, the communicative relationship of the communicative participants is the child with her parents. At the same time, it expresses the narrator's eagerness to return home to see the grassland and the river which are loved by her parents while the function of her parents is to evoke the eagerness of narrator. Hence one can see that there is a tilt of force among the communicators and the narrator is in a mighty position. The narrator chooses the communicative tone of statement rather than the exclamation, questioning, or imperative tone. From the perspective of the tone of interpersonal function, the advantage of using statement is useful to express the helplessness of that he had never seen the grassland and the river and to express the comfort of the natural environment when she came back home. In addition, the modal operation words convey the interpersonal meaning of the discourse. As an example, "never" (let him never forget each other at the ends of the world.), shows that the narrator's father never forgets the fragrance of the grassland; "always" (mother always loves to trace the mighty river), as a high modal word suggests the depth of missing of the mother to the river; and "finally" (now I finally see the vast land) is a relatively strong expression which conveys the hope for going back home of the narrator. The communication participants and the communication formality of tenor Ⅱ are different from tenor Ⅰ. The interpersonal functions of the narrator conveyed by the modal system are also dissimilar from the interpersonal functions of the narrator conveyed by man and nature. According to Table 7, the communicative relationship of the communicative participants is the child and nature. The lyrics featured "Although already" and "please" (Although already can't speak in one's mother tongue, please accept my sorrow and my joy). It indicates the existence of a power tilt among the communicators. In this relationship, the narrator "I" is in a weak position, so the paper chooses the means of imperative tone.

As can be seen from the analysis, it can be found that the most ordinary grammatical structure in the lyrics *Father's Grassland Mother's River* is the declarative clause which reflects the communicative role and purpose of the speaker. The focus of the discourse is to give information, and the speaker controls the complete situation and provides information to the listener. In addition, the use of exclamatory clauses is useful to arouse the resonance of readers. When it comes to the modality system, the use of modal operation words can better reflect the situation of the speaker and express the speaker's yearning for the hometown. However, "grassland and river" in lyrics is the epitome of "hometown". The relationship between the narrator and "grassland and river" is both the relationship between children and parents and man and nature.

Intonation System:

Regarding the intonation system, it is based on the contradiction of ascending and descending tones[39]. We can conclude that it uses a descending tone, because this lyric expresses a positive matter. The lyrics mainly use three descending tones: i) the unmarked intonation of the statement, such as "now I finally see the vast land" which expresses a statement without other accompanying characteristics, but simply affirms the information; ii) statement with protest, such as "can't speak in one's mother tongue" which emphasize the emotion; iii) request, such as "please accept my sorrow and my joy". The chorus which is repeated twice in the song is the center of gravity of the lyrics.

Mode and discussion of textual function

Mood refers to the way in which language communication is presented[1]. The meaning of the discourse is usually in the thematic structure of the clause, the information structure in the tone group, and the cohesion system between the clause and the unit larger than the clause[46].

Textual function refers to how speakers construct their messages in a way which makes them fit into the unfolding language events. The events may be conversations or the newspaper articles[38] which have three semantic systems, including the thematic structure, the information structure and the cohesion system. The way of emotional expression of lyrics is between written and spoken words. Taking into account the oral and audible nature of the song, the lyrics often need rhymes at the end of the clause[36]. The first paragraph of the lyrics use [d], [ər], [oʊ], [əs] as rhymes, forming the gentle melody, which reflects the narrator's deep and affectionate memories of the hometown. The consonants, particularly the ending consonants [n] and [m] are mostly nasal. They used to convey the characteristics of the speech in the first paragraph and reproduce the narrative style of the first paragraph of the lyrics.

Thematic structure:

Theme, the psychological subject, is the starting point of human thoughts and helps us to classify clauses according to information transmission[43]. The thematic structure refers to a clause that can be divided into two parts: theme and rhyme. Theme is for the most part located at the beginning of a clause and refers to the starting point of discourse while rhyme is the remaining component. Halliday divided declarative clauses, interrogative clauses and imperative clauses, according to the theme-rhyme structure of English clauses. All kinds of clauses of different mood have both unmarked and marked theme. From the perspective of determining the component of theme of the speaker, the theme can be divided into two types, and one is unmarked theme while the other is marked theme[7].

Theme	Rhyme
My father once	described the fragrance of the grassland
Mother always	loves to trace the mighty river
The river	is singing the blessings of the ancestors
I	am also a kid from the plateau
Now I	finally see the vast land
Standing on the fragrant grassland	I cry like rain
Bless the wandering children	find their way home
Although already	can not speak（verbal process） in one's mother tongue
Please	accept my sorrow and my joy
There is	a song in my heart
In the song	there is my father's grassland mother's river

Table 8: Theme and rhyme

From the table of the theme and the rhyme, we can see that the theme can be played not only by the noun phrase, but also by adverb phrase, prepositional phrase and so on. Unmarked theme plays the role of the subject in clauses, such as "my father" "mother" "the river" and "I", which indicates the starting point of the message of the clause. The marked theme could play the role of interjection, adverb, participle and verb etc.. Although these words are not the subjects, they locate at the beginning of the clause and become the themes of the clauses.

When the subject in the declarative clause acts as the theme, the subject is consistent with the theme. The subject is the unmarked theme and frequently be acted on by nouns, pronouns, noun phrases, nominal clauses, and sometimes by the object of clauses. When other components act as the theme of the clause, it is marked and usually composed of adverbs or preposition phrases, which act as the modifiers in the clause. The basic message of an imperative clause is that the speaker wants the listener to do something or do something with the listener. From the perspective of the communicative purpose of imperative clauses, it is natural to consider that the predicator is the starting point of the information, as a result the theme is also unmarked. Virtually, predicator is usually used as the theme in the imperative clause. For example, in Eg.(3) *please* is the theme while the rest is the rhyme.

Eg.(3)

Please (T) *// accept my sorrow and my joy* (R).

The theme can be divided into single-simple theme and multiple theme, clause as theme and predicated theme. Simple theme owns only ideational function, without interpersonal or discourse function while multiple theme may have not only ideational function but interpersonal or textual function at the same time. In Eg.(4) both "my father" and "once" are themes, "my father" is the interpersonal and "once" is the discourse theme which is helpful for the coherent of clause.

Eg.(4)

My father (T) *once* (T)*// described the fragrance of the grassland* (R).

Lyrics are a special style between written and spoken. First, the rhymes require complementing the beat of the song. The rhythm of the song *Father's Grassland Mother's River* is relatively gentle. The entire song is 6/8 beats, and the rhyme is 2 beats, that is, strong and weak, which is correspond to the theme-rhyme of the song.

Information structure:

Information structure is a structure that organizes language into 'information units[32]. The unit of information refers to its literal meaning: a unit of information. The concept of information in the linguistic sense is the interaction between the new and non-new content. Accordingly, the unit of information is the structure. Two functional constituents include the new information and the known information[39]. The known information plays the main role in the clause, however, the new information is often written after the known message. The highest point of the new information (information focus) usually plays the vital functional component in the clause. In this song, the information structure conveys the focal point of information "homesickness" through imagery such as "father, mother, grassland", while satisfying the rhythmic beauty of music. In the analysis of the following examples, we use the double slash (//) to divide the boundary of the tone group and use the auxiliary symbol(^) to indicate the starting beat of the step.

i) My father once described the fragrance of the grassland, (which) let him never forget each other at the end of the world. The analysis of the clause is as follows:

//^ My father/ once/ described/ the fragrance of/ the grassland,/

Known Information————————————————————→

(which) let/ him/ never forget/ each other/ at the end of/ the world.//

New information   ←————————————————

According to the previous clause, we could infer that "my father" is known information. The new information starts from "(which) let", and the focus of the information is "at the end of the world" which clarifies a point that father can not forget the hometown, though the distance is far away.

ii) Mother always loves to trace the mighty river, rushing in my remote hometown on the Mongolian plateau. The analysis of the clause is as follows:

//Mother/ always/ loves to/ trace/ the mighty river,/
New information⟶⟶⟶⟶⟶⟶⟶⟶⟶⟶⟶⟶⟶⟶⟶⟶⟶⟶⟶⟶⟶⟶⟶⟶⟶⟶⟶⟶⟶⟶⟶⟶⟶⟶➝
^ rushing/ in my remote hometown/ on the Mongolian plateau.//
Known information ⟵⟵⟵⟵⟵⟵⟵⟵⟵⟵⟵⟵⟵⟵⟵⟵⟵⟵⟵⟵⟵⟵

In fact, the known information does not necessarily precede the new information. Sometimes in order to highlight the importance of the part and to take into account the construction of the text, the known information and the new information will be transposed. In this clause, "rushing" is the new information. The theme and its component are adverbial in front of the known information and the known information is at the end of the clause. In the song, "river" and "plateau" of the clause are rhymed, so that the content emphasizes the natural scenery.

iii)Now I finally see the vast land. Standing on the fragrant grassland, I cry like rain. The analysis of the clause is as follows:

//^ Standing on/ the fragrant grassland,/
New information⟶⟶⟶⟶⟶⟶⟶⟶⟶⟶⟶⟶⟶⟶⟶⟶⟶⟶⟶⟶⟶⟶⟶⟶⟶⟶➝
I/ cry/ like/ rain.//
Known information ⟵⟵⟵⟵⟵⟵⟵⟵⟵⟵⟵⟵⟵⟵⟵⟵⟵⟵⟵⟵⟵⟵

Obviously, "I", as known information, is in the epilogue. "Standing on the fragrant grassland", as the theme, is the new information which not only stresses the fragrance of the grassland, but also facilitates the rhyme of the clause.

Cohesion system:
Cohesion refers to the semantic relationship between linguistic components in a discourse which is divided into two types: grammatical cohesion and lexicon cohesion. Coherence reflects a kind of psychological phenomenon which is realized through the common knowledge of both sides in language communication[16].

Repetition is an important mean of cohesion. It refers to the phenomenon of the same structure, word, and phrase which could repeat by themselves in a different part of the same discourse. Similarly, repetition can be divided into grammatical and lexical levels and the former is a repetition of syntactic structure, while the latter is a repetition of vocabulary. Huang believes that the repetition of parallel structures is a kind of grammatical cohesion[17]. The repetition of words is usually the repetition of the key words and phrases. Proper repetition can not only make the semantic relationship of each part of the whole text closer, but also can emphasize the main points and deepen the impression.

The morphological characteristic of the Mongolian melody is the repetition of tune. The operating rule is changing in repetition. It is a remarkable feature that the repetition technique used in Mongolian melodies which is a different from other folk melodies.

Lyrics	Times of reputation
Ah, father's grassland	
Ah, mother's river	
Although already	2
Can't speak in one's mother tongue	
Please accept my sorrow and my joy	
I am also a kid from the plateau	
There is a song in my heart	3
In the song there is my father's grassland and mother's river	

Table 9: Times of lyrics reputation

The song has two verses repeated twice as a chorus. The lyrics "I am also a kid from the plateau; there is a song in my heart; in the song there is my father's grassland and mother's river" appear for the third time at the end of the song. The lyrics of "father's grassland" and "mother's river" appear twice which coincide with the subject. Some of the lyrics are not only the repetitions of the content, but also have a semantic connection of cohesion. For instance, "can't speak in one's mother tongue" and "in my remote hometown" in the first verse lyrics constitute a causal relationship; "please accept my sorrow and my joy" act in cooperation with "I cry like rain" and "I am also a kid from the plateau" echoes "bless the wandering children find their way home". The last lyrics "in the song there is my father's grassland and mother's river" are consistent and coherent with the whole discourse.

From the above analysis, we can see that the lyrics are closely relevant to the subject in content and form and are related to the subject of the song. Such repetition technique plays a role of connecting the discourse context expressing a strong feeling. We can even recognize the theme of the song by taking into account some of the lyrics.

Results and Discussion
Register theory is explanatory for the discourse analysis. As a special discourse, lyrics could be analyzed by register theory as well. This study analyses the English version of *Father's Grassland Mother's River* which is excerpted from

the website of *Wedding Poetry* from the perspectives of the field, tenor, and mode under the framework of the theory of systemic functional linguistics.

The conceptual function of the lyrics is revealed by analyzing the vocabularies, transitivity system and logical function of the lyrics. The interpersonal function of the lyrics unfolds by analyzing the mood, modality and intonation system in the lyrics. The discourse function of the lyrics has been exhibited by analyzing the lyrics of the thematic structure, the information structure and the cohesion system.

The result of this study has shown: firstly, the vocabularies that restrict the field of lyrics affect the transitivity system, the mode system and the logical relationship of lyrics. The distribution of transitivity processes ranked in the descend order are as: existential processes, material processes, mental processes, relational processes, verbal processes and behavioral processes. Secondly, this paper examines the interpersonal significance of mood, the level of modal value, the and the communicative relationship. Thirdly, through the cohesion analysis of lyrics, it can be concluded that the lyrics are closely related to the subject of the song both in content and form. Particularly, repetition plays a significant role of connecting the context of discourse. Last but not least, through the analysis of the field, it demonstrates that the topic of the lyrics is homesickness and nature; through the analysis of the tenor, the communicators in the lyrics are "father" "mother" "I" "children and "nature" and through the analysis of the mode, it shows that the style of lyrics is special and the way of emotional expression of lyrics is between written and spoken words. Briefly speaking, this study finds that the field of *Father's Grassland Mother's River* is the process by which the narrator returns to visit the grassland; the tenor of the discourse is the relationship between the narrator and hometown—the relationship between children and their parents and man and nature. The narrator expressed the expectation and concerns about his hometown but also with the great integration of pluralistic culture since the narrator who can not speak the native language anxious about the loss of grassland culture.

Consequently, register theory and the three meta-functions of language are not only applicable to the special style of analyzing lyrics, but could do researcher a favor to comprehensively grasp the characteristics and dig out the implication of the discourse. It is the mutual action of the field, tenor and mode of language that forms the reasonable and clear lyrics, which is the fundamental cause of the wide spread of the song *Father's Grassland Mother's River*.

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