

Large Language Models for Emotion Analysis in Literary Translation: A Case Study of Yu Hua's *To Live*

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Abstract

This study investigates how large language models (LLMs) can support theory-guided emotion analysis in literary translation. Drawing on Appraisal Theory, we develop an annotation workflow that operationalises evaluative meaning across the Affect, Engagement, and Graduation subsystems and apply it to Yu Hua's novel *To Live*. The analysis compares the Chinese source text, Michael Berry's English translation, and the translations generated by contemporary LLMs. We adopt a theory-guided prompting strategy to produce structured evaluative annotations and calibrate the procedure against a human-annotated gold-standard subset to assess annotation reliability and the effects of prompt design. The results show that theory-informed prompting improves the stability of appraisal-based annotation and enables systematic comparison of evaluative patterns across translation conditions.