RESEARCH ARTICLE

ANALYSIS OF THE TRANSLATION METHODS OF *REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE GOVERNMENT 2019* FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR
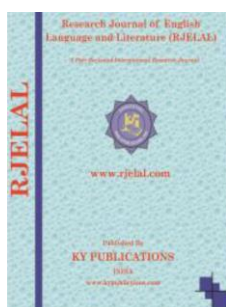
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ABSTRACT

As a cognitive tool and way of thinking that is ubiquitous in human society, conceptual metaphor is widely used in political discourse, which contributes to the research and development of cognitive linguistics and adds a bright color to political discourse. This paper takes the official bilingual version of Report on the Work of the Government 2019 as the research object. It analyzes the classification of conceptual metaphor in Chinese reports and compares the Chinese and English versions to discuss the translation methods of metaphors in the report in order to provide new ideas for metaphor translation in political texts.

Key words: conceptual metaphor; Report on the Work of the Government 2019; metaphor translation methods

I.   Introduction

As a cognitive tool and way of thinking that is ubiquitous in human society, metaphor is closely related to people's daily life. It can be said that people live in the ocean of metaphor. Many scholars have continuously explored and studied metaphors. The perspectives of metaphor research have focused on various fields such as business, public service advertisements, political discourses and so on. Metaphor can make neutral language full of emotion and can be used to render or propagate some strong subjective emotions. Many metaphors in political texts not only aim at explaining the domain of purpose, but also play an important role in guiding public ideology, maintaining or resisting existing social power. Therefore, vivid metaphors can be found everywhere, whether in an annual summary of the work report of the government at home or as a speech in international diplomatic relations.

The annual government work report is a summary of the work done by the Chinese government and its work deployment. Report on the Work of the Government 2019 is made by Premier Li Keqiang at the second meeting of the 13th National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China on March 5, 2019, and is submitted to the National People's Congress for deliberation. Political events are often difficult to be perceived directly, so more scholars believe that the importance of metaphor in political discourse is more prominent. Without metaphor, political expression will become difficult. Metaphor in the government work reports can cause obstacles to the comprehension of target

language readers. Therefore, the translation of government work reports plays a pivotal role. When dealing with the translation of political texts, appropriate translation strategies and methods should be chosen according to their types and functions. The translator must fully understand the content of metaphors in the source language and compare the English and Chinese languages. Only in this way can target readers accurately understand the metaphors and the content in the source and finally achieve the purpose of communication. This paper mainly discusses the classification of conceptual metaphor in Chinese reports and analyzes the translation methods when translating metaphors. I hope this study can make some contributions and provide some new ideas for the translation of political discourse metaphors.

II.   Theoretical Basis

Metaphor is everywhere in our lives. Since the 20th century, with the rise of cognitive linguistics, the cognitive function of metaphor has been widely recognized. American cognitive linguist, Lakoff, began to study metaphor from a cognitive perspective. He pointed out in his book *Metaphors we live by,* that human beings use metaphor to organize their conceptual systems. The essence of metaphor is to understand another thing through something. Metaphor has no fixed language form and can be a word, a phrase, a sentence, or an article (Wei, 121). Metaphor is a process of mapping from source domain to target domain. In a word, metaphor is to associate different things, find out their similarities and compare them on this basis.

In the book, *Metaphors We Live by* written by Lakoff and Johnson, conceptual metaphor is divided into three categories: structural metaphor, orientational metaphor and ontological metaphor.

2.1.   Structural metaphor

Structural metaphor is a typical type of metaphor. Its mapping is that: constructing the concept of target domain with the concept of origin domain. Although the cognitive domains of the two are different, in the metaphorical subject, there is a corresponding relationship between their respective constructive components (Zhang, 28). That is, the

structure remains consistent and the meaning has a corresponding relationship.

2.2   Orientational metaphor

Orientational metaphor, also known as "space metaphor", actually refers to a type of metaphor formed by the concept of spatial orientation such as "up and down, in and out, front and back, on and off, central and peripheral"(Lakoff, 1980). Actually, people are accustomed to using basic spatial positioning concepts to understand more abstract concepts, such as mind, mental state, physical health, and so on. For example, people always like to say "I am feeling up", which doesn't mean that the speaker is in the high position but to show that he is happy at that time. This kind of expression is an orientational metaphor. The mapping is that happy is up, which is always used to show emotions.

2.3   Ontological metaphor

The way humans perceive the world determines their direct life experience, which refers to things that are captured by the five faculties (Zhang, 28). Therefore, human beings are deeply entangled in their cognitive world by the physical roots that can be touched by the five senses in nature, thus forming an instinctive experience. Using these basic life experiences will help to understand relatively abstract, vague things such as non-discrete, ideas, and behaviors. Ontological metaphor refers to the concept of mapping the source domain to the target domain by means of life experience, that is, using the concept of expressing concrete things to diagnose the concept of reflecting abstract and ambiguous things.

III.   Conceptual metaphors in Report on the Work of the Government 2019

As a political discourse, Report on the Work of the Government 2019 contains many abstract political concepts, which often need to be understood with the help of well-known, tangible and concrete concepts. By carefully analyzing the conceptual metaphor in the original report on the Work of the Government in 2019, the author summarized some kind of metaphor models of the three basic categories which are frequently used in

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the report according to the different types of source domain.

3.1 War Metaphor

In this report, war metaphor shows that achieving a socialist modernization and powerful country requires long-term and unremitting efforts. The process of building our country is just like a war. It was the sacrifices of countless communists in the revolutionary war that brought about the founding of the new China. The current road to a strong country infiltrates the efforts and sweat of the Communists, conceptualizing the issue of national development with war. Therefore, the war metaphor in this report is understood as "achieving a socialist modernization and powerful country is a war". And the use of war metaphor helps people understand the concept of abstraction, and at the same time inspires people to contribute to socialist modernization and strengthening the country. For example:

(1) 要做好打硬仗的充分准备。

In this example, the underlined word "打硬仗" refers to a very difficult battle in the war in the source domain. However, in this report, "打硬仗" means that this year China will face a graver and more complicated environment as well as risks and challenges, foreseeable and otherwise. So the mapping is that when we meet challenges and difficulties, we must be fully prepared for a tough struggle just like the soldiers fight as hard as they can. Here, the usage of war metaphor make readers know that although the unknown difficulties cannot be underestimated, our confidence cannot be shaken.

3.2 Journey Metaphor

When it comes to journey metaphor, the Communist Party of China strictly follows the certain goals and leads people in a stable and orderly way to make China a powerful socialist county. Therefore, the journey metaphor in of the Report on the Work of the Government 2019 is understood as "the road to become a powerful country is a journey", and its journey metaphor model can be considered as

"national development process is a journey". For example:

(2) 我们将坚定不移走和平发展道路、奉行互利共赢的开放战略。

In this example, the underlined part of "走和平发展道路" uses the journey metaphor. That is "development is a journey". The concept of journey metaphor implies that"道路" of the original domain needs to be explored and the exploration spirit of our Communist Party of China moves toward "peaceful development", which reflects that our country's plan is to resolutely uphold multilateralism and the international system built around the United Nations. And we should participate actively in reforming and improving the global governance system.

3.3 Building Metaphor

In the report, there are many situations where building metaphor are used. The Chinese Communist Party in the new era shoulders an important historical mission and realizes the Chinese dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. It must build a great project. This grand blueprint needs the interpretation of the architectural metaphor model to vividly highlight the importance of the foundation of this great "engineering". In the Report on the Work of the Government 2019, the building metaphor model is "the development of the country is a process of great engineering construction". For examples:

(3) 为决胜全面建成小康社会、夺取新时代中国特色社会主义伟大胜利,为把我国建设成为富强民主文明和谐美丽的社会主义现代化强国、实现中华民族伟大复兴的中国梦不懈奋斗!

(4) 过去一年,国防和军队建设扎实推进,强军事业展现许多新气象新作为。

In the case of (3), the metaphor model is that "the system required for national development is the framework of building or engineering", which guides the cooperation between designers and

architectures. The leadership of the Communist Party of China is the engineer of this building. The people of the country are their architectures and builders, and they cooperate closely with the construction of this great project to promote the country's development. The example (4) summarizes the achievements of national defense in the past year and concretizes the requirement of national construction to the military and national defense construction. The extensive use of building metaphor reflects China's high regard for the building of our country and people are encouraged to actively contribute to the strong modern socialist country.

3.4 Plant Metaphor

For examples:

(5) 嫦娥四号等一批重大科技创新成果相继问世。

(6) 经济外交、人文交流成果丰硕。

In these two examples, the metaphor model is "fruits are achievements." In the source domain, the underlined part"成果"refers to the fruit after the harvest of the plant. However, "成果" in the target domain in this report refers to the achievements and successes we have achieved in technological innovation, economic diplomacy and humanities communication. The whole hard and long process of planting, fertilizing and harvesting is exactly the same as our efforts and achievements in technological innovation, economic diplomacy and humanities communication.

3.5 Circle Metaphor

In the report, circle metaphor is also frequently used. Historically, the "Central Committee" has been regarded as the core position, representing the power of the ruling party. The Communist Party of China is at the core of the Central Committee and leads the people to devote themselves to the great cause of national rejuvenation. Therefore, the mode of circle metaphor in political text is generally "the Communist Party of China is the center". For example:

(7) 做好政府工作，要在以习近平同志为核心的党中央坚强领导下

In this example, the metaphor is "the leadership of Comrade Xi Jinping is the center". The "Party Central Committee" is conceptualized as a circle. The center of the circle is projected on Comrade Xi Jinping. The innumerable dots around the circle are mapped to the leaders of the Party Central Committee. Only by adhering to the leadership of the Communist Party with President Xi Jinping as its core, can the people of all ethnic groups in the country have the backbone to unite and work together to realize the dream of a powerful country.

IV. Translation methods of metaphor in Report on the Work of the Government 2019

Since metaphors in political texts still belong to a branch of metaphor, many methods and strategies in metaphorical translation still apply to them. In view of this, there are different translation methods for different types of metaphors. Scholars have proposed many translation methods for metaphor translation. There are roughly these kinds: 1. Literal translation; 2. Liberal translation; 3. Omission; 4. Literal and liberal translation; 5, Other translations. In view of the different cultural soils rooted in English and Chinese, there are many differences in the use of metaphors. Therefore, the translation of political metaphors should consider cultural differences and translators should adopt different translation methods for different situations. Examples from Chinese and English version of "report on the work of the government 2019" are used to analyze the translation methods of metaphors.

4.1 Literal Translation -- retain metaphor

The literal translation method takes the form of the original text as the standard, and maintains the original appearance of the original text in terms of the correspondence of the keywords and the comparison of the syntactic structure. Generally speaking, when the cognition of certain things in Chinese and English is consistent, the literal translation method is adopted, which can absorb the

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characteristics of the original text and be faithful to the expression structure of the original text. In this way the loss of the translation process can be greatly weakened. For example:

(1)   ST: 全面开展蓝天、碧水、净土<u>保卫战</u>。

TT: We launched an **all-out fight** to keep our skies blue, our waters clear, and our land pollution-free.

In the first example, the underlined word "保卫战" is the use of war metaphor which belongs to ontological metaphor. The metaphor mapping is that "ecological environment construction is a fight". Because "保卫战" originally refers to a kind of battle in the war in the source domain, while "保卫战" in the report means that we launched an all-out fight to keep our skies blue, our waters clear, and our land pollution-free in the target domain. It refers to the construction plan and strategy of ecological civilization . That is, there is only one goal to improve the quality of the ecological environment. Here, the method of war metaphor is used to make the audience or the reader feel the importance and urgency of keeping the blue sky and clear water. This term can make readers feel the firm attitude of our government on the improvement of ecological construction. In the translation, the word "保卫战" is literally translated as "all-out fight" and the metaphor is remained. For the target readers, the country's determination to govern the ecological environment can also be well understood.

(2)   ST: 为把我国<u>建设</u>成为富强民主文明和谐美丽的社会主义现代化强国、实现中华民族伟大复兴的中国梦不懈奋斗！

TT: To **build** China into a great modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, harmonious, and beautiful, and to realize the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation!

In this sentence, building metaphor is used. The metaphor model is that "the construction of our

country is an engineering project" as introduced in last chapter. The leadership of the Communist Party of China is the engineer of this building. The people of the country are their architectures and builders and they cooperate closely with the construction of this great project to promote the country's development. The translator adopt the literal translation method to translate "建设" of the original sentence into "build". This literal translation method is consistent with the target reader's cognition which can make the target readers have a good understanding of our determination to build a socialist power and the original thinking mode and expression characteristics.

4.2   Liberal Translation -- retain metaphor

To put it simply, the liberal translation method is only a method that conveys its meaning in the translation. Due to the difference between Chinese and English, the literal translation is generally not possible. Although this translation method ignore the form of language, the conceptual meaning of the original system can be fully expressed. That is to say, when the form and meaning cannot be combined, the form can be abandoned and the meaning should be retained to avoid the situation where readers have a misunderstanding about the source text. In the government work reports, many liberal translations of metaphors are adopted due to the above reasons.

(3)   ST: 面对新情况新变化，我们坚持不搞"<u>大水漫灌</u>"式强刺激，保持宏观政策连续性稳定性。

TT: Facing new circumstances and developments, we were firm in choosing not to adopt **a deluge of strong stimulus policies**, and we maintained the continuity and consistency of macro policies.

In the example （3）, structural metaphor is used. "大水漫灌" was originally intended to be an irrigation method used in agricultural production. That is water was directly poured into the ground, which is of extensive use. However, in the report "坚持不搞"大水漫灌"式刺激"means that our government should change its excessive

dependence on investment and exports to drive growth. We should constantly innovate and control, coordinate the implementation of interval control and direction control. And we need to rely on reform and innovation and structural adjustment to enhance the development of endogenous power. In the English context, there is no corresponding cognition, so the translator has adopted the liberal translation method and translated ""大水漫灌"式刺激" into "a deluge of strong stimulus policies", which contains the metaphor, so that foreign readers can understand what kind of measures the government is going to take. Using the liberal translation method can avoid misunderstandings well.

(4)   ST: 要做好**打硬仗**的充分准备

TT: We must be fully prepared for **a tough struggle**.

In this sentence, "打硬仗" is the use of war metaphor. The metaphor model is that "development of China is a fight". "打硬仗" originally means to fight a hard battle. The strength of the two sides is comparable and it will take a lot to win. However, in this report, the underlined part means that in pursuing development this year, China will face a graver and more complicated environment as well as risks and challenges. The difficulties we face must not be underestimated and our confidence must not be weakened. Translators do not directly translate "硬仗" into "a hard fight" but translate it into "a tough struggle". In the Oxford Dictionary, "struggle" means a forceful or violent effort to get free of restraint or resist attack. The word "struggle" well explain the situation that our country is facing now and our firm attitude and confidence in this kind situation.

(6)   ST: 改善和加强服务，发挥好他们的独特优势和重要作用，画好海内外中华儿女的**最大同心圆**，汇聚起共创辉煌的澎湃力量。

TT: We will improve and strengthen our services for them, give play to their unique strengths and important role, seek **the greatest convergence of interests** among all Chinese, both at home and overseas, and forge a mighty force, as we endeavor to create more remarkable achievements.

In this example, orientational metaphor is used and the mapping is that "the Communist Party of China is in the central position, all our Chinese both at home and overseas are in the peripheral position". In the source domain, "最大同心圆" refers to the circle with the largest diameter and the center of the circle at the same point in the source language. While, in the target domain of this report, China is conceptualized into a circle, with numerous Chinese people around the center of the circle. History tells us that by adhering to the leadership of the Communist Party and having the backbone of the people of all nationalities in the country, we can unite as one to achieve the dream of a strong country. If the translator translates"最大同心圆"into the maximum concentric circle，it will cause misunderstanding of the target readers, so the translator translates it as"the greatest convergence of interests", which is acceptable for the readers.

4.3   Omission -- omit metaphor

The omission method is significantly different in the form of translation from the literal translation method and the liberal translation method. From the perspective of metaphor translation, whether it is literal translation or liberal translation, the relevant metaphorical expression or figuration or implied expression of the original text will appear in the translation. However, it does not appear in the translation when using the omission method.

(6)   ST: 在实际执行中，既要把好货币供给**总闸门**，不搞"大水漫灌"。

TT: In implementation, we will ensure the valve on aggregate monetary supply is well controlled and refrain from using a deluge of stimulus policies;

In this example, ontological metaphor is used. "总闸门" refers to the control facility used to close and open the drain channel, which is an object, an important component of a hydraulic building that

can be used to intercept water flow, control water levels, regulate flow, discharge sediment and floating matter. In the report, "把好货币供给"总闸门"" means ensuring that the liquidity of the currency is reasonably abundant and in line with the needs of economic development. This metaphor vividly expresses our government's policy of controlling the currency. In the translation, this image isn't found. The translator omits the metaphor, but the translation text still faithfully expresses the meaning of the original text and it is accepted by the English culture.

(7)   ST: 深入实施军民融合发展战略，加快国防科技创新**步伐**。

TT: We will further implement the military-civilian integration strategy, and speed up efforts to make innovations in defense related science and technology.

In this sentence, the use of journey metaphor here makes the abstract concept more concrete. It is a structure metaphor. The source domain of "步伐" is a concept-specific step for human beings, while the target domain is the development of our national defense science and technology innovation. "步伐" reflects the development of national defense science and technology innovation. There is no corresponding expression pattern in English culture. Therefore, under the premise of keeping the original meaning unchanged, the word "步伐" can be omitted.

V.   Conclusion

Through the analysis of metaphor and its translation methods in Report on the Work of the Government 2019, research findings of this thesis are as follows: Firstly, under the guidance of conceptual metaphor theory, the three categories including structural metaphor, orientational metaphor and ontological metaphor are identified and analyzed. Metaphors on different topics are also illustrated, such as building metaphors, journey metaphors, war metaphors, plant metaphors and circle metaphors, which not only promote people to understand the abstract and difficult concepts in political discourse, but also convey the cognitive model and ruling concept of the Communist Party of China imperceptibly, which pays great attention to information transmission. Secondly, three practical translation methods are delivered, including literal translation which retains metaphor, liberal translation which retains metaphor and omission which omits metaphor. The translator should fully understand the content of the original text, grasp the working mechanism of metaphor, understand the purpose and effect of metaphor and adopt appropriate translation methods in different metaphors, so that the meaning of political texts can be faithfully and accurately conveyed. These three translation methods can provide practical guidance for future researchers and help them solve the problems encountered in metaphor translation.

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