

Political Metaphors in English Version of “Report to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China”

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Abstract

With China's growing influence, many countries are eager to know about China, and China also wants foreign countries to have a correct understanding of itself, so translations of political discourse are important. And because metaphor can reflect the thinking of the authors and translators, it is widely used in the translation process to transmit the ideology. Since now, many researches have been done to study the types of metaphors and the translation strategies of metaphors in the translations of the CPC literature, but few of them focus on how metaphors in the translation version convey the ideology. Therefore, this paper, aiming to study how political metaphors in the translation help transmit the ideology and governance thought of China to the world, applies Critical Metaphor Analysis as the analytical framework to investigate the political metaphors in English version of “Report to the 20th CPC National Congress”. The results show that journey metaphors, building metaphors, plant metaphors, life metaphors, and war metaphors are especially prominent. Compared with literal translation, the English version of the Report utilizes the imagery and concepts familiar to the readers to lead them to understand the Chinese theories and thinking that they are unfamiliar with. And the political metaphors explain and publicize the governance philosophy in a way that foreign readers can understand, highlight the Party's attitude, and correctly display the image of China. This study deepens the study of the role of metaphors in the transmission of governments' principles and policies.

Keywords: political metaphor; the 20th CPC National Congress; CPC literature translation; ideology; governance thought

1. Introduction

With China's growing economic strength and international influence, people around the world are eager to know more about China. At the same time, China also wants to spread its voice overseas, so that other countries can have a correct understanding of itself. An important aspect of communication is political publicity, through which the government introduces its governance philosophy, national policies, and political positions. Therefore, the translation of political discourse is particularly important. In the translation of various documents, the translators of literature of the Communist Party of China (CPC literature hereafter), adhering to the original mission of explaining Chinese theories and transmitting Chinese ideas (Wang, 2018), adopt different translation strategies and methods to build a harmonious system of international political discourse at home and abroad.

Under the leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC hereafter), China has made great achievements, and the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (the 20th CPC National Congress hereafter) was successfully held in 2022. During the congress, Chinese President Xi Jinping delivered a report entitled *Hold High the Great Banner of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics and Strive in Unity to Build a Modern Socialist Country in All Respects* (the Report hereafter), which has mapped out the goals, tasks and major policies for the development of the cause of CPC and China in the coming period, and is of great and far-reaching significance in the history of CPC and China. Therefore, the translation of the Report is particularly important for external publicity.

There are many perspectives on the analysis of the translation of political discourse. Metaphor, as an important one, has received wide attention in recent years, reflecting the ideology and purpose of both the author and the

translator. Therefore, this paper aims to prove that the study of metaphors in the English version of the Report is helpful in analyzing the ideology and governance thought of the Chinese government and CPC, to understand the image and ideas of China established in the external publicity work, and to enhance the confidence in theory and path. And this paper is aiming to address the following two research questions:

- 1) How do political metaphors in the Report convey and transmit the ideology of China?
- 2) What's the motivation of the political metaphors in the Report?

2. Literature Review

The study of metaphor has a long history, dating back to the study of Aristotle, who believes that metaphor is the application of a noun which properly applies to something else (Aristotle, 1996). It was first regarded as a rhetorical phenomenon and even a dispensable decoration (Shu, 1996).

In the 1980s, Lakoff and Johnson published *Metaphors We Live By* and proposed Conceptual Metaphor Theory, which marked the transition of the understanding of metaphor from the field of rhetoric to the field of cognition, and the cognitive theory of metaphor is the watershed between traditional metaphor theory and contemporary metaphor theory. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) hold the view that metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language, and our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature.

According to Conceptual Metaphor Theory, the essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), and the relationship between the two main units or two sets is based on one-to-one correspondence, which is called a model, in which there are two domains: a source domain, which is often an objective and tangible concept, and a target domain, which is a subjective and abstract concept (Abdolkarimi & Estaji, 2021). One conceptual domain can be mapped to another conceptual domain through cognition and reasoning to make the statement metaphorical (Feng, 2006).

As a unique speech way that can convey the thinking of the speaker, metaphor has always been employed in the political discourse to construct the social and political reality (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), and it is likely to figure prominently in the political cognition of citizens (Bougher, 2012). In that case, metaphor provides a mechanism that clarifies how previous knowledge and experience in nonpolitical domains can both structure and constrain how citizens view the political world (Bougher, 2012). It can frame political issues in a specific mode and set the direction for the resolution of issues, thus providing an interpretive framework to influence political decision-making (Wen, 2014). And it can help statesmen influence people's thinking, reshape people's attitudes, frame people's views and ideologies, and change people's actions (He, 2014).

As a political discourse for external publicity, the translation version of CPC literature, which conveys the ideology and spirit of CPC, should emphasize the attention to political meaning and political sense, to elaborate the political stance and views of the country and nation, and to show the real, three-dimensional and comprehensive China (Shi & Zhang, 2021). Therefore, in order to transmit China's voice to the world, and show the image of China, in the translation process, a large number of metaphors will be applied. Thus, it is of vital significance to study the metaphors in the translation version of the CPC literature, so as to explore how it conveys the ideology.

But previous studies on metaphors in the CPC literature translation mainly focus on the analysis of the types of conceptual metaphors, and the translation strategies of metaphors (Xiang & Han, 2023), while few people have analyzed the sentences that originally did not use metaphors in the original Chinese text, but used metaphors after translation. So, this paper starts from this perspective, and takes the Report as example, to analyze the significance of metaphor used in the translation process of literal sentences for the dissemination of ideology, which is one of the innovative points of this paper.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Corpus Collection

The corpus of this paper comes from the Chinese and English versions of the Report. The Chinese version of the Report comes from the book, “《高举中国特色社会主义伟大旗帜为全面建设社会主义现代化国家而团结奋斗——在中国共产党第二十次全国代表大会上的报告（2022年10月16日）》 (*Hold High the Great Banner of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics and Strive in Unity to Build a Modern Socialist Country in All Respects—Report to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (October 16, 2022)*)”, published by People's Publishing House in 2022, and the English version of the Report is retrieved from the official website of the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China

(http://english.www.gov.cn/news/topnews/202210/25/content_WS6357df20c6d0a757729e1bfc.html).

3.2 Metaphor Analysis

Following Charteris-Black (2004), the metaphor analysis process is divided into three stages: metaphor identification, metaphor interpretation, and metaphor explanation. The following is a detailed description of these three stages.

3.2.1 Metaphor Identification

In the metaphor identification stage, the task is to identify whether metaphors are present in a text and establishing whether there is a tension between a literal source domain and a metaphoric target domain (Charteris-Black, 2004). This study follows the “Metaphor Identification Procedure” (MIP) for identifying metaphorically used words, which provides a set of universal rules for the exhaustive identification of metaphors in large-scale corpora and discourse (Pragglejaz group, 2007; Chen, 2022). The procedure is as following: 1) Read through the text to establish a general understanding of the meaning; 2) Determine the lexical units; 3a) Clarify the contextual meaning of the unit; 3b) Determine whether there is a more basic meaning; 3c) If there is, determine whether the contextual meaning is distinct from the basic meaning and whether it can be understood in comparison with it; 4) If yes, the lexical unit is a metaphorical (Pragglejaz group, 2007; Steen et al., 2010).

For example, in “A total of 832 impoverished counties and close to 100 million poor rural residents have been lifted out of poverty.”, the lexical unit “lift out of” means “to get rid of” in the context, and it has a more concrete and basic meaning, “to take up and out of”. The contextual meaning and the basic meaning are different, but the contextual meaning can be understood with the help of the basic meaning. Hence, “lift out of” here is metaphoric, and “absolute poverty” (source domain) is viewed as “container” (target domain).

3.2.2 Metaphor Interpretation and Explanation

Metaphor interpretation involves establishing a relationship between metaphors and the cognitive and pragmatic factors that determine them, and this involves the identification of conceptual metaphors (Charteris-Black, 2004). The inference of conceptual metaphors from the surface linguistic metaphors can help us identify the patterns of relationship among metaphors that account for their meaning (Hu & Xu, 2017).

Then, explanation of metaphors takes a further step to figure out the intrinsic persuasive function. It involves identifying the social agency that is involved in their production and their social role in persuasion (Charteris-Black, 2004). It unearths the formation process of conceptual metaphors and enables us to know about the persuasive function of metaphors (Hu & Xu, 2017). In a sense, it is identifying the discourse function of metaphors that permits us to establish their ideological and rhetorical motivation (Charteris-Black, 2004).

Therefore, following Hu and Xu (2017), this study interprets the conceptual metaphor with the help of the cross-domain mapping process to demonstrate the process of projecting source domain concepts to target domain concepts via metaphor keywords. Finally, how the conceptual metaphors reflect and publicize the ideology and theory to play the persuasive function and influence the readers and society will be explained.

4. An Analysis of Political Metaphors in English Version of “Report to the 20th CPC National Congress”

After more than a hundred years of development, CPC has formed a large number of theories, it is not realistic to list them one by one, so this paper selected some theories for demonstration and analysis.

4.1. Metaphors that can Reflect the Ideological Orientation of CPC

CPC has always attached great importance to ideological and political work, and the most important criterion to measure the success or failure of ideological work is whether CPC can truly unify the thoughts of Chinese people and gather their strength (Zhu, 2019). Chinese President Xi (2018) once said, one of the important reasons that the CPC has been able to continue to grow in the face of difficulties and hardships is that CPC always attaches great importance to constructing the Party with scientific thoughts and theories. This has ensured that the whole Party is united in thought, steadfast of will, coordinated in action, and formidable in strength.

Therefore, CPC has always attached importance to the ideological orientation of Party members, which is also one of the key points of our external publicity work, which is also reflected in the metaphors of the English version of the Report.

4.1.1 COUNTRY DEVELOPMENT IS ENTREPRENEURIAL PROCESS

In the hard times of the past, adhering to the enterprising spirit, CPC has overcome numerous difficulties on the way forward. At present, keeping the spirit of hard work and entrepreneurship is an important ideological guarantee for the vitality of the Party. In that case, a large number of “entrepreneurial process” metaphors are

used in the Report to advocate arduous entrepreneurial spirit.

Example 1

ST: 踔厉奋发、勇毅前行 (Xi, 2022)

TT: forging ahead with **enterprise** and fortitude (Xinhua News Agency, 2022)

Example 2

ST: 青年一代更加积极向上 (Xi, 2022)

TT: Our young people are filled with greater optimism and **enterprise** (Xinhua News Agency, 2022)

Example 3

ST: 在全社会弘扬劳动精神、奋斗精神、奉献精神、创造精神、勤俭节约精神，培育时代新风新貌 (Xi, 2022)

TT: We will foster an ethos of work, **enterprise**, dedication, creativity, and frugality throughout society and cultivate new trends and new customs for our times (Xinhua News Agency, 2022).

The words related to positive attitude are often translated as “enterprise”. This shows that the country development process is like an entrepreneurial process. Every Party member and people is important for the “entrepreneurial process”. And everyone should maintain positive attitude and striving spirit to overcome all the difficulties in the process of achieving Chinese dream.

4.1.2 COUNTRY DEVELOPMENT IS DRAMA

Drama is a common art form and one of the concepts that people often use to understand the events they experience. Therefore, drama metaphors are often found in political discourse, allowing people to use the cognitive basis and experience of drama to understand politics. And in the English version of the Report, many drama metaphors are used.

Example 1

ST: 充分发挥市场在资源配置中的决定性作用，更好发挥政府作用 (Xi, 2022)

TT: the market plays **the decisive role** in resource allocation and that the government better plays its **role** (Xinhua News Agency, 2022)

Example 2

ST: 增强消费对经济发展的基础性作用和投资对优化供给结构的关键作用 (Xi, 2022)

TT: better leverage **the fundamental role** of consumption in stimulating economic growth and **the key role** of investment in improving the supply structure (Xinhua News Agency, 2022)

Example 3

ST: 坚持马克思主义在意识形态领域指导地位的根本制度 (Xi, 2022)

TT: uphold the foundational system for ensuring **the guiding role** of Marxism in the ideological domain (Xinhua News Agency, 2022)

The country development is metaphorically described as a drama, and all positive factors are actors in the drama. Different actors have different jobs, but only when they cooperate can they perform an excellent play. Thus, all components of the society should perform their respective duties and work together in solidarity. Only in this way can society continue to move forward in a stable manner.

This emphasizes the need to firmly establish the thinking and theory of “coordinating all the activities of the nation like pieces in a chess game”, i.e., encouraging initiative from all sectors with concentrated efforts for big and key projects, all for the purpose of achieving the fundamental goals for national development.

4.2 Metaphors that can Reflect the Working Style of CPC

CPC has always attached great importance to working style, because the spirit state and style of work of Party members and cadres directly reflect the vitality and vigor of the Party (Tang, 2023). And history has repeatedly proved that when the Party’s style of work is good, the relationship between the Party and the people will become increasingly closer, and the Party’s cause will develop smoothly (Li, 2022).

Up to now, CPC has been in power for more than 70 years. CPC always attaches great importance to the improvement of the working style, while fully recognizing the great achievements made by the cause of the Party and China in the New Era, the Report is soberly aware of the existing difficulties and problems (Tang, 2023). In the English version of the Report, many metaphors are used to highlight this point.

4.2.1 RISK IS BOMB

In the English version of the Report, “responding to risk” is translated as “defusing risks”.

Example 1

ST: 坚决维护国家安全, 防范**化解重大风险**, 保持社会大局稳定 (Xi, 2022)

TT: We have worked with firm resolve to safeguard national security, fended off and **defused major risks**, and ensured social stability (Xinhua News Agency, 2022).

Example 2

ST: 主动识变应变求变, 主动防范**化解风险** (Xi, 2022)

TT: proactively identify, respond to, and steer changes and prevent and **defuse risks** (Xinhua News Agency, 2022)

Example 3

ST: 增强干部推动高质量发展本领、服务群众本领、防范**化解风险**本领 (Xi, 2022)

TT: This will help to ensure that officials become more capable of pursuing high-quality development, serving the people, and guarding against and **defusing risks** (Xinhua News Agency, 2022).

“Defuse” is used to describe the situation “to remove the FUSE from a bomb so that it cannot explode” (Hornby, 2018). In this way, “bomb” is used as a metaphor for “risk”, so that the “danger” of the “bomb disposal process” is mapped into the process of “risk resolution”. Thus, it is stressed that in the process of achieving Chinese dream, China will encounter many risks. In the face of these risks, all the people must act cautiously, otherwise, China will be caught in the fire and fall into great danger.

And it is also emphasized that at any time and in the face of any risk, CPC, just like bomb disposal squad, will always be at the forefront, taking on all dangerous work for the sake of the people’s safety.

4.2.2 SOCIAL PROBLEM IS DISEASE

In country development, there are many obstacles and problems along the way. CPC has also done a variety of work to deal with these problems, which can also reflect the working style of CPC. In the English version of the Report, many disease metaphors are used to show the adverse effects of the social problems.

Example 1

ST: 坚定不移走生产发展、生活富裕、生态**良好**的文明发展道路 (Xi, 2022)

TT: pursue a model of sound development featuring improved production, higher living standards, and **healthy** ecosystems (Xinhua News Agency, 2022)

Example 2

ST: 健全网络综合治理体系, 推动形成**良好**网络生态 (Xi, 2022)

TT: We will improve the system for conducting comprehensive cyberspace management and foster a **healthy** online environment (Xinhua News Agency, 2022).

“Healthy” means having good physical condition and not likely to become ill, but in the Report, it is used to modify the ecosystem and online system, which are important components in the social system. Therefore, it is reflected that social problems are just like “diseases”, and they will affect society to make the social system “unhealthy”. As a result, people’s lives will be greatly affected, and they will become “unhealthy” in such an “unhealthy” environment.

Therefore, in order to foster a healthy environment, CPC will act as “doctor” to solve all the social problems, so that Chinese people can live a happy, healthy, and joyful life. In this way, the value orientation of taking people as the center of the party’s work is reflected.

4.3 Metaphors that can Reflect the Importance of CPC Leadership

The great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation in the past relied on the leadership of the CPC; today, to comprehensively promote the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, it is of vital significance to uphold and strengthen the leadership of the CPC (Zhu, 2022). Therefore, in the English version of the Report, a large number of metaphors are used to highlight the importance of the leadership of CPC and CPC’s determination to lead the people to achieve the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

4.3.1 CPC IS ENGINEER

The CPC in the New Era shoulders an important historical mission, which is to realize the Chinese dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. To realize the Chinese dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, CPC must build great project, and this project can be illustrated as constructing a building in the metaphorical mode. And CPC acts as the “engineer” of the project.

Example 1

ST: 中国特色**强军**之路 (Xi, 2022)

TT: the Chinese path to **building a strong military** (Xinhua News Agency, 2022)

Example 2

ST: 美丽中国目标 (Xi, 2022)

TT: the goal of **building** a Beautiful China (Xinhua News Agency, 2022)

Example 3

ST: 坚持先**立**后破 (Xi, 2022)

TT: in line with the principle of **building** the new before discarding the old (Xinhua News Agency, 2022)

Developing different fields in the country is like constructing buildings, and CPC takes the job of construction. Therefore, building metaphors highlight that CPC plays a vital role in the development of China, and the great rejuvenation of China needs CPC as its “engineer” to promote the great project.

4.3.2 COUNTRY DEVELOPMENT IS WAR

In the Report, war metaphor is frequently used to conceptualize the country development.

Example 1

ST: **深化**教育领域综合改革 (Xi, 2022)

TT: **advance** comprehensive reform in education (Xinhua News Agency, 2022)

Example 2

ST: **着力**形成人才国际竞争的比较优势 (Xi, 2022)

TT: **strive to** build up our comparative strengths in global competition for talent (Xinhua News Agency, 2022)

Example 3

ST: **全面**贯彻新发展理念 (Xi, 2022)

TT: We have fully and faithfully applied the new development philosophy **on all fronts** (Xinhua News Agency, 2022)

In the translation process of the Report, various fields of development are metaphorically described as battlefields, and the promotion of national development as a process of march. And, undoubtedly, all Chinese people are soldiers led by CPC.

The victory of a war requires a qualified leader, and so does that of country development. The war metaphor vividly reflects CPC’s conscientious and responsible philosophy of governance and its sense of responsibility in administering the country. Only under the leadership of the CPC can the Chinese people win and realize the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

4.4 Metaphors that can Reflect the Thought of “All from the People”

Adhering to the “Theory of People’s Principle Status”, CPC has established the thought of “all from the people”, which means to fully respect the initiative of the people, to attach great importance to people’s will, experience, rights, and role, to constantly draw wisdom and strength from the people, and to consciously learn from the people (Liu, 2022).

In order to fully publicize the thought of “all from the people”, a large number of metaphors are used to highlight this point in the translation of the Report.

4.4.1 COUNTRY IS PLANT

Country development is a long-term process that requires the concerted efforts of the whole country. To highlight this point, there are many words related to plant growth or cultivation process are used to construe the concept of the development of China, which reflect plant metaphors.

Example 1

ST: 实现了小康这个中华民族的千年梦想 (Xi, 2022)

TT: We have achieved **moderate prosperity**, the millennia-old dream of the Chinese nations (Xinhua News Agency, 2022)

Example 2

ST: 国内生产总值从五十四万亿元增长到一百一十四万亿元 (Xi, 2022)

TT: China's GDP has **grown** from 54 trillion yuan to 114 trillion yuan to account for 18.5 percent of the world economy (Xinhua News Agency, 2022)

Example 3

ST: 许多领域实现历史性变革、系统性重塑、整体性重构 (Xi, 2022)

TT: to achieve historic, systemic, and holistic transformations **in many fields** (Xinhua News Agency, 2022)

Only by hardworking farmers, can plants prosper and fructify. And only by diligent workers, can China achieve the great rejuvenation. With the help of plant metaphor, people can experience the process of country development and be more delicate to realize that behind each achievement is the result of the hard work of every diligent worker (Zhang & Liu, 2022). And this highlights that CPC adheres to the principle of "all from the people" and calls on the people to work together to develop China.

4.4.2 COUNTRY IS BUILDING

Building metaphor is one of the most common metaphors in political discourse, and it can be used in a wide range of ways.

Example 1

ST: 为我们继续前进奠定了坚实基础、创造了良好条件、提供了重要保障 (Xi, 2022)

TT: All this had created solid foundations, favorable conditions, and **key underpinnings** for our continued progress (Xinhua News Agency, 2022).

Example 2

ST: 我国发展具备了更为坚实的物质基础、更为完善的制度保证 (Xi, 2022)

TT: China now has more solid material foundations and stronger **institutional underpinnings** for pursuing development (Xinhua News Agency, 2022).

Example 3

ST: 着力形成人才国际竞争的比较优势 (Xi, 2022)

TT: strive to **build up** our comparative strengths in global competition for talent (Xinhua News Agency, 2022)

With the help of the terms of the construction industry, building metaphors can depict the unremitting efforts of the people as builders in the construction of great causes (Zhang & Liu, 2022). Therefore, it is highlighted that the cause of CPC depends on the hard work of the people and requires the concerted efforts of all to lay a solid "foundation", build reliable "pillars" and build "tall buildings".

5. Motivation of Political Metaphors in English Version of "Report to the 20th CPC National Congress"

The basic tasks of external publicity work in the New Era are to shape a good image of China, safeguard the fundamental interests of the country, spread Chinese culture, and serve CPC and China's foreign strategy (Zhai, 2023), so it is very important to enable readers to understand the theories of CPC correctly, but literal translation is not enough to explain Chinese theories, as readers are not familiar with the social background of China. Therefore, in the process of CPC literature translation, a large number of political metaphors are used. They convey the perceptions of the speakers and the translators, and they apply the images that are close to readers' lives so that readers can comprehend the theories by processing these metaphors.

5.1 Explaining the Philosophy of Governance

The use of political metaphors in the Report is to tell the story of China and to point out the direction of China's future development. And it further aims to demonstrate CPC's philosophy of governance.

Since the 18th CPC National Congress, Chinese President Xi has profoundly grasped the characteristics of the New Era, put forward the requirements of innovation based on past works, and made new descriptions of the Party's theoretical and practical innovation, thus guiding the current situation in developing China, which is also

mentioned many times in the Report.

Example 1

ST: 必须坚持守正**创新** (Xi, 2022)

TT: We must uphold fundamental principles and **break new ground** (Xinhua News Agency, 2022).

Example 2

ST: **创新**才能把握时代、引领时代 (Xi, 2022)

TT: Only **by breaking new ground** can we meet the call of the day and shape the trends of our times (Xinhua News Agency, 2022).

Example 3

ST: 深入推进改革**创新** (Xi, 2022)

TT: We must intensify efforts to advance reform and **explore new ground** (Xinhua News Agency, 2022)

“Breaking new ground” originally means “discovering a new idea” (Pearson Education Asia Ltd., 2003), and here it means developing the theories adapt to the Chinese context and the needs of the times. Therefore, “new ground” refers to “China”. Theories are like “buildings”, and CPC is the “engineer” “building” them in China, i.e., developing theories based on the specific conditions of China in the New Era.

Therefore, it is emphasized that CPC attaches great significance to upholding fundamental principles and discovering new ideas. Instead of being dogmatically reciting the previous theories, CPC is aiming to speak new words, do something new, and seek for practical results from China’s specific conditions, the main issues in domestic society, and the 5,000-year-old Chinese civilization (Hong, 2023).

5.2 Highlighting the Attitude of CPC

The translation of the Report is not only the conversion of text information but also the transplantation of “emotion”. The “heartless” translation focuses on the translation and conversion of words and sentences in the language itself; while the “emotional” interpretation focuses on the transplantation of the emotion and atmosphere expressed in the original text (Zhang, 1993). This requirement is especially important to the translation of the metaphors in the Report because “empathy” can help highlight CPC’s attitude.

Example 1

ST: 九百六十多万**贫困人口**实现易地搬迁 (Xi, 2022)

TT: more than 9.6 million **poverty-stricken people** have been relocated from inhospitable areas (Xinhua News Agency, 2022)

Example 2

ST: 增强**脱贫地区和脱贫群众**内生发展动力 (Xi, 2022)

TT: help **areas and people that have just shaken off poverty** build their own momentum for growth (Xinhua News Agency, 2022).

Poverty is metaphorically described as disease, and people who are deeply affected by absolute poverty are like being stricken by difficult miscellaneous diseases. “Disease” is a common experience of human beings, so, by using it to metaphorically describe absolute poverty, foreign readers will subconsciously surmise the harm that absolute poverty brings to the people. Also, “shake off” highlights the attribute of diseases that can be cured, which emphasizes CPC’s determined attitude to “cure” the people of the “chronic disease” of absolute poverty, enabling people to enjoy their lives.

5.3 Showing the Image of China

As an official discourse representing the national position, disseminating political ideas, and shaping the national image, the English version of the Report will use political metaphors to influence readers’ understanding and recognition of the image of China when exchanging information with other countries. Moreover, political metaphor has rich and profound connotations, and plays a very important role in improving national image and promoting China’s international soft power in political discourse.

Example 1

ST: 提出实现中华民族伟大复兴的中国梦，**以中国式现代化**推进中华民族伟大复兴 (Xi, 2022)

TT: We have put forward the Chinese Dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation and proposed

promoting national rejuvenation **through a Chinese path to modernization** (Xinhua News Agency, 2022).

Example 2

ST: **以中国式现代化**全面推进中华民族伟大复兴。(Xi, 2022)

TT: to advance the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation on all fronts **through a Chinese path to modernization** (Xinhua News Agency, 2022)

In the English version of the Report, “Zhong Guo Shi Xian Dai Hua (中国式现代化)” is translated as “Chinese path to modernization”, so that, “MODERNIZATION DEVELOPMENT IS JOURNEY” is reflected.

“Path” means “a way or track that is built or is made by the action of people walking” (Hornby, 2018). Therefore, it can be reflected that in order to achieve the destination of modernization with Chinese characteristics, China is fearless of danger and difficulties in exploring the way with its people to achieve modernization with Chinese characteristics.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Major Findings

Under the guidance of Critical Metaphor Analysis, this paper explores political metaphors in English version of “Report to the 20th CPC National Congress”. The English version of the Report is highly metaphorical. Among the different kinds of conceptual metaphors, journey metaphors, building metaphors, plant metaphors, life metaphors, and war metaphors are particularly prominent. The projection of the concepts, such as obstacles in journey, building structures, growth process of plants, factors that are harmful to health, responsible leader who leads the war to victory, etc., onto country development helps construe the political terms with Chinese characteristics. In this way, through processing the metaphors, readers can have a deep understanding of the process of modernization with Chinese characteristics and the requirements to CPC members.

Also, the motivations and functions of metaphors used in the English version of the Report are studied and analyzed. Due to the readers’ unfamiliarity with China’s thoughts and culture, literal translation would not make them understand the abstract concepts in the original text. Therefore, political metaphors, mobilizing imagery and concepts familiar to the readers, guide the readers to feel the emotions and get them to know about Chinese thinking and culture. And the metaphors present three main functions: 1) help reflect CPC’s philosophy of governance and ideological orientation; 2) show the image of China, which is the most important content of soft power and has a rich and profound connotation; and 3) highlight CPC’s attention toward its people and diplomacy.

6.2 Research Significance

The significance of this paper can be divided into theoretical and practical significance.

Theoretically, this paper deepens the research on the influence of political metaphors on ideology transmission in political discourse translation. And this research can promote the study of conceptual metaphors in the transmission of political ideas.

Practically, the metaphor materials extracted from the English version of the Report can be directly used as examples when teaching and illustrating metaphor theory. At the same time, the use of metaphors is not only a linguistic phenomenon but also a cognitive phenomenon in essence. Therefore, the understanding of the use of metaphors in the English version of the Report is helpful for drawing inferences about other cases from one instance and realizing flexible responses at the language level in translation activities.

6.3 Limitations and Further Suggestions

Due to the limited references to political concepts, extraction and judgment of metaphor materials in this study are less sufficient. Therefore, further researches should expand the source of the corpus and select more political discourse to ensure the adequacy of political metaphor materials.

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Authors contributions

Conceptualization, Ao Wang & You Wang; Supervision and Reviewing, You Wang & Shuo Cao; Drafting, Ao Wang; Revision, Ao Wang & Yuyao Liu. All authors approved to the publication of the manuscript.

Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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No additional data are available.

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