Translation Research on Conceptual Metaphor in the 2023 Chinese Government Work Report

Yi Li[1] & Guangjie Tang[1]

[1] College of International Studies, Southwest University, China

Correspondence: Yi Li, College of International Studies, Southwest University, China.

Abstract

In traditional rhetoric, metaphor is simply a rhetorical device used to make the mentioned things more understandable. It was not until 1980 that two cognitive linguists, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980) argued in *Metaphors We Live By* that the essence of metaphor is the cognitive mechanism by which abstract things are explained through concrete things, shifting the study of metaphor from the linguistic level to the cognitive level. Later on, Lakoff (1996) analyzed political metaphor from a cognitive perspective for the first time in *Moral Politics*, which drives the upsurge of research on conceptual metaphor in political discourse. Political discourse usually uses metaphor to conceptualize the political ideas and issues it aims to disseminate, and the use of conceptual metaphor is closely related to national culture, so the translation of conceptual metaphor has become the key to the overseas publicity of political discourse. On March 5, 2023, Premier Li Keqiang delivered Chinese Government Work Report at the opening meeting of the first session of the 14th National People's Congress. After reading the official translation on www.china.org.cn, the authors find that the Report contains a wealth of conceptual metaphors, and whether the translation of these metaphors is appropriate or not will affect the accuracy of people's understanding of the Report. Based on Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) conceptual metaphor theory and Group's (2007) metaphor identification procedure, this paper takes the 2023 Chinese Government Work Report and its English translation version on www.china.org.cn as the research corpus. Through manual screening, classification and statistics of conceptual metaphors, this paper explores ten types of conceptual metaphor models, namely human metaphor, journey metaphor, war metaphor, cultural metaphor, architecture metaphor, water metaphor, animal and plant metaphor, machine metaphor, line metaphor as well as object metaphor. Based on Xiao's (2005) cognitive strategy of metaphor translation, this paper also analyzes the translation of ten types of conceptual metaphors. This paper attempts to explore the following three research questions: (1) What are the types of metaphorical patterns in the Report? (2) How are the conceptual metaphors used in the Report and what cultural connotations and images are conveyed by them? (3) How to effectively translate conceptual metaphors in the Report to achieve a better understanding of the target audience? Microsoft Office (Word and Excel) is used as a statistical tool and a mapping tool to count specific conceptual metaphor categories and record typical metaphor keywords, and visualize the data of the proportion of various types. This paper tries to summarize and analyze the cultural connotations and images conveyed by the conceptual metaphors, so as to provide help for the English translation of Chinese political discourse and promote the international dissemination of Chinese political ideas. Through the analysis of conceptual metaphors, we can judge that although the political concepts in the Report is abstract, conceptual metaphors can express them more concretely and more easily understood by the audience through the mapping from the source domain to the target domain.

Keywords: the year of 2023, Chinese Government Work Report, conceptual metaphors, English translation

1. Translation Research on Conceptual Metaphor in the 2023 Chinese Government Work Report

The economic base determines the superstructure, and the superstructure inversely reacts to the economic base. From this, it can be seen that Chinese Government Work Report (hereinafter referred to as the Report), one of the focuses of the two sessions of China each year, is not only a summary of the work of the country in the past year but also an action guide that plays an important role in the economic development in the next year.

On the morning of March 5, 2023, the first session of the 14th National People's Congress was grandly opened at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. On behalf of the State Council, Premier Li Keqiang delivered 2023

Chinese Government Work Report at the opening meeting, putting forward a series of new targets and plans, and sending a new signal of China's economic and social development. After reading the official translation on www.china.org.cn and comparing the original text, the authors find that the Report contains a wealth of conceptual metaphors (See Figure 1).

Figure 1. A wealth of conceptual metaphors in the Report (words highlighted in yellow)

This paper selects the 2023 Chinese Government Work Report and its English translation version on www.china.org.cn as the research corpus. The Report contains 18,505 characters in Chinese and 14,887 characters in the English translation version. Based on Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) conceptual metaphor theory, the "metaphor identification procedure (MIP)" proposed by Pragglejaz Group (2007) is applied to extract conceptual metaphors from the two parallel texts. Xiao (2005) deemed that "translators should understand the psychological basis of metaphor from a cognitive perspective and determine specific translation strategies according to the psychological operation mechanism of it" (p. 102). Liu and Zhong (2018) mentioned that "political discourse usually uses metaphor to conceptualize the political ideas and issues it aims to disseminate, and the translation of metaphor has become the key to the external publicity of political discourse" (p. 202). Lu (2022) also claimed that "the importance of the government work report determines that the English translation of metaphors involved in the report also has important research value" (p. 57). So based on Xiao's (2005) cognitive strategy of metaphor translation, this paper also analyzes the translation of ten types of conceptual metaphors.

This paper analyzes the working mechanism of conceptual metaphors in political discourse and summarizes the cultural connotations and images conveyed by them, to provide help for the English translation of political discourse and promote the international dissemination of Chinese political ideas. This paper attempts to explore the following three research questions: (1) What are the types of metaphorical patterns in the Report? (2) How are the conceptual metaphors used in the Report and what cultural connotations and images are conveyed by them? (3) How to effectively translate conceptual metaphors in the Report to achieve a better understanding of the target audience?

2. Literature Review

The study of metaphor can be traced back to the time of Aristotle. But in traditional rhetoric, metaphor is simply a rhetorical device used to make the mentioned things more understandable. It was not until 1980 that two cognitive linguists, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980) argued in *Metaphors We Live By* that the essence of metaphor is the cognitive mechanism by which abstract things are explained through concrete things, shifting the study of metaphor from the linguistic level to the cognitive level. Later on, Lakoff (1996) analyzed political metaphor from a cognitive perspective for the first time in *Moral Politics*, which drives the upsurge of research on conceptual metaphor in political discourse. "Metaphors can help politicians reorganize reality and create a metaphorical reality, to influence people's thinking, reshape people's attitudes, construct people's views and ideologies, and change people's actions. Metaphors become a license for political action" (He, 2011, p. 49).

Using the research methods of corpus linguistics, Huang and Wu (2009) analyzed the conceptual metaphors in the editorial of the two sessions of the People's Daily from a diachronic perspective from 1978 to 2007 and concluded that since the reform and opening up, the use of travel metaphor, architectural metaphor and plant metaphor has been stable, while the use of war metaphor, navigation metaphor and family metaphor has changed to different degrees. Wang and Huang (2012) then conducted a diachronic study of conceptual metaphors in 34

Chinese Government Work Reports from 1978 to 2011. His study reflects the subtle changes in the Chinese government's ideology and governing philosophy.

Subsequently, scholars have turned their attention to the translation of conceptual metaphors in political discourses. Wang (2016), guided by Skopos theory, a German functionalist translation theory, analyzed the textual characteristics of the 2014 Chinese Government Work Report and summarized the methods of cross-cultural translation. Through Tian's (2016) study on the English translation of the 2015 Chinese Government Work Report, she analyzed the translation strategies and the presentation process of cultural transformation that have a significant impact on translation generation. Liu and Zhong (2018) took the 2017 Chinese Government Work Report as an example to discuss and analyze the metaphorical translation strategies from the perspective of cognition and tried to point out the shortcomings of metaphorical translation and put forward solutions. Liu and Zhou (2019) took the Chinese and English versions of the Report of the 19th National Congress as an example, taking the translation of conceptual metaphor as a starting point, and studied the translation methods of conceptual metaphor and its hidden reasons. Using Xi Jinping's New Year greetings from 2014 to 2021 (bilingual edition) as the research corpus, Yan (2022) also explored the conceptual metaphors and analyzed the translation strategies used in them.

The authors find that although scholars have done much research on the English translation of conceptual metaphors in the Chinese political discourse, the current text of the 2023 Chinese Government Work Report is relatively new, so little research has been done on it. Therefore, the research on this topic has certain practical significance.

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 Conceptual Metaphor Theory

According to cognitive linguistics, metaphor is not a rhetorical device, but a way of thinking and a cognitive device that can be reflected in language. The idea of conceptual metaphor theory, first proposed in the book *Metaphors We Live By* by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), works by the systematic mapping of metaphors from a concrete conceptual domain (source domain) to an abstract one (target domain). They believe that the essence of metaphor is to understand and experience one thing through another thing, shifting the study of metaphor from the linguistic level to the cognitive level.

3.2 Metaphor Identification Procedure

For the extraction of conceptual metaphors in the Report, the "metaphor identification procedure (MIP)" proposed by Pragglejaz Group (2007) was adopted in this paper. The procedure is mainly divided into the following four steps: (1) Read through the whole text to understand the general meaning of the words; (2) Identify lexical units in discourse; (3) Determine the meaning of each lexical unit in the context of the text, and then find out whether the lexical unit has a more basic, more specific and more accurate meaning in other contexts than in this context; (4) If the lexical unit has a more basic meaning in another context, it is metaphorical in that context; if it does not, it is not metaphorical.

3.3 Cognitive Strategy of Metaphor Translation

Xiao (2005) believed that traditional translation theories lack the rigour of systematic science in microcosmic analysis. He put forward the view that cognitive orientation should be adopted in the translation of metaphor, rather than rhetorical orientation. Based on the psychological basis and mechanism of metaphor, he proposed the "cognitive strategy of metaphor translation", which includes three strategies to explore metaphor translation from a cognitive perspective: (1) equivalent mapping of metaphorical conceptual domains, (2) domestication mapping of a metaphorical conceptual domain in the target language, and (3) transplantation mapping of metaphorical conceptual domains.

The experience of different nations facing the same objective world is similar to a large extent. Based on the same perception, different nations can naturally produce similar conceptual structures. "Equivalent mapping of metaphorical conceptual domains" means "metaphorical expressions appearing in different languages have the same mapping mode of metaphorical conceptual domains."

Due to differences in social environment, historical traditions, religious beliefs and others, various ethnic groups have a lot of different experiences. "Domestication mapping of a metaphorical conceptual domain in the target language" means "the abstract concepts in the source language are mapped by the concrete concepts of the target domain in the target language, which conform to the sociocultural characteristics of the target language community."

Some metaphors are loaded with unique cultural connotations with no same metaphorical concept nor similar conceptual domain mapping existing in the target language culture, so the expedient strategy "transplantation mapping of metaphorical conceptual domains" is adopted. This strategy means "the mapping mode of conceptual metaphors in the source language is fully transplanted and translated in the target language." Though foreign readers will not have the same reaction as domestic readers, the metaphorical expressions of the original text are reproduced in the target language, reflecting the cognitive basis of the metaphors.

4. Methodology

MIP is taken as the reference basis for identifying conceptual metaphors in the corpus. Microsoft Office (Word and Excel) is used as a statistical tool and a mapping tool to count specific conceptual metaphor categories and record typical metaphor keywords, as well as visualize the data of the proportion of various types.

The research procedure is as follows:

(1) Collecting corpus

The authors download the 2023 Chinese Government Work Report and import it into the Word document, then look up the official English translation online at www.china.org.cn. To achieve a convenient comparison between Chinese and English, the authors insert the translation into the Word document paragraph by paragraph (each paragraph with its original text and translation text).

(2) Reading the bilingual text and identifying conceptual metaphors

The authors read through the whole Report and its English translation to grasp the general meaning of it. Then the authors read the second time and use the MIP to identify various kinds of conceptual metaphors.

An example of the specific use of MIP in this paper is as follows: the sentence "经济发展再上新台阶" means that "economic development has reached a new level", and "新台阶" is recognized as a lexical unit. In the context of the political text, "新台阶" refers to "social development, work, production, etc., reaching a new height". But in other contexts, "新台阶" has a more basic meaning, that is "one of the surfaces that you walk on when you go up or down stairs". So in this political context, "新台阶" is recognized as metaphorically used.

(3) Recording and visualizing data

When the authors determine one conceptual metaphor, they use the "Find" function in the Word document to retrieve the number of times that conceptual metaphor keywords appear in the Report, and then record the specific lexical unit and its frequency in the Excel table. When the statistics of all the conceptual metaphors in the Report are completed, the authors classify those conceptual metaphors into different types according to their specific usage. Later on, the authors use the drawing tool in Excel to visualize the data of the proportion of various conceptual metaphor types.

(4) Analyzing the data

According to the Figure of the metaphorical classification proportion visualized by Excel, the authors analyze which types of conceptual metaphors appear most frequently, and scan the full text again to select typical conceptual metaphor examples for translation analysis according to Xiao's (2005) cognitive strategy of metaphor translation.

5. Classification and Analysis of Conceptual Metaphors in the 2023 Chinese Government Work Report

5.1 Classification of Conceptual Metaphors in the Report

George Lakoff divided metaphor into entity metaphor, structure metaphor and location metaphor. According to Lakoff's metaphor theory, domestic scholars have classified metaphors in many political discourses. As regards Chinese Government Work Report, in a total of 34 Reports from 1978 to 2011, Wang and Huang (2012) extracted ten types of conceptual metaphors, namely architectural metaphor, journey metaphor, machine metaphor, water metaphor, organism metaphor, object metaphor, war metaphor, road metaphor, family metaphor and meteorological metaphor. Liu (2019) summarized the metaphorical patterns in the 2019 Chinese Government Work Report into nine categories, namely architectural metaphor, journey metaphor, war metaphor, machine metaphor, water metaphor, spatial orientation metaphor, container metaphor, object metaphor and living entity metaphor. Lu (2022) divided the conceptual metaphors in the 2022 Chinese Government Work report into seven categories: architectural metaphors, struggle metaphors, journey metaphors, family metaphors, competition metaphors, and human and disease metaphors.

To sum up, the authors find that different scholars have similar classifications of conceptual metaphors in Chinese Government Work Reports. Based on the textual characteristics of the 2023 Chinese Government Work

Report, the authors divide the conceptual metaphors collected in this paper into ten categories according to their specific usage, namely, to classify those conceptual metaphors according to their specific source domains employed.

Classification and frequency of conceptual metaphors in the Report are shown in the following Figure 2. The left column contains ten types of conceptual metaphors collected in the Report, namely, human metaphor, journey metaphor, war metaphor, cultural metaphor, architecture metaphor, water metaphor, animal and plant metaphor, machine metaphor, line metaphor, and object metaphor. The middle column is some examples of conceptual metaphors, the keywords coloured in red are specific expressions of conceptual metaphors, with blank figures showing their frequency on their right side. The right column is the total frequency of each conceptual metaphor type.

Types	Expressions of Conceptual Metaphors	Frequency
Human Metaphor	迈3、应对11、帮扶4、人类命运共同体2、面临2、直面2、领导5、推动24、推进28、爬坡过坎1、激发2、着力7、立足2、描绘1、面对5、带领1、遇到2、实施26、落实14、表现1、展现1、抓7、发挥11、企稳3、举世瞩目1、居2、步伐1、抬头1、带头1、把握2、拖欠2、承担1、担当1、扶贫1、扶持1、对口1、依靠1、跨省2、监督6、偷税逃税1、漠视1、头部房企1	195
Journey Metaphor	征程1、稳步7、阶段9、进一步6、脱离1、违背1、方向2、进程2、稳中求进3、同步2、道路1、方针3、下行2、引导7、通行2、历程1、前行2、直达1、准入2、通行2、捷径1、路线1、施政所向1、走向1、任重道远1、起好步1	63
War Metaphor	脱贫攻坚战4、污染防治攻坚1、进军1、冲击7、竞争4、保卫战1、斗争4、打击2、战略11、目标4、统筹9、奋斗5、防范2、突破4、部署5、胜利3、攻关4、旗帜1、防控7、打赢2、抵御1、抗疫2、挂牌督战1、抗击1	86
Cultural Metaphor	放水养鱼1、出台4、勇创佳绩1、扫黑除恶1、考核1、稳字当头1、共克时艰1、同胞5、侨胞2、伙伴4、传承2、核心12、针对5、下乡1、韧性1、刚性3、弹性1、难题2、基调2、摘帽1、接踵而来1、大水漫灌1、留得青山1、过紧日子1、千方百计1、炒1、落地2、大道为公1、保护伞1、初心1、凝心聚力1、冷暖1、表面文章1、解难题1、新气象1、腐败现象1、尽心竭力1、格局4、血脉相连1	74
Architecture Metaphor	建设17、巩固8、空间2、基础14、共建1、开放9、基层4、工程12、建立6、建成2、构建9、组建4、结构7、支撑4、挖掘1、大梁1、扩围1、台阶1、民生之基1、壁垒1、市场16、共建3、强基计划1、高层1、建设性作用1、树立1	127
Water Metaphor	渠道5、流动性1、流通1、上涨2、涨幅2、风高浪急1、涌现1、下沉2、财富之源1	16
Animal and Plant Metaphor	成果6、涵养税源1、发展33、新兴产业2、振兴6、可再生1、活力5、收缩2、培育4、壮大3、更新1、攀升1	67
Machine Metaphor	力度15、运行6、机制2、启动2、动力6、动能1、驱动1、带动5、合力3、调控3、稳定21、提升17、高效4、支持25、挖掘1、中高速1、强度1、运转1、压减4、压缩1、压实1、加速1、提速1、拉动力1、功能1	129
Line Metaphor	产业链2、供应链1、强链补链2、环节5、主线1、循环2、底线1、供给侧4、衔接1、沿线国家1、多边1、保护红线2、边界1	28
Object Metaphor	负担3、压力2、短板3、一刀切1、清单2、工具5、一揽子1、经济大盘2、储备4、投放1、缺口1、稳岗3、扩岗2、容量2、解脱1、撬动1、承载1、产业带1、饭碗1、金山银山1、兜4、保障网1、轨道1、金砖国家1、层层加码1、重托1、摆在…位置2、布局5	54

Figure 2. Classification and frequency of conceptual metaphors in the 2023 Chinese Government Work Report

Excel is used as a statistical tool and a mapping tool to draw the conceptual metaphors in the Report by percentage. It can be seen from the following Figure 3 that human metaphor, machine metaphor, architecture metaphor and war metaphor are the most frequently used conceptual metaphors in the 2023 Chinese Government Work Report, accounting for 23%, 15%, 15% and 10% respectively.
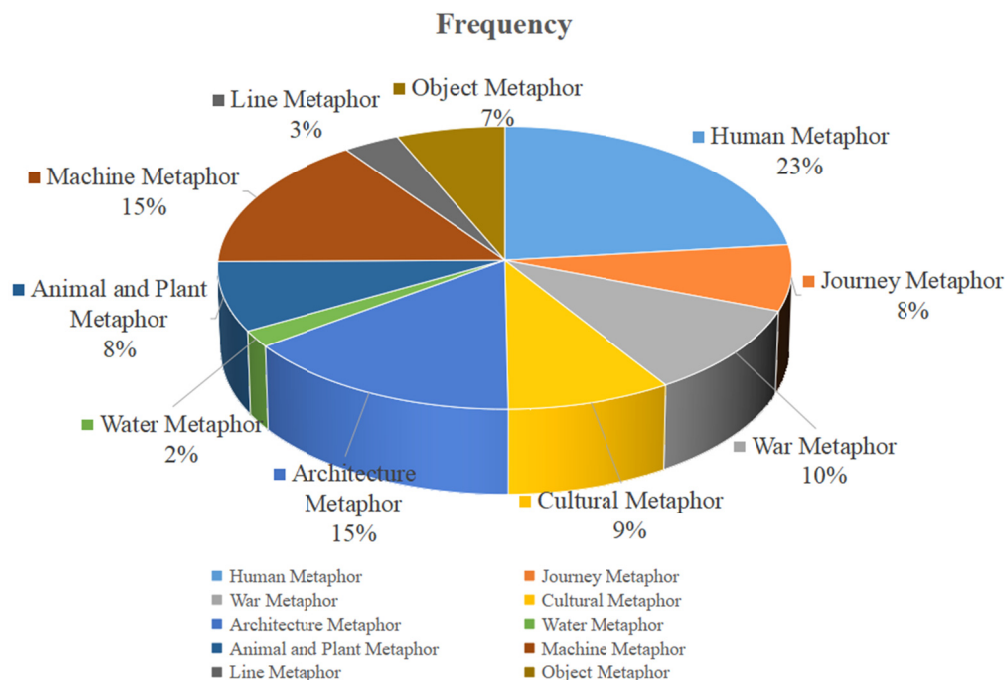
Figure 3. Metaphorical classification ratio

5.2 Conceptual Metaphor Analysis in the Report

Liu and Zhong (2018) proposed that "the translatability of metaphor is based on the cognitive overlap of different nations and the common cultural cognitive experience, which makes similar or equivalent conceptual metaphors exist and equivalent mapping translation possible. However, due to the influence of social culture, different nations have very different cultural cognitive models and different image choices for the same abstract concept" (p. 204). The following will analyze the 10 types of conceptual metaphors in the 2023 Report and their translation, and point out the practical role of conceptual metaphors in political discourse.

1) Human Metaphor

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) pointed out that human metaphor is the most common metaphor we can understand. As for the definition of human metaphor, Wen (2017) claimed that "the source domain of human metaphor is a living and thinking concrete person with flesh-and-blood" (p. 2). Our bodies, organs, movements, and life experiences can all be used metaphorically.

Example 1: 以改革开放办法推动经济*爬坡过坎*、持续前行。

Translation: *We pursued reform and opening up as a means to steer the economy through various trials and difficulties and sustain growth.*

Example 2: 下大气力*抓*农业生产……

Translation: *We redoubled efforts to bolster agricultural production…*

In the above two examples, the metaphorical keywords "爬坡过坎" and "抓" indirectly activate the human metaphors. As the human metaphors don't appear in the original text, in their English translations, none of the three cognitive strategies for metaphor translation has been used. Instead, the translator deleted the metaphorical images and adopted free translation.

In Example 1, in the original Chinese, "经济"(economy) is likened to a human entity. The picture of "经济" in a three-dimensional world is constructed, and there are many obstacles in front of it. The trials and difficulties faced by the current economy are also materialized as "坡"(slope) and "坎"(ridge), and then a human metaphor is used to express "the economy climbs the slope over the ridge like a human", thereby showing that the risks and challenges faced by our economy are urgent to be solved, are inescapable, and are not small in difficulty, which requires us to pay hard efforts and have firm confidence to overcome. At the same time, it also indirectly highlights the effectiveness of using reform and opening up methods, giving domestic readers strong confidence.

The current trials and difficulties will have a short-term and external impact on the Chinese economy, but it will not change the fundamentals of China's long-term economic growth, nor will it change the internal upward momentum of China's economic development. As for the translation of this human metaphor, though the word "growth" gives life and vitality to the "economy", the overall translation is static, with the meaning of "爬" and "过" simply expressed by "through". It's difficult to convey this dynamic Chinese image in the translation literally, so the translator employed the translation strategy of free translation. Though the translation is not as vivid as the original Chinese text, it does not create a potential loss of meaning, because the connotation of "坡" and "坎", namely "trials and difficulties", is translated, and the general meaning of "the economy overcomes many difficulties" is cleverly conveyed.

In Chinese, "抓" means "grab" and it is a hand movement. The verb "抓" in Example 2 is used to refer to "government" as "a human entity" and "government policy" as "an invisible hand". Example 2 not only humanizes the implementer of the action (the implementer is the government while the action is the use of policy) but also materializes the object of the action (agricultural production) into something that can be grasped in hands. As a matter of fact, in Chinese, the connotation of "抓农业生产" is "to promote and support agricultural development and work hard in agricultural production", in that "抓" has an implied meaning of "pay special attention to", showing the precision of policy. "大气力" means "the great strength of the hand movement", implying that policy implementation needs to be fully active and focused. As for the English translation, due to cultural differences, "grab" doesn't have the same meaning as "pay special attention to", so it can not be translated literally. The translator here used a free translation strategy, too, and the word "bolster" accurately expresses the inherent meaning of the human metaphor. Similarly, in the Report, "抓好油料生产" is translated as "promote the production of oilseed crops". And "持续抓紧抓好农业生产" is translated as "continuously gave priority to agricultural production". The Chinese metaphor and images are cleverly conveyed so that foreigners can understand this political discourse more clearly.

2) Journey Metaphor

"Journey" is the source of many metaphors because of its variety of beginnings, ends and processes. The journey metaphor is based on "A PURPOSEFUL SOCIAL ACTIVITY IS A JOURNEY". "The purpose of the politician's social action is conceptualized as the destination the traveller intends to reach" (Sheng, 2021, p. 66). The continuous development of a country is often accompanied by various problems, and so is the journey. "Since the destination is viewed as a goal of social value, the journey metaphor often positively evaluates the social behaviour concerned" (Sheng, 2021, p. 66).

Example 3: ……开启向第二个百年奋斗目标进军新*征程*。

Translation: *…and embarking on a new journey to realize the Second Centenary Goal.*

Example 4: 做好经济社会发展工作，没有*捷径*，实干为要。

Translation: *There is no shortcut to achieving economic and social development; only solid work will deliver it.*

In the above two examples, the metaphorical keywords "征程" and "捷径" directly activate the journey metaphors. Due to the similar cognitive experience of "journey" at home and abroad, the strategy of "equivalent mapping of metaphorical conceptual domains" is adopted. The translator retained the metaphorical keywords in their English translation to achieve the equivalent effect and accurately convey the political idea of China.

In Example 3, as the process of working towards the Second Centenary Goal is very abstract, it is conceptualized as a "journey", which considers the development of China as a positive, confident and pleasant trip. The Party serves as the leader and the people are travellers, marching towards the Second Centenary Goal under the guidance of the Party's principles and policies. This metaphor can not only inspire people to join hands in the development of China but also construct their political thinking, achieving specific political goals by stimulating people's inner emotions. "The use of journey metaphor can better enable the audience to understand the focus of the government's work, to maximize the dissemination and identification of the political ideas of political discourse communicators" (Wang & Huang, 2012, p. 43). At the same time, as the Second Centenary Goal and the First Centenary Goal are connected, it also highlights the lengthy and phased nature of this process. In English, the conceptual metaphor equivalent to "征程" exists, that is "journey", which makes the equivalent mapping translation possible. Therefore, the translator can perform a literal translation here, and foreign readers can easily grasp the meaning of this political sentence. It can be seen that the conceptual metaphor of "journey" formed by Chinese and English nationalities is the same.

Example 4 refers to the progress of economic and social development as a "journey" because "捷径"(shortcut) activates a journey metaphor, emphasizing that only "实干"(to do solid work) can we achieve economic and

social development. Literally, "shortcut" means "a quicker or shorter way of getting to a place", but here, it means "a way of doing something quicker than the usual way". It does not represent a "road" in the true sense, but a "method". In Chinese, "要" can mean "something important and notable", so in this context, we can interpret it as "干线"(main lines of communication). From a comparison between "shortcut" and "main lines of communication", we can see that our country gives priority to "to do solid work" and has a down-to-earth attitude and unshakable determination in our economic and social development. We don't try to do things quickly, we just try to do things steadily. Similar to the above example, the conceptual metaphor "shortcut" is equivalent to "捷径" in its denotation and connotation, so the "equivalent mapping of metaphorical conceptual domains" strategy can be used and the translator can perform literal translation.

3) War Metaphor

Based on the special national conditions and policies, China often interprets economic development, policy management and goals of struggle as the original domain of "war". Although the word "war" often conjures up images of suffering, in Chinese political discourse, this domain of origin is now mostly used to refer to "human struggle against various obstacles".

Example 5: 持续加强社会治安综合治理，严厉*打击*各类违法犯罪，开展扫黑除恶专项*斗争*……

Translation: *We continued to take a full range of measures to maintain law and order, cracked down hard on illegal and criminal activities of all types, and launched campaigns to combat organized crime and handed out severe punishments…*

Example 6: ……持续打好蓝天、碧水、净土*保卫战*。

Translation: *…and continue working to keep our skies blue, waters clear, and lands clean.*

In the above two examples, three metaphorical keywords "打击", "斗争" and "战" directly activate the war metaphors.

Two war metaphors are used in Example 5. Words such as "打击"(fight) and "斗争"(struggle) indicate that the government regards all kinds of illegal and criminal acts and evil forces as enemies and resolutely fights against them. Here, war metaphors can clearly show that illegal acts and evil forces are stubborn diseases. It requires sufficient efforts to punish "违法犯罪"(illegal criminal activity) and "黑恶势力"(vicious power), so it rises to the level of "war". In its English translation, as China and English-speaking countries have the same cognitive basis for "war" in the political discourse, the strategy of "equivalent mapping of metaphorical conceptual domains" is used. The evil forces are a major obstacle to our realization of socialism. "Cracked down hard on" shows a strong and precise fight against crime. "Launched campaigns to combat" borrows the original conceptual domain of "war" to translate, making the target language closer to the expression of the source language and directly showing the government's determination to wipe out evil, so that foreign readers can quickly understand its meaning. Huang and Wu (2009) believe that "a moderate amount of war metaphors can inspire people, stimulate fighting spirit, and call on people to join the cause of socialism" (p. 94).

Flusberg et al. (2018) claimed that "war metaphors are notable for the fear that they evoke and their tendency to frame adversarial relationships" (p. 12). However, this is not always the case, especially in Chinese political discourse. Contrary to Example 5, in Example 6, although the original text of the Report is "保卫战"(defence war), no gunpowder flavour is there. "Blue sky", "clear water" and "pure land" are our friends, but not our enemies. They constitute the natural and necessary environment of human beings, and we can not live a good life without them. Nevertheless, it is not easy to live in harmony with these friends. We need to love the environment and fight against anything that pollutes it. Therefore, "保卫战" is a "war" with positive meanings. In its translation, none of the three cognitive strategies for metaphor translation has been used, the translator did not refer to the original domain of "war", but deleted the conceptual metaphor keyword "保卫战" and dug its connotation, that is, "working to keep our skies blue, waters clear, and lands clean". Though the translation does not show any concepts related to "war", the authors consider it is very appropriate, because it already accurately conveys the core meaning of the original text. In this case, the tone in the translation is also very appropriate, because there is no hint of war. "The change in the use of war metaphor reflects the change in the governing idea of our government, that is, the transformation from a revolutionary party to a ruling party, and the political discourse of the party is becoming more and more positive and peaceful" (Wang & Huang, 2012, p.44).

4) Cultural Metaphor

"A cultural metaphor is a major phenomenon, institution, or activity in a nation with which most citizens identify cognitively or emotionally and through which it is possible to describe the national culture and its frame of reference in depth" (Gannon, 2006, p. 37). Due to the cultural differences of various nationalities, the translation

of metaphors is not easy.

Example 7: ……既帮助企业*渡过难关*、*留得青山*，也*放水养鱼*、涵养税源……

Translation: *This policy not only helped enterprises overcome difficulties and stay afloat, but also nurtured business growth and cultivated sources of tax revenue.*

Example 8: ……*出台*实施稳经济一揽子政策和接续措施……

Translation: *We unveiled and implemented a full range of policies and follow-up measures to stabilize the economy.*

Example 9: 坚持房子是用来住的、不是用来*炒*的定位。

Translation: *Adhering to the principle that housing is for living in and not for speculation…*

In the above three examples, five metaphorical keywords "渡过难关", "留得青山", "放水养鱼", "出台" and "炒" directly activate the cultural metaphors. The first two cognitive strategies for metaphor translation are used in their translations.

In Chinese culture, "渡" is generally used to refer to "cross a river", but its figurative meaning is to "go through hardships". So in Example 7, it can be seen from "渡过难关" that the process of solving problems is compared to crossing a river, and the difficulties and obstacles encountered by enterprises on the way are compared to barriers, highlighting the tremendous help of the policy to enterprises. Here, free translation is employed, but the authors think it is better to use the "domestication mapping of a metaphorical conceptual domain in the target language" strategy because, in English, we have concrete concepts that have the same meaning as "渡过难关". They are "pull through", "ride out a storm" and "turn the corner". "放水养鱼" literally means that "if you want the fish to live, you must give it enough water". But in the Report, it is a policy that means "if you want the main market players to live well, you must create a good environment for them", for example, strengthening phased policies and combining them with institutional arrangements. Rich cultural connotations are hidden in this word and they are unique to Chinese culture, so if it is literally translated, foreign readers may be difficult to understand. Based on the similar cognitive mode and psychological basis of different nationalities, the "domestication mapping of a metaphorical conceptual domain in the target language" strategy is used. The translator translates it together with the following "涵养税源" into "nurture business growth and cultivate sources of tax revenue", which conveys the core meaning accurately. Similarly, the phrase "留得青山" in this sentence also has rich cultural connotations. This word comes from a Chinese idiom "留得青山在，不怕没柴烧", which suggests that "as long as the fundamental thing is still there, temporary losses or setbacks will not hurt". By using the "domestication mapping of a metaphorical conceptual domain in the target language" strategy, the translation of "留得青山" is "stay afloat", namely "maintaining turnover". This translation is simple, although it conveys the basic meaning of the original, the authors believe that it fails to show the connotations of Chinese culture. If the Chinese cultural metaphors can be skillfully conveyed in the translation, foreign readers can understand the political discourse more clearly. "Helping target language readers to obtain similar cognitive experience as source language readers has the function of enhancing a sense of identity" (Yan, 2022. p. 82).

The word "出台" in Example 8 originated from Chinese opera, referring to "characters taking to the stage", and later it evolved to refer to "a policy being formally proposed after deliberation and preparation". "Unveil" in the translation is very proper as it also has two meanings. One is "to remove a cover or curtain from a painting, statue, etc. so that it can be seen in public for the first time", and another is "to show or introduce a new plan, product, etc. to the public for the first time". In this case, "出台" and "unveil" are consistent with their second meanings. So the strategy of "equivalent mapping of metaphorical conceptual domains" is employed. It can be seen that the cultural cognition of English-speaking countries and China are unified in these two terms, but the Chinese version has more cultural connotations and deposits.

The concept of "炒房" appears in Example 9. Literally, "炒" is a cooking method, and the corresponding English translation is "stir-fry". Houses can not be stir-fried, but if the translation is equivalent to every word in the original sentence, it should be "stir-fry the house", which is difficult for foreign readers to understand. By using the strategy of "domestication mapping of a metaphorical conceptual domain in the target language", the translation here is "speculation", precisely conveying the meaning of the concept. Because in Chinese, in the field of economic, "炒" refers to "buying and selling", and "炒房" refers to "the investment behaviour accompanying the development of the real estate industry".

5) Architecture Metaphor

Architecture metaphor uses architecture to convey a message through structural elements. In a broad sense,

"architecture" includes ordinary buildings and the environment. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) claimed that architecture metaphor is used to conceptualize the abstract and complex system in our daily experience and to represent things and events such as theory, society, enterprise, creation, and relationship as buildings. "The extensive use of architectural metaphors reflects the government's full affirmation of the significance and value of the socialist cause, and at the same time can arouse people's yearning for a better future and mobilize people's enthusiasm for socialist construction" (Wang & Huang, 2012, p. 43).

Example 10: 中国作为负责任大国，在推进国际抗疫合作、解决全球性挑战和地区热点问题上发挥了重要*建设性*作用，为促进世界和平与发展作出重要贡献。

Translation: *As a responsible major country, China played significant and constructive roles in enhancing international Covid-19 cooperation and addressing global challenges and regional hotspot issues, thus making important contributions to global peace and development.*

The phrase "建设性作用" in Example 10 activates an architecture metaphor. "建设" means "construction", but "建设性作用" refers to "the overall positive promoting and pioneering role, which is scientific, reasonable and instructive". Using such a metaphor can help people realize the strong strength of China, and remind people that China has made great contributions to the world. Through China's positive role, all parties in promoting international cooperation against the Covid-19 epidemic as well as addressing global challenges and regional hotspot issues, are moving in a positive direction, just like buildings are gradually rising, highlighting China's major contribution to international affairs. The phrase "建设性作用" is translated into English as "constructive roles". It can be seen that China and the English-speaking countries share the same understanding and feelings about this expression, so here it is the "equivalent mapping of metaphorical conceptual domains" strategy that is used. "The similarity between the development of a country and the construction of houses is that if a country wants to develop for a long time, it must have a good foundation, and the construction of houses is the same" (Lu, 2022, p. 58).

6) Water Metaphor

A water metaphor is a metaphor that involves comparing something to water by saying it is water. Huang and Qin (2010) explained that people initially formed the concept of "water" from its significant characteristics and functions. With the development of society and the improvement of people's cognition, they gradually associate "water" with other things and use it to understand other related concepts. Water is the source of all things, "the most persuasive metaphors come from ordinary language because ordinary language reflects the consensus of the language user community" (Wen, 2014, p. 13).

Example 11: 就业是民生之基、*财富之源*。

Translation: *Employment is the cornerstone of people's wellbeing and the wellspring of wealth.*

With a neat antithesis format, both an architecture metaphor and a water metaphor are presented in Example 11. Literally, "源" corresponds to "source" in English. But here, it activates a water metaphor "源泉", which means "wellspring". "Wellspring" refers to "a supply or source of a particular quality, especially one that never ends". It emphasizes the indispensable role of employment for wealth ownership and increase. So solving the employment problem is never a castle in the air. Only when the employment problem is solved, wealth will continue to flow. The translation here is a completely equivalent style, retaining the connotation of metaphor convergence and indicating that the Eastern and Western nations have similar psychological experiences and mental models in this expression, to achieve the purpose of information exchange.

7) Animal and Plant Metaphor

Chinese is hieroglyphic writing, which reflects the harmonious relationship between man and nature. Therefore, people have a deep perception of animals and plants and are good at using them as metaphors. Animal and plant metaphor regards things as having vitality, that is, it brings inanimate things to life, and a large number of conceptual metaphors are born on this basis.

Example 12: 促进传统产业改造升级，*培育壮大*战略性*新兴产业*，着力补强产业链薄弱环节。

Translation: *We should promote the transformation and upgrading of traditional industries, cultivate and strengthen strategic emerging industries, and take forceful steps to shore up weak links in industrial chains.*

Example 12 refers to "新兴产业"(new industries) as living plants or animals, and the translation of "新兴" also makes use of the animal and plant metaphor, which is presented as a highly dynamic adjective "emerging", vividly expressing the vitality and passion of the new industry. "[Living organisms] can be used in political discourse as a metaphor for the state and trend of China's social economy and other aspects, which can better

show the vitality of China's vigorous development" (Liu, 2019, p. 101). The translation strategy used in here is the "equivalent mapping of metaphorical conceptual domains". Comparing the development process of emerging industries to the cultivation process of plants, this example also makes people realize the correlation and gradual progress of sowing (establishment of industry), cultivation (development of industry) and harvest (stabilization of industry), requiring people to be down-to-earth and step by step in the development of new industries. This kind of metaphor has a positive meaning, which is conducive to stimulating people's longing for the future, and also reflects the Party and the government's perseverance in implementing policies.

8) Machine Metaphor

"Simplicity science regards the cognitive object as a 'machine' or a 'clock' and tries to understand and explain natural phenomena with Newton's mechanics, thus creating the machine metaphor of cognitive thinking" (Yu, 2011, p. 509). Machine metaphor informs models of human and animal behaviour and reflects advances in technology.

Example 13: ……世界经济和贸易增长*动能*减弱……

Translation: *…global economic and trade growth is losing steam…*

Example 14: 把稳就业作为经济*运行*在合理区间的关键指标。

Translation: *Stable employment has remained a key indicator of the economy operating within the appropriate range.*

In the above two examples, the metaphorical keywords "动能" and "运行" activate the machine metaphors. The first two cognitive strategies for metaphor translation are used in their translations.

"动能"(kinetic energy) in Example 13 originally refers to "the energy of objects due to mechanical motion", so it is used as a machine metaphor. In Chinese, it seems that we consider "世界经济和贸易增长" as two machines, and "动能" is used to refer to the kinetic energy of the world economy and trade growth themselves. In its English translation, the cognitive strategy of "domestication mapping of a metaphorical conceptual domain in the target language" is used, as the translator has combined "动能" with "减弱" together and translated it into "losing steam". Nevertheless, different from the original Chinese text, "losing steam" implies that something is providing energy for the growth of the world economy and trade to guarantee and promote their development, just like a steam engine. Steam engines work by boiling water to produce high-pressure steam in a boiler that can use wood, coal, oil or natural gas or even combustible garbage as heat sources. Steam expansion drives the piston to do work, converting heat energy into mechanical energy in a certain heat cycle. It suggests that something is powering the global economic and trade growth similarly. Although there are some slight differences in meaning between the English translation and the Chinese original, the authors think it does not affect foreign readers' understanding of this political discourse.

The word "运行" in Example 14 is a machine word. "经济"(economy) is likened to a machine. "稳就业"(stability of employment) is likened to an indicator, which shows the basic state of the national economy. The economic situation of the country needs to be regulated and driven before it can finally be stabilized, just like a machine that needs constant maintenance. Through the stability of employment, we can see whether a country's economy is stable. Wang and Huang (2012) argued that "the rise in the use of machine metaphors reflects the government's increasingly clear overall consciousness. When dealing with all kinds of work, China's contemporary leaders are good at starting from the overall situation, implementing macro-control, 'focusing on the large while letting the small go', and no longer interfering excessively in specific work, to make the political and economic life of the whole country more vibrant" (p. 43). Here, the strategy of "equivalent mapping of metaphorical conceptual domains" is used. It is a literal translation.

9) Line Metaphor

Line metaphor is a kind of location metaphor. It conceptualizes the national protection system, such as the regulatory requirements for ecological functions, environmental quality and utilization of natural resources, as "lines".

Example 15: 做好因疫因灾遇困群众临时救助工作，切实兜住民生*底线*。

Translation: *We provided emergency assistance to people hit hard by the epidemic or natural disasters, thus ensuring that the basic living needs of all our people were met.*

In Example 15, the word "底线" refers to "the most basic living standard of the people" as "a line", alerting the government to ensure that the basic quality of life of the residents is higher than this standard, and making sure the work is done in details. None of the three cognitive strategies for metaphor translation has been used. The

translator has brought out the connotation of "底线" here, but it does not reflect any concept of "line" in the translation. The authors believe that the word "line" itself can be used to translate, for example, translated as "line in the sand", "baseline" or "bottom line", which can also be understood by foreign readers. In the Report, another interesting example of "兜底线" is translated as "provide a cushion for those most in need". The "domestication mapping of a metaphorical conceptual domain in the target language" strategy is used in this example. It not only expresses the connotation of "底线", but also uses "cushion" as a metaphor to convey the meaning more vividly. It shows that what is even more important is that we should provide help for people to stay afloat.

10) Object Metaphor

Object metaphor indicates that people regard some abstract things and activities as tangible items. It is opposed to the animal and plant metaphor, as the differences lie in that for object metaphor, the source domains are always inanimate things. Throughout the whole Report, although the number of object metaphors is small, they are very representative and can reflect the characteristics of China's diplomatic and political discourse.

Example 16: 围绕补*短板*、调结构、增后劲扩大有效投资。

Translation: *We expanded effective investment to shore up weak links, promote structural adjustments, and sustain growth momentum.*

Example 17: ……始终不懈地把 14 亿多中国人的*饭碗*牢牢端在自己手中。

Translation: *With these efforts, we have fully secured the food supply of more than 1.4 billion people.*

Example 18:有的地方政策执行"*一刀切*"、*层层加码*。

Translation: *Some local governments have used one-size-fits-all approaches or taken excessive measures when implementing policies.*

In the above three examples, four metaphorical keywords "短板", "饭碗", "一刀切" and "层层加码" activate the object metaphors. The latter two cognitive strategies for metaphor translation are used in their translations.

Culturally, the word "短板"(short slab) in Example 16 comes from the barrel theory put forward by the American management scientist Lawrence Peter. It means "how much water a barrel can hold depends on the shortest board", so this word suggests "people's shortcomings or vulnerable spots". "短板" is translated as "weak links", which is a "domestication mapping of a metaphorical conceptual domain in the target language" translation. Although the object metaphor of "board" is transformed into "link", the meaning remains unchanged, because in fact, "weak links" and "短板" both have the same meaning. "Weak links" conforms to the sociocultural characteristics of the English community while "短板" conforms to the Chinese community. And in the translation, "shore up", which means "to support something or prevent it from collapsing by placing supports under or against it", also embodies the object metaphor.

The word "饭碗"(rice bottle) in Example 17 embodies an object metaphor. "饭碗" literally refers to "the bowl with which to eat", but here it is used as "the food supply of 1.4 billion Chinese people", thus the invisible things are shaped. The translator has deleted the conceptual metaphor and brought out the connotation of "饭碗", but the translation is relatively common and does not reflect the original domain of the object metaphor. The authors think that using the "transplantation mapping of metaphorical conceptual domains" strategy to translate "饭碗牢牢端在自己手中" as "keeping the rice bowl firmly in hand" can also show the Chinese government's determination to secure basic food supplies, and more importantly, it will not cause any difficulty for foreign readers to understand.

Example 18 contains two object metaphors, one is "刀"(knife) and the other is "砝码"(weight). "一刀切" originally refers to "the way of dividing a cake that does not consider the whole but only considers the requirements of one certain person". Later, it is used to refer to a sweeping approach, which means "to deal with a problem in a generalized, one-sided and extreme way that will inevitably harm the interests of others". This object metaphor shows that some local policies deal with the problem by ignoring the interests of others and only making profits for one party, resulting in the inevitable damage to others. In English, there is a corresponding translation with "一刀切", which is a "one-size-fits-all approach". Therefore, the translator has adopted the "domestication mapping of a metaphorical conceptual domain in the target language" strategy. "层层加码" means "each level goes through, adding some weights". It is often used to express "adding new content or making new requirements step by step in implementing an order or a regulation". It implies that the policies adopted by some local governments were not precise enough and there are still many unnecessary procedures, which shows that the Chinese government has reflected on the problems in the past year, and is determined to

face the challenges squarely and work hard to improve the work to live up to the people's trust. These two object metaphors are both freely translated with the two items of "knife" and "weight" not interpreted, but their connotations are directly and cleverly conveyed.

6. Conclusion

Conceptual metaphors play a crucial role in the Chinese Government Work Report. This paper selects the 2023 Chinese Government Work Report as the research corpus and is based on Lakoff's conceptual metaphor theory, using the "metaphor identification procedure" proposed by Pragglejaz Group to extract ten types of conceptual metaphors in the text, and analyzing their usage and functions. Based on Xiao's (2005) cognitive strategy of metaphor translation, this paper also analyzes the translation of those ten types of conceptual metaphors.

Through the analysis of conceptual metaphors in the Report, we can judge that although the content in the Report is abstract, conceptual metaphors can express abstract political concepts more concretely and more easily understood by the audience through the mapping from the source domain to the target domain. The authors find that the Report is mostly translated by "equivalent mapping of metaphorical conceptual domains" and "domestication mapping of a metaphorical conceptual domain in the target language" strategies because based on the similar cognitive basis of humans, most conceptual metaphors have corresponding or similar expression forms in both Chinese and English. Though the authors didn't find any use of the "transplantation mapping of metaphorical conceptual domains" strategy in the translation of the Report, they think in some cases, this strategy certainly can be used. In the future, when translating political discourse, we can also consider adopting this translation strategy more. Using different strategies to translate conceptual metaphors in political discourse can more accurately convey the meanings of the original text and spread Chinese political thinking more widely.

References

Flusberg, S. J., Matlock, T., & Thibodeau, P. H. (2018). War metaphors in public discourse. *Metaphor and Symbol*, *33*(1), 1–18. https://doi.org/10.1080/10926488.2018.1407992

Gannon, M. J., Locke, E. A., Gupta, A., Audia, P., & Kristof-Brown, A. L. (2006). Cultural metaphors as frames of reference for nations a six-country study. *International Studies of Management & Organization*, *35*(4), 37–47. https://doi.org/10.1080/00208825.2005.11043744

He, M. (2011). On the relationship between conceptual metaphor and politics. *Foreign Languages and Literature,* (3), 48-52.

Huang, Q., & Wu, B. (2009). A diachronic analysis of political metaphors based on editorials on "Two Sessions" in People's Daily (1978-2007). *Language Teaching and Linguistic Studies*. (5), 91-96.

Huang, X., & Qin, X. (2010). Conceptual metaphors of "Water" from the experiential cognitive perspective—A corpus-based comparative study between English and Chinese. *Shandong Foreign Language Teaching, 31*(6), 28-34.

Lakoff, G. (1996). *Moral politics: What conservatives know that liberals don't*. Chicago University Press.

Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by*. University of Chicago Press.

Liu, E. (2019). Discourse analysis of the Government Work Report from the perspective of conceptual metaphor theory: A case study of the 2019 Government Work Report. *Modern Communication,* (9), 100-101.

Liu, Q., & Zhou, H. (2019). Conceptual metaphors in Chinese-English translation based on the original and English translation of the Report of the 19th CPC National Congress. *Translation Forum,* (2), 46-50.

Liu, Y., & Zhong, H. (2018). Metaphor translation in political discourse from the perspective of conceptual metaphor theory: A case study of metaphor translation in the Chinese Government Work Report. *Northern Literature,* (29), 202-204.

Lu, Y. (2022). A study on conceptual metaphors and their Chinese-English translation strategies in the 2022 Government Work Report. *Modern English,* (13), 57-61.

Pragglejaz, G. (2007). MIP: A method for identifying metaphorically used words in discourse. *Metaphor and Symbol*, *22*(1), 1–39. https://doi.org/10.1080/10926480709336752

Sheng, D. D. (2021). A corpus-based study on journey metaphors in Chinese-English conference interpreting. *Shanghai Journal of Translators,* (1), 65-70.

Tian, M. (2016). The English translation research of the Government Report in 2015 based on conceptual metaphor. *Heilongjiang Researches on Higher Education,* (6), 157-160.

Wang, R. (2016). Research on the cognition of conceptual metaphor and its cross-cultural English translation: Taking the translation of the Report on the Work of the Government as an example. *Journal of Shanghai University of International Business and Economics, 23*(2), 87-96.

Wang, W., & Huang, Y. (2012). Government's Ideology and governing concept: from the perspective of conceptual metaphor. *Journal of Southwest Jiaotong University (Social Sciences), (3)*, 40-45.

Wen, Q. (2017). Ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions of the personification of "a Community of Shared Future for Mankind"—Analysis of president Xi Jinping's speech at the general debate of the 70th Session of the UN General Assembly. *Foreign Language Research, (3)*, 1-6.

Wen, X. (2014). Political discourse and political metaphors. *Contemporary Foreign Languages Studies, (9)*, 11-16.

Xiao, K. (2005). On the cognitive nature of metaphor and the cognitive orientation of metaphor translation. *Foreign Language Research, (5)*, 103-107.

Yan, Z. (2022). A study on the conceptual metaphor and translation of Chinese leaders' New Year message. *Journal of Hubei University of Science and Technology, 42*(4), 79-83.

Yu, J. (2011). A new understanding of the paradigm of complexity thinking: from the perspective of cognitive metaphor. *Studies in Science of Science, (4)*, 508-514.