

On English Translation of Conceptual Metaphors on Leader's 2021 New Year's Address

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Abstract: Leader's 2021 New Year's Address, as a typical representative of political texts. To make some abstract and obscure political concepts easier for the general public, it has adopted metaphorical expressions in large numbers. In the process of foreign communication, the translation of metaphor also plays a crucial role, under the perspective of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), this thesis adopts a both quantitative and qualitative approach to evaluate and explore how the official English version of the report handle English Translation of Conceptual Metaphors from Leader's 2021 New Year's Address. The results show that conceptual metaphors collected from the report can be mainly divided into 5 categories. The purpose of this study is to explore the effects of different types of conceptual metaphor.

1. Introduction

1.1 Research background

Metaphor originally comes from the combination of Greek words "meta" and "pherein". It means to transfer. Before 1980, Metaphor had been constantly studied only as a figure of speech, after that time, Lakoff and Johnson in their co-authored book *Metaphors We Live By* proposed conceptual metaphor theory. Since then, metaphor is not simply rhetorical, artistic or creative. Actually, metaphor is pervasive in our everyday life, severing as a fundamental part of our brains conceptual system.

1.2 Research purpose and significance

Conceptual metaphor is principally favored by the researchers of political discourse and is widely used in political discourse and has far-reaching influence. Chinese Communists not only use metaphors to help people understand the complex political situation, but also make full use of metaphors to encourage, guide and unite the whole nation to adhere to reform and opening up and economic and social development (Qiulin Huang, Benhu Wu, 2009). By analyzing the different types of metaphors and their important roles in the address and the translation strategies and effects of different types of metaphors, We can better understand the connotation of the address and promote the Chinese attitudes at home and abroad.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Metaphor Theory

In the book *Metaphors We Live By*, linguist and philosopher George Lakoff and Mark Johnson published in 1980. They proposed Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) and has a profound effect. Since published, the book has changed the way we understand language and the way we understand the world.

According to this book, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argues metaphor is not just figure of speech, but a fundamental part of our brains conceptual system, that is the central to the way we perceive ourselves, others and the world. From that point of view, the essence of metaphor is understanding

and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another. In traditional understandings, metaphors are rhetorical, artistic and creative. In their opinion, not only concepts can govern our thoughts, they also govern our everyday functioning, even the most mundane details.

Based on CMT, the basic formula of conceptual metaphor can be concluded as “X is Y”, wherein Y (as the source domain) is used to understand X (as the target domain). That’s where the central idea of CMT lies in as an embodiment of cross-domain mapping. For example, in the metaphor TIME IS MONEY, MONEY serves as the source domain through which we comprehend the target domain TIME in a better way.[1]

2.1.1 Categorization of conceptual metaphor

In *Metaphors We Live By* published in 1980, Lakoff and Johnson put forward three major types of conceptual metaphor, namely ORIENTATIONAL metaphor, ONTOLOGICAL metaphor and STRUCTURE Metaphor. Among the three types, ORIENTATIONAL metaphor lays the foundation for the other two types.

When it comes to specific categorization of the source domain and target domain, different scholars may have different criteria. Kövecses (2010) enumerates 13 common source domains including HUMAN BODY, ANIMAL, JOURNEY, CONSTRUCTION, MACHINE, WAR and so on. This thesis is based on Kövecses’ category.

2.1.2 Translation of conceptual metaphor

The study of metaphor translation has always been concerned by the academic circle. Peter Newmark (2001) proposed five conceptual metaphor translation strategies. The first strategy is literal translation with the same metaphor image preserved. The second strategy is to translate the metaphor into a simile by some concrete vehicle words. The third strategy is to replace the metaphor with the equivalent expression in the target language. The fourth strategy is to directly explain the similarity with the same metaphor image retained. And the metaphor can also be translated in an interpretative way. Christina Schäffner (2003), under the guidance of frame theory, pointed out four specific methods of metaphor translation: finding corresponding metaphors, adding notes to metaphors, deleting unfamiliar metaphors in source language, and adding new ones in target language.

Internally, Zhang Peiji (1980:167-175) holds that metaphor translation can be carried out by three methods: direct translation, paraphrase and imaginative substitution. Yu Gaofeng (2011) sums up five translation methods of conceptual metaphor, namely literal translation, free translation, metonymy translation, simile translation and retention of metaphors with additional meaning. All in all, there are still fewer studies of conceptual metaphor translation in political discourses than those of other types of discourse. Zhu Xiaomin (2013) explored translation methods of conceptual metaphor in political texts based on a parallel corpus. There are also many other scholars who explore conceptual metaphor translation from different perspectives. Chen Xiaowei (2014:86) points out that different cultures have different expressions of metaphors, and audiences of different cultures will have different expectations and interpretations of metaphors. Therefore, it is necessary to fully understand the rhetorical differences between English and Chinese in this respect, or to adopt the metaphor familiar to the target language audience, or to elaborate and use the language familiar to the audience, so as to achieve the rhetorical translation purpose, and at the same time to provide the audience with new knowledge and new expectations. The same is true for the metaphorical translation of political discourse.[2]

3. Methodology

3.1 Research questions

Based on the conceptual metaphor in the official English version of President Xi Jinping's 2021 New Year's Speech, this study is to explore the translation strategies official translation in different types of conceptual metaphor. Based on the above research purposes, this paper will solve the following research problems:

1) How many categories can be divided in terms of conceptual metaphors collected from Leader's 2021 New Year's Address?

2) What role do metaphors play in the translation of different types of conceptual metaphors in the 2021 leaders' New Year Address?

In order to answer the above two questions, the study has adopted a both quantitative and qualitative approach. The quantitative method focuses on the distribution picture of different source domain in Leader's 2021 New Year's Address, while the qualitative method forces on the analysis of official translation of conceptual metaphor's effects. By doing so, this study hopes to answer these two questions in a more accurate and reasonable way.

3.2 Data collection

Political discourse analysis is an important content and direction of discourse research, and metaphor, as a cognitive way of thinking and behavior, has been widely used in political discourse. In the field of political discourse, leaders' speeches are one of the main topics. Leader's 2021 New Year's Address is a text of typical political types, which uses metaphorical expressions to make some abstract and vague political concepts easier to be understood by the public.

According to Lakoff and Johnson's metaphor classification, this paper makes statistics on the use of metaphors in President Xi Jinping's 2021 New Year's Speech. According to the different domains of origin, the categories, carrier words, frequency and frequency of metaphors used in congratulation are summarized (see Table 1).[3]

Table 1. Resonance of source domain

Source Domain	Frequency	Percentage/%
WAR metaphor	22	32.0%
HUMAN BODAY metaphor	16	23.2%
WATER metaphor	6	8.7%
CONSTRUCTION metaphor	4	5.8%
JOURNEY metaphor	4	5.8%
Others	17	24.5%
Total	69	100.0%

According to Table 1, President Xi Jinping used metaphors 69 times in his New Year's Speech in 2021. War metaphors accounted for the highest frequency (32%), followed by human body metaphors, river metaphors, architectural metaphors and journey metaphors.

4. Findings and Discussion

President Xi proposed five conceptual metaphors in his speech. In this part, this paper will analyze each category of words through specific examples.

4.1 WAR metaphor

In President Xi Jinping's 2021 New Year's Address, war metaphors were used 22 times, accounting for 32 percent of the total number of metaphors. This category often uses keywords like "solidarity", "resilience", "frontlines", "sacrifices", "army", "fight against", "defeat" and "assault". In President Xi Jinping's 2021 New Year's Address, there are three metaphors for war: "flood disaster" is war, "poverty alleviation" is war, and "fighting the epidemic" is war.

4.1.1 "Flood disaster" is WAR

(1)OFFICAL: We also defeated severe flooding. With the military and civilians heedless of danger and difficulty, and standing in unity, we managed to minimize the damage of the floods.

For example (1), "flood", as a metaphor for war, vividly expresses the perseverance and courage of the nation and Chinese people in flood fighting and disaster relief, as well as the huge sacrifice

they paid, and profoundly reflects the patriotism and fearless spirit of the Chinese people.

4.1.2 "Poverty Alleviation" is WAR

(2)OFFICAL: We launched the final assault on the fortress of entrenched rural poverty, and cracked this "hardest nut".

For example (2), poverty eradication is compared to a war to highlight the difficulties of helping people and regions in poor areas lift themselves out of poverty. The comparison of "poverty alleviation" to "war" fully demonstrates China's confidence in building a well-off society in an all-round way.

4.2 HUMAN metaphor

In President Xi Jinping's 2021 New Year's Address, 16 metaphors of the human body were used, accounting for 23.2 percent of the total number of metaphors. This category often uses keywords like "arrive", "write", "spirit", "crack", "feet". This source-domain metaphor mainly describes the internal state of the human body, as we can most easily understand it through personal experience. In President Xi Jinping's 2021 New Year's Address, we found that the metaphor of the human body can be divided into two categories: "Country" is the human body, and "poverty alleviation" is the human body.

4.2.1 "Country" is the Human Body

OFFICAL: After a year of hardship, we can understand more than ever the significance of a community with a shared future for mankind.

Example (4) compares the country to the human body. To build a community with a shared future for mankind, we need to join hands with every country in the world.

4.2.2 "Poverty Alleviation" is the Human Body.

OFFICAL: We launched the final assault on the fortress of entrenched rural poverty, and cracked this "hardest nut".

Example (5) We compare the difficulties encountered in poverty alleviation to the "hard bone", and it is the Chinese people who are gnawing the hard bone. Through this metaphor, poverty alleviation becomes more down-to-earth and closer to the people. With the efforts of the Chinese people, all kinds of problems encountered in poverty alleviation can be overcome.

4.3 WATER metaphor

Since the flow of water is dynamic rather than static, this source-domain metaphor can more vividly illustrate other concepts. The frequency of the river metaphor in President Xi Jinping's 2021 New Year's Address is 6. There are two main types of water metaphors in President Xi Jinping's 2021 New Year's Address.

4.3.1 "Chinese people" is WATER

(6)OFFICIAL: Numerous people fulfilled their missions at the cost of their lives and protected humanity with sincere love. They pooled their drops of strength into tremendous power and built an iron wall to safeguard lives.

In example (6), during the epidemic period, countless Chinese people put their lives on a mission as a metaphor of "drops of strength". The metaphor here shows that the Chinese nation has pulled together to fight against the epidemic. It is these "trickle-down forces" that finally protect the safety of the people.

4.3.2 "Historical development" is WATER

(7) OFFICIAL: At the historic crossroad of the "Two Centenary Goals", the new journey of comprehensively building a modern socialist country is about to start..

Example (7) metaphors the development of social history as water. The metaphor captures the context in which we live, the magnitude of our roles and our mission, the enormity of our

responsibilities, and the beginning of a new national journey.[7]

4.4 CONSTRUCTION metaphor

Among the 63 metaphors, structural metaphors appear 4 times. CONSTRUCTION metaphor are often used to show the blueprint, process and achievements of China's development, in order to convey the yearning for a better life in the future. This category uses keywords such as “forge”, “formulate” and “step up”. A typical example of constructing metaphors in the report is that a new pattern for development is CONSTRUCTION.

4.4.1 “The Chinese people” is CONSTRUCTION

(8) OFFICIAL: From medical workers to the people's army, from scientific researchers to community workers, from volunteers to those who built the projects, from seniors to youths born after the 1990s and 2000s, numerous people fulfilled their missions at the cost of their lives and protected humanity with sincere love. They pooled their drops of strength into tremendous power and built an iron wall to safeguard lives.

The concerted efforts of all have been a key factor in our success. For example (8), the main body protecting lives in epidemic prevention and control is compared to an “iron wall”, which reflects the perseverance of the whole country to fight the epidemic.[6]

4.4.2 “GDP” is CONSTRUCTION

(9) OFFICIAL: China is the first major economy worldwide to achieve positive growth, and its GDP in 2020 is expected to step up to a new level of 100 trillion yuan.

In example(9), the development of GDP is compared to a kind of construction, that is-new level, the official also use the verb-step up to vividly state China's GDP increased quickly.

4.5 JOURNEY metaphor

JOURNEY is seen as a purposeful activity that involves the movement of physical space from its beginning to its end. The metaphor of “JOURNEY” is used in President Xi Jinping's 2021 New Year's Address. This category uses keywords such as “Move forward steadily”, “Long voyage” and “Heavy responsibility long distance”. In this text, there are two types: common prosperity as a metaphor for a journey, the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation as a metaphor for a journey.[7]

4.5.1 “Common prosperity” is JOURNEY

(10) OFFICIAL: We still need to stay tenacious like a bamboo deeply rooted in the rocks, keep our feet on the ground, and work hard to paint a magnificent picture of rural vitalization, and steadily march ahead towards the goal of common prosperity.

Example(10) compares China's goal of common prosperity to a road with a specific direction and destination. This requires both our feet on the ground and our determination to achieve rural revitalization.

4.5.2 “The great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation” is JOURNEY

(11) OFFICIAL: We adhere to putting people at the center, stay true to our original aspiration, keep our mission well in mind, break the waves and sail out for our journey ahead, and we will certainly realize the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

In example (11), the JOURNEY metaphor is used to describe the process of realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation as a journey, which shows the firm confidence of the sons and daughters of the Chinese nation in creating a better tomorrow and their continuous efforts to realize the “Two Centenary Goals”. [8]

5. Conclusion

According to the data of President Xi Jinping's 2021 New Year's Address, conceptual metaphors can be divided into five categories, namely, WAR metaphor, HUMAN BODY metaphor, WATER

metaphor, CONSTRUCTION metaphor and JOURNEY metaphor. WAR metaphor accounted for the largest proportion (32.0%), followed by HUMAN BODY metaphor (23.2%) and WATER metaphors (8.7%). Through analysis, we find that in President Xi Jinping's 2021 New Year's Speech, for the metaphors with distinctive Chinese characteristics that are easy to be understood by the target language readers, the official translation adopts the method of directly preserving the metaphor of the source language, so as to convey the cultural characteristics of the source language.

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