# METAPHOR TRANSLATION IN POLITICAL LITERATURE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF CONCEPTUAL INTEGRATION: A CASE STUDY OF THE GOVERNMENT WORK REPORT IN RECENT YEARS[1]

# A TRADUÇÃO DA METÁFORA NA LITERATURA POLÍTICA SOB A PERSPECTIVA DA INTEGRAÇÃO CONCEITUAL: UM ESTUDO DE CASO DO RELATÓRIO DE TRABALHO GOVERNAMENTAL NOS ÚLTIMOS ANOS

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**Abstract:** From the perspective of language output purpose, the translation of political literature should not only be readable by the international community, but also be able to convey their core language concepts and intended language purposes. Based on the conceptual integration theory, this paper analyzes four basic metaphorical conceptual network structures, namely, simplified domain network, mirror network, single domain network and double domain network, which combines with the metaphorical examples in the Government Work Report in recent years to deeply analyze the translation process of different metaphorical expressions from three approaches: literal translation, literal translation + amplification and free translation. The purpose of this study is to provide theoretical and empirical basis for the study of metaphor translation in Chinese political documents.

**Keywords:** Conceptual Integration. Political Literature. Metaphor Translation.

**Resumo:** Do ponto de vista do propósito de produção do idioma, a tradução de literatura política não deve apenas ser legível pela comunidade internacional, mas também ser capaz de transmitir seus conceitos linguísticos centrais e propósitos linguísticos pretendidos. Com base na teoria da integração conceitual, este artigo analisa quatro estruturas básicas de redes conceituais metafóricas, a saber, rede de domínio simplificada, rede espelho, rede de domínio único e rede de domínio duplo, que combina com os exemplos metafóricos no Relatório de Trabalho do Governo nos últimos anos para aprofundar analisar o processo de tradução de diferentes expressões metafóricas a partir de três abordagens: tradução literal, tradução literal + amplificação e tradução livre. O objetivo deste estudo é fornecer bases teóricas e empíricas para o estudo da tradução de metáforas em documentos políticos chineses.

**Palavras-chave:** Integração Conceitual. Literatura Política. Tradução da Metáfora.

## 1.      Introduction

Since the reform and opening up, along with China's economic development and the improvement of overall national strength, China's international status has also been enhanced, and the existence of political literature plays a positive role in effectively shaping China's international image. Therefore, the translation of political literature has been attached great importance in many fields. How to strengthen the quality of translation work and realize the accurate analysis of metaphorical words and sentences in political literature is the current focus of external publicity translation. Based on the theory of conceptual integration, this paper analyzes four different conceptual network structures of metaphor and combines metaphorical examples in political literature to summarize its scientific translation path. This will help us to interpret the language expression forms in the Government work report, but also lay a solid theoretical basis and positive foundation for formulating and translating the government work report in the future.

## 2.      The Basic Concept and Theoretical Framework of Conceptual Integration

### 2.1  Theoretical Basis of Conceptual Integration

From the logic of language development, conceptual integration mainly refers to the main thinking and cognitive activities of people in the process of interpreting language, and it is a variety of modes derived from people's mind to understand the logical relations between languages (Hui, 2014). At present, conceptual integration has been highly theoretical and scientific, and many scholars have studied the basic forms and purposes of conceptual integration. They believe that the ultimate purpose of conceptual integration is to convey the idea that the whole meaning of a sentence is greater than that of some words to the readers through the thinking process of conceptual integration, but the whole meaning of a sentence is not equal to the sum of the meanings of the words in the sentence.

### 2.2  Important Network Structure of Conceptual Integration Theory

Network structure mainly refers to the formation of conceptual integration theory and different methods in the application process (Wang, 2016). According to the research results of many scholars, the network structures in the conceptual integration theory can be divided into the following four types.

*2.2.1 Simple Domain Network*

The simplified domain network is mainly composed of a single framework and element. We can assume that the frame is "sister" and the elements are female a and b. After projecting this element into the frame, the information that "female a and b are sisters" can be obtained. This is the simplest conceptual network in the conceptual integration frame, and it can also be called the category phenomenon. We can arbitrarily change the relationship between elements, including increasing or reducing them, and project the new element into the frame, then the theoretical results will be different. This is the most basic thinking method of human beings, which are also the first two natural spaces proposed in the process of analyzing sentence content, namely element space and frame space.

*2.2.2 Mirror Network*

Mirror network is an additional framework built on the basis of simple domain network, but in the overall network system, the main types and expressions of these two frameworks are the same, this phenomenon can be called similarity. When two different elements are projected into these two frames, readers can compare the two different conclusions and get a deeper meaning. For example, the projection result of frame a and element a is "In the 20th century, it took 15 days for a ship to sail from the United States to China". The projection result of frame b and element b is "in the 21st century, a ship sails from the United States to China by the same route, but it only takes 10 days", where the element is the ship, while the frame is the same route in two different times respectively. When the readers have finished reading the above sentences, a comparative analysis of the projection results of frame a and element a versus frame b and element b leads to a message that goes far beyond the surface meaning of the sentence: "Times are progressing and the speed of the ship is increasing." This is what the mirror network represents.

*2.2.3 Single Domain Network*

Single domain network refers to the fact that each element has its own frame space to be projected, but only one frame of the two frames can serve the ultimate linguistic purpose. For example, in the translation process of the idiom "巧妇难为无米之炊" (it literally means a skillful wife can't make cook without rice), the frame of traditional Chinese

saying and the frame of modern language will appear. At this time, the translator will use different frames to translate according to different language contexts. For example, for Chinese readers, the element is "skillful wife" and the frame is "one can't cook without rice." For western readers, if they choose the same element and framework for translation as Chinese readers, it will cause ambiguity. In the language framework of western readers, the linguistic concept of "skillful wife" does not exist, because in Western thinking, the role definition of modern female is not limited to the concept of "wife". Accordingly, under the trend of advocating gender equality in the west, the element of "skillful wife" is put into the framework of "one cannot cook without rice," which obviously does not conform to the values and cognitive structure of western readers.

Therefore, it is necessary to paraphrase the sentence, which is to convey the sentence connotation to the target language readers according to the social environment and language habits of the them (Shen, 2008). For example, it can be translated as "You can't make bricks without straw." Among them, the translator chooses "straw" as the element of language and "make bricks" as the language frame, which is neutral and non-sexist and completely different from the expression structure of the source language, to help western readers build another new and effective language frame. This kind of translation is not only in line with the language expression habits and cognitive mode of the target language readers, but also serves the ultimate expression purpose of the source language, so it is worth further exploration.

### 2.2.4 Dual-domain Network

Dual-domain network and single-domain network have the same basic structure, in which different elements are projected into different language frames. However, different from single-domain network, the two frames in dual-domain network can serve for the final purpose of language expression, and a third element and frame space can be created through the integration of these two elements and frames, that is, a new conceptual structure can be integrated.

For example, "If a man is born in an Arab country, he is not guilty of bigamy." Two different elements and frames can be integrated from this sentence. Element one is "a man", and the frame is "he has multiple wives". Element two is "Men in Arab countries," and the frame is "bigamy allowed in Arab countries." Combining these two elements and frames gives us the third element, "a man in China (outside the Arab states)", and the

frame, "committed bigamy". while on this basis, we can get the second level of language expression meaning, that is, the system of China is different from that of Arab countries.

Above, we can realize that the theory of conceptual integration involves a differentiation of numerous current language systems, each of which involves different scenes and different types. These network types of language integration are then integrated into the metaphorical translation of political documents.

## 3.      The Main Principles of Metaphor Translation

At first, the functional school translators in Germany analyzed the translation behavior on the basis of Skopos theory, believing that translation should take the actual expression purpose and expected function of the target text as the basis, and combine different contexts and the actual needs of readers to choose the best translation method. At the same time, translators should insist on a coherent relationship between the translated text and the original one, which is called the principle of fidelity. Translating according to the function and intended purpose of the target text is called the principle of purpose. It requires the continuity and readability of the translated text in the target language environment, which is called the coherence principle. These three principles complement each other to ensure that the translation of political documents can play its original purpose (Liang, 2010). At the same time, it can be accepted by the majority of target language readers.

## 4.      The Main Methods of Metaphor in Political Documents

Metaphor is an important part of the language system of all nations. Therefore, in line with  the similarity of human physiological basis and cognitive mode, metaphorical words are also used in most sentences in the process of drafting and publishing political documents (Jia, 2014), and targeted analysis of these metaphorical words should be carried out by combining different elements and framework contents. Generally speaking, the translation of political metaphors in China and other countries should be carried out in the following ways.

*4.1 Literal Translation*

Literal translation is based on the common psychological experience and language habits of people of many nationalities and countries. Therefore, when different language systems have similar cognitive models and expression habits for a certain metaphor, it can be translated directly through literal translation. For example, the 2014 Government Work Report (Li, 2014). In the report, a large number of metaphorical words are used in the most professional fields, and literal translation should be adopted when translating them. The advantage of literal translation is that it can directly make the target language readers clearly understand the specific meaning and purpose conveyed in the original text.

For example, "Exports fluctuated greatly in the first half of last year......There are international voices that China's economy may have a '硬着陆'(hard landing)......" In the translation of this sentence, the translator directly translated "硬着陆" as "hard landing." This literal translation is mainly based on the two-domain network models in the theory of conceptual integration. Each country has a similar understanding of the important phenomena in the process of economic growth and development. The economic hard landing phenomenon mainly refers to the excessive speed of economic development in a certain stage, which leads to the imbalance among various industrial structures and areas of the whole society. Then it is necessary to control the speed of economic development by slam-braking, and the result of such a series of behaviors  is rapid economic decline, increased unemployment, and rapid decline in the efficiency of economic growth (Hu, 2007). This is consistent with the consequences of the sudden hard landing of the aircraft in the process of high-speed flight due to some reasons, and this cognition is the  common sense of every country, so the literal translation can directly indicate the meaning of the original expression, without the need to carry out a variety of connotation conversion.

Moreover, in the 2016 Government Work Report, the premier's use of the phrase "铲除滋生腐败土壤" (literally means rooting out the soil that breeds corruption) indicates that the Communist Party of China (CPC) will intensify its efforts to fight corruption. According to the principle of metaphorical working mechanism, the original domain of "corruption soil" in the original text actually alludes to the social environment where corruption may occur. And soil as a foundation for growing all kinds of plants, this point is recognized by the public around the world, especially farmers. Therefore, although the language elements of "crop" and "corruption" are different, that is, the source area, both crop growth and corruption breeding require certain soil and environment, which is the

same, that is, the framework and target area are the same. Therefore, based on the two-domain network model in the conceptual integration theory, it is translated literally as "eliminate the breeding ground for corruption," so that when the target language readers read the phrase "the breeding ground", they can integrate their thinking into the breeding ground of some bacteria or viruses. For the Chinese government and its citizens, "corruption" in the source language is exactly the same as the virus is unacceptable and even rejected by the human body, so "corruption" is resisted and intolerable by our government. This literal translation not only preserves the cultural characteristics of the source language, but also shows the target language readers our Party's determination to work against corruption and advocating integrity.

### 4.2 Literal Translation & Amplification

From the perspective of Chinese language expression habits, metaphor has strong characteristics of Chinese language, and also has a direct correlation with the uniqueness of Chinese social development. Therefore, in the process of translating the political documents, for some metaphorical words with strong characteristics which are unfamiliar to target language readers, complementary translation should be carried out, that should be made expression habits out on the basis of literal is, meaning supplementation according to the actual of the target language and combined with the expression connotation of the source language. At present, for the translation of the Government Work Report, this method is also called compensatory translation, which is consistent with the single domain network in the theory of conceptual integration. Different language frameworks need to be selected to meet the actual reading needs of different readers.

For example, "耕地红线"which literally means 'arable land red line,' a political expression with Chinese characteristics, appears repeatedly in the Government Work Report. At a State Council press conference in 2009, specific actions were put forward to ensure economic growth and the red line of cultivated land (Wu, 2019). The red line mainly refers to maintaining China's 120 million hectares of cultivated land from external damage and providing security for basic farmers and agricultural development, which is unique to China's national conditions. The cultivated land protection policy issued under such unique conditions of China naturally has Chinese characteristics. For the readers of the source language, it is easy to understand the specific content and purpose of the policy, while for the target language political cultivated described readers living under different

systems, the understanding of the land protection policy can be as zero basis. If the literal translation method is adopted, it is easy to generate ambiguity due to the lack of knowledge background. For this reason, in the translation process, on the basis of the literal translation of "red line," it can be supplemented and translated as "the red line of 120 million hectares." The specific area of cultivated land "120 million hectares" can be added into the translation. To illustrate the real purpose of this policy, which is to protect the 120 million hectares of arable land from the destruction of other land development activities. Therefore, the translator retained the cognate "the red line" to express the same linguistic element, and used "1.2 million hectares" as the framework, which builds a whole new language framework through amplification translation. This translation method not only further explains the specific national background of our country, but also lays the basis for the target language readers to better understand the original language.

In addition, in the Government Work Report of 2017, Premier Li pointed out that "各有关部门和单位都要舍小利顾大义，使企业轻装上阵，创造条件形成我国竞争新优势。"It literally means: "All relevant departments and units should have in mind the overall interests of the country instead of their narrow departmental, so that enterprises can work lightly and create conditions to form new advantages of competition in China." In the report, the original meaning of "abandoning small interests to safeguard the collective interests" means to abandon individual interests, which is in line with China's traditional collectivist values. In order to preserve the collective interests, it is necessary to sacrifice individual interests. If the literal translation of "舍小利顾大义" is "give up the small benefit to the big cause," the target language readers are likely to be confused about what is "small benefit" and what is "great benefit." At this time, it is particularly important to adopt the amplification translation method to translate it into "have in mind the overall interests of the country instead of their narrow departmental interests." By amplification translation, the new language frame not only explains the concrete meaning of this phrase, but also conveys target language readers the advantageous conditions our country has created for the development of business.

*4.3 Free Translation*

There are strong linguistic and cultural differences between English and Chinese. Although there are a large number of similar metaphorical words, there may also be different associations in different language systems and structures. Therefore, a series of

contradictions of expression will often occur when literal translation is simply used to transform the same English words. In the Government Work Report in 2014, a small number of metaphorical words not only cannot convey their connotations through literal translation, but also cannot find corresponding translation ways to express their connotations reasonably in English. Therefore, we should give up the external expression image of the language and use the target language to express the internal connotation of the original text (Wang, 2013).

For another example, in the Government Work Report in 2015, it is said: "改革是今年政府工作的首要任务...分类推进，抓好牵一发而动全身的举措...", whose literal meaning is: "Reform is the top priority of the government's work this year...Advance it by categories, and take measures that move the whole body well..." Among them, there is a phrase: "牵一发而动全身" comes from an idiom in Gong Zizhen's book of Bachelor of Education in the Qing Dynasty (Hu, 2019). If literal translation is adopted, the translation would be "pull one hair and you move the whole body." Such a translation method retains the original sentence structure which cannot express the internal meaning of "locating key issues and achieving linkage of the whole." Then it can be transformed on the basis of the single-domain network advocated in the conceptual integration theory, and it can be interpreted as "take the key measure that will have an overall impact." In this way, readers can not only clarify the meaning expressed by the text, but also get closer to the language system of English expression.

In addition, in the 2017 Government Work Report, Premier Li summed up the current Chinese undertakings are in a critical period of development, pointed out: "我国发展正处在爬坡过坎的关键阶," which literally means: "China's development is at a critical stage of climbing over difficulties." Based on the working mechanism of the metaphor, we find that the original meaning of "爬坡过坎" (climbing mountains and over hills) in the source text refers to various travel forms to be experienced in the process of climbing mountains, and the author maps it to the target domain. In fact, it refers to the difficulties, bottlenecks and other critical moments encountered in the development of our political, economic, cultural and other undertakings.

If the literal translation method is adopted, and the translation is : "China is at a critical stage in its development where we can climb uphill." This way of literal translation cannot express the connotation of "China is experiencing difficulties, bottlenecks and other critical moments of great significance in the process of development," but will lead the

target language readers to misunderstand that "Chinese people can climb mountains at a critical stage in its development." To avoid such misunderstanding, it can be transformed on the basis of the single domain network advocated in the conceptual integration theory, which can be interpreted as "China is at a crucial and challenging stage in its own development endeavors." In this literal translation, the translator clearly conveys to the target readers the current stage of China's development and the challenges it faces through two adjectives "crucial" and "challenging". And the efforts of the Chinese people paid to overcome such obstacles are conveyed through a noun phrase "in its own development endeavors". This kind of translation not only enables the target language readers to clarify the deep meaning expressed in the original text, but also makes it more close to the target language readers' linguistic expression system.

## 5. Conclusion

Considering the current development situation of China, political literature has become the main carrier for the international community to understand China's domestic social development and foreign policies, so we must pay more attention to the scientific nature and rationality of political literature translation. Under the framework of conceptual integration theory, combined with the characteristics of metaphorical translation in political literature, translation should adopt appropriate translation strategies to ensure that it can not only convey the political connotation of relevant metaphorical expressions to target readers, but also conform to the reading habits of target readers. This is the direction that political literature translators should pay attention to in the future. The Report on the Work of the Government is regarded as the analytical text. Under the guidance of conceptual integration theory, the analysis can be more reasonable and scientific, and provide relevant theoretical basis and practical cases for the optimization of the translation of political literature in the future.

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