

Review Article

On English Translation Strategies of Conceptual Metaphors Based on the Chinese Traditional Culture-Loaded Terms——Take *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China (Volume II)* as an Example

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Abstract: *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China (Volume II)* is a microcosm of the development of politics, economy and culture in China, in which the conceptual metaphor has aroused widespread concern in the translation community, and the translation of culture-loaded terms is an important bridge for other countries to understand the development of Chinese culture. Therefore, the accuracy of conceptual metaphor translation is particularly essential. This research mainly explores the metaphor translation of characteristic culture-loaded terms in *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China (Volume II)* from the perspective of conceptual metaphor, and summarizes the metaphor translation strategies of culture-loaded terms with Chinese characteristics, so as to promote Chinese culture to the world.

Keywords: Culture-loaded terms Concept metaphor Translation strategy, *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China (Volume II)*.

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1. RESEARCH BACKGROUND AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.1 Overviews of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*

Xi Jinping: The Governance of China (Volumes 1 to 3), which contains 54 topics, and 270 works, including President Xi Jinping's political reports, speeches, talks, criticism, instructions and congratulatory letters from Nov 15, 2012 to Jan 13, 2020, is a concentrated embodiment of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era [1]. It covers many aspects of China's politics, economy and culture and so on, which is the crystallization of Xi Jinping's wisdom. *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China (Volume II)* (Hereinafter referred to as *Xi*) contains a large number of traditional culture-loaded terms with Chinese characteristics and its publication and distribution of English translations is a new window for the world to comprehend Chinese culture. In the English version, how to translate Chinese traditional culture-loaded terms is more in line with Chinese values and easier for readers to accept, among which the translation strategies of conceptual metaphors are more critical.

1.2 Conceptual Metaphor

1.2.1 Definition of Conceptual Metaphor

Shu (2000) pointed out that metaphor is not just a language phenomenon, it is more important a human cognitive phenomenon, a cognitive activity in which human beings use their experience in one field to explain or understand the experience of another field [2]. Conceptual metaphor, which is the metaphor of one thing that is widely known and accepted as another complex thing, aims to transform strange and complex texts into easy-to-understand texts based on a common human physical experience and human universal cognition of external things. The political philosophy contained in the political texts is used as conceptual metaphors with simple things, so as to better express the ideological value and meaning contained in the original text.

1.2.2 Characteristics of Conceptual Metaphors

Lakoff & Johnson first put forward the theoretical idea of conceptual metaphor in *Metaphors We Live*. In conceptual metaphor, it refers to the systematic mapping from a specific conceptual domain to an abstract conceptual domain. Therefore, its essence is still conceptual. Conceptual metaphors are interconnected and transformed through two different concepts, so as to use simple concepts to explain

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abstract and complex concepts, which is easy for readers to understand.

Metaphors are often used to illustrate one type of thing to another, and are characterized by indirectness; so many metaphors have the function of "euphemism" [3]. For example, if there are inappropriate expressions or contradictory values in the original text, the translator needs to make better use of conceptual metaphors to avoid linguistic conflicts and to close the distance with the readers without damaging the interests of both sides, so as to create empathy between both readers.

In the process of conceptual metaphor, in order to better understand the complex tenors, it is necessary to use metaphors with similar concepts and functions to map them. Therefore, the tenors and vehicles must be consistent. When the vehicles of metaphor are constantly innovated and expanded, the tenors of metaphor changes accordingly [4]. Therefore, grasping the consistency of time and content in conceptual metaphors is the basis for translating metaphors.

1.2.3 Types of Conceptual Metaphors

According to the characteristics of conceptual metaphor and the types of tenors and vehicles, conceptual metaphor can be divided into the following types:

- (1) **Travel Metaphor:** Travel metaphor refers to the use of common concepts in travel to construct another abstract concept, such as "journey", "passenger", "starting point", "end point" [5]. For example, Xunzi in 《劝学》 — “故不积跬步，无以致千里；……骐骥一跃，不能十步；驽马十驾，功在不舍。” Emphasizing that learning is like a journey, it needs to be accumulated every day, there will be a phased process, and it will be possible to reach the end point over time.
- (2) **Disease Metaphor:** Disease metaphor, also known as health metaphors, refers to the use of physiological and psychological parts or elements to explain real problems. For example, President Xi Jinping used a large number of disease metaphors to indicate political issues in national institutions that still need to be improved.
- (3) **Life Metaphor:** Life metaphors borrow common things in life to explain other abstract and complex concepts. For instance, "bathing", "anchoring", "fishing", "cooking" and so on, it is of convenience for readers to make use of life experience to construct specific and simple concepts.
- (4) **War Metaphor:** The word "war" is often used metaphorically to explain urgent, difficult tasks. For example: "command", "army", "strategy", "flag", "attack", "charge", "attack", "charge", etc. These expressions often convey

the urgency of the message in an accurate and timely manner, and can quickly attract attention.

- (5) **Architectural Metaphor:** Architectural domain is a very important source domain, which conceptualizes the abstract and complex systems. In all kinds of discourse, architectural metaphor analogizes theory, society, cause, creation, relationship and other things and events to architecture [6]. Use the form on the space of the architectures to convey information, hinting the development and the efforts needed of things, common vehicles in architectural metaphors like "Construction", "Pillar", "Fencing", "Engineering", "Bridge", "Track", etc.
- (6) **Plant Metaphor:** Plants usually have seeds, roots, stems, leaves, flowers, fruits, etc., and have their own growth environment and mechanism. Plant components, growth environment and mechanism have the same or different profound cultural connotations in China and the West [7]. For example, in 《诗经·小雅·采薇》, “昔我往矣，杨柳依依；今我来兮，雨雪霏霏”，using the attitude of “杨柳依依” to express people's farewell and nostalgia.
- (7) **Anthropomorphic Metaphor:** Lakoff and Jason maintained that anthropomorphic metaphor is the most common form of metaphors. Its tenor is a living person, and its vehicle is usually an animal, plant or some abstract concepts that are difficult to understand. Anthropomorphic Metaphor uses human experience and emotional comprehension to achieve a better understanding of things.
- (8) **Idiom Metaphor:** Different countries and nationalities have various cultures, and each nation has its own idioms or habitual expressions. Idiom metaphor could help readers better understand some abstract cultural concepts and cultural connotations carried by them. This kind of metaphor often contains illocutionary meaning, so it is difficult for readers to understand it intuitively, which requires further analysis and transformation by translators.

1.3 Culture-Loaded Terms

In the whole process of language formation and development, there will inevitably be many words that can reflect the unique cultural phenomenon of a nation, which are called "culture-loaded terms" in academic circles [8]. Culture-loaded terms are the concentrated embodiment and expression of a national culture, reflecting nation's characteristic ways of life and values. They contain unique four-character idioms, ancient Chinese, allusions, proverbs, and characteristic discourses and so on, formed in a nation's long history.

The culture-loaded terms in *Xi* bear the characteristic history and culture of China. Therefore, the English translation of culture-loaded terms in *Xi* plays an important role in the grasp of the overall meaning of the whole text and the transmission of values with Chinese characteristics.

2. Culture-Loaded Terms Analysis in *Xi* from the Perspective of Concept Metaphor

2.1 Types of Conceptual Metaphors in *Xi*

President Xi Jinping used a large number of conceptual metaphors to map the problems existing in national governance, the path and direction of China's development, etc. in *Xi*, which is conducive to English readers to accept and understand China's complex and abstract political concepts. Based on this, through specific empirical research and analysis, there are several types of conceptual metaphors in *Xi*:

Travel Metaphor	理论思维的起点决定着理论创新的结果。 文艺要反映好人民心声，就要坚持为人民服务、为社会主义服务这个根本方向。
Anthropomorphic Metaphor	关在“象牙塔”里不会有持久的文艺灵感和创作激情。 在这两个群体中，有些经营网络、是“搭台”的，有些网上发声、是“唱戏”的。
Disease Metaphor	共产党人如果没有信仰、没有理想，或信仰、理想不坚定，精神上就会“缺钙”，就会得“软骨病”，就必然导致政治上变质、经济上贪婪、道德上堕落、生活上腐化。
Life Metaphor	历史是一面镜子，从历史中，我们能够更好看清世界、参透生活、认识自己。
War Metaphor	我们党就创造性地提出了建设社会主义精神文明的战略任务，确立了“两手抓、两手都要硬”的战略方针。
Plant Metaphor	坚持以人民为中心的创作导向，艺术之树才能常青。 物质需求是第一位的，吃上饭是最主要的，所以说“民以食为天”。
Idiom Metaphor	杜甫的“安得广厦千万间，大庇天下寒士俱欢颜”、“朱门酒肉臭，路有冻死骨”，李绅的“谁知盘中餐，粒粒皆辛苦”，郑板桥的“些小吾曹州县吏，一枝一叶总关情”。

2.2 Positive Analysis of Concept Metaphor in *Xi*

There are a large number of different types of metaphors in *Xi*. These metaphors express Chinese values in an easy-to-understand way through simple concepts. The following will analyze the expressive role of metaphor in political texts through specific examples of metaphors in *Xi*.

Travel Metaphor: “理论思维的起点决定着理论创新的结果”。

"Where theoretical thinking starts decides what results will be achieved".

"Starting point" means the place or time when things begin, which plays a vital role in the quantitative and qualitative change of things. The metaphor of the beginning of theoretical thinking is "Starting point", which emphasizes the importance of thinking mode to the result of theoretical innovation. Therefore, if writers and artists do not change their creative thinking, it will be difficult to create literary works that really make the public happy.

Disease Metaphor: “共产党人如果没有信仰、没有理想，或信仰、理想不坚定，精神上就会“缺钙”，就会得“软骨病”，就必然导致政治上变质、经济上贪婪、道德上堕落、生活上腐化”。

"The lack or absence of ideals and convictions will result in moral weakness, which leads to political corruption, greed, moral degradation and a decadent lifestyle".

In the original article, "ideals and convictions" is the tenor and "calcium" is the vehicle. It compares ideals and convictions to an indispensable element of the human body. "Calcium" accurately and vividly shows that ideals and convictions have been integrated into the lives of Communists. "Cartilage disease" is a disease characterized by calcium and phosphorus metabolism disorders caused by vitamin D deficiency and bone calcification disorders in clinic. It is used here to metaphor the consequences of lack of ideals and convictions, which has Chinese characteristics.

Life Metaphor: “历史是一面镜子，从历史中，我们能够更好看清世界、参透生活、认识自己”。

"History is a mirror, through which we can better see the world and life and understand ourselves".

"Mirrors" are objects that can be seen everywhere in life, while history is abstract and complex, President Xi Jinping has turns history into a mirror, learns from history, and uses history to be wise, seeking strategies and paths for governing the country from history and reality.

Architectural Metaphor: “关在“象牙塔”里不会有持久的文艺灵感和创作激情”。

"There is no sustained inspiration or passion for art to be founding an ivory tower".

In Chinese, "ivory tower" originally refers to a person who ignores the ugly and tragic life of the real society, but conceals his ideal and happy situation to engage in creation. It is emphasized here that if literary

and art workers are not familiar with the world, do not sympathize with the people, and only indulge in their own creative space, there will be no good works of art, which are vivid and appropriate.

3. Concept Metaphor Translation Strategies of Culture-Loaded Terms in *Xi*

3.1 Metaphor Omission

In the process of metaphor translation, when encountering expressions with the same or similar Chinese meanings, the translator can appropriately delete them without affecting readers' understanding or textual meaning. For example:

“共产党人如果没有信仰、没有理想，或信仰、理想不坚定，精神上就会“缺钙”，就会得“软骨病”，就必然导致政治上变质、经济上贪婪、道德上堕落、生活上腐化”。

"The lack or absence of ideals and convictions will result in moral weakness, which leads to political corruption, greed, moral degradation and a decadent lifestyle".

“没有信仰、没有理想，或信仰、理想不坚定” did not translate as "The lack or absence of ideals and convictions or ideas and convictions are not firm." but directly translated as "The lack or absence of ideals and convictions". The expression of “信仰、理想不坚定” is omitted, which avoids the repetition of semantics and the cumbersome of the text, making the translation more concise, which is in line with the Chinese expression habits and easy for readers to accept.

3.2 Metaphor Amplification

There are significant differences in language and culture between Chinese and English. Chinese has the ability to express meaning concisely with fewer words. Therefore, in the process of translating Chinese into English, some expressions need to be added appropriately so that readers could better understand the real connotation.

For example: “长江后浪推前浪”。

"The waves behind drive on those before, and the younger generation will excel the previous one".

The proverb here is not directly translated as "The waves behind the Yangtze River push the waves forward", but as “the later generations add fuel to the flames, and the younger generation will surpass the previous generation”. While retaining the original meaning of this sentence, it adds the meaning of "the younger generation has injected new vitality into society", ensuring the complete grammatical structure of the translation and the clarity of the meaning of the translation.

3.3 Metaphor Replacement

"Replacement method" is one of the common methods in metaphor translation. In the case of complex

and difficult to understand the meaning, it is also a choice to replace the relevant words, sentences, etc., thus succinctly expressing the meaning in the original article.

For example: “物质需求是第一位的，吃上饭是最重要的，所以说“民以食为天”。

"Material needs are primary needs, and the need for food precedes all others. That's why we say "Food is the god for the people".

“天” is expressed in the Oxford dictionary as follows, "sky", "heaven", "day", etc. “天” is translated here as "God". God is an admirable and extremely important image in Western world views. It expresses the irreplaceable role of "food" for the people, which not only perfectly expresses the Chinese value contained in the original text, but also conforms to the western language.

3.4 Metaphor Annotation

Whether in Chinese or English, annotations could help readers understand and expand relevant knowledge, grasping the difficulties and key contents. There are a lot of annotation expressions of culture-loaded terms in the original *Xi*.

For example: "I Sigh and cry, how hard life is for my countrymen" ^①by Qu Yuan; "Where to find decent homes?"

To shelter all poor scholars on earth and bring a smile to their face" ^②and "The rich wine and dine, the poor starve and die" ^③by Du Fu; "Every grain on the plate comes from hard labor" by Li Shen; and "For petty county officials like us, every concern of the people weighs in our heart" by Zheng Banqiao.

屈原的“长太息以掩涕兮，哀民生之多艰”，杜甫的“安得广厦千万间，大庇天下寒士俱欢颜”、“朱门酒肉臭，路有冻死骨”，李绅的“谁知盘中餐，粒粒皆辛苦”，郑板桥的“些小吾曹州县吏，一枝一叶总关情”，等等，也都是深刻反映人民心声的作品和佳句。

(1) Qu Yuan: "Asking Heaven" (Tian Wen), *Songs of Chu (Chu Ci)*. Qu Yuan (c.339-278 BC) was a poet and statesman of the Warring States Period.

(2) *Song of the Chile (Chi Le Ge)* is a folk song of the Northern Dynasties (386-581).

(3) *The Ballad of Mulan (Mu Lan Shi)* is a long narrative folk song of the North-ern Dynasties.

There are a large number of ancient poems or ancient Chinese in *Xi* to metaphor the current social situation at that time. Idiom metaphors add rich connotations to political texts and have profound cultural appeal. However, due to cultural differences, it is necessary to append annotations to further expand the

reader's knowledge and strengthen a deeper understanding of the meaning of the original article.

4. SUMMARY

China is now entering a new era of socialism, and its role and status on the international stage have gradually increased, contributing Chinese wisdom and solutions to the world. However, different countries have different understandings or even misunderstandings of China's political and economic claims. Therefore, in the process of cultural exchange, translators should bear the responsibility and mission of giving a good Chinese narrative. This research is based on the conceptual metaphor strategies analysis in *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China (Volume II)*, which studies different types of metaphors, and summarizes the translation methods of conceptual metaphors to convey Chinese values to the world more accurately. At the same time, grasping different metaphorical translation strategies is conducive to promoting cultural outreach with Chinese characteristics, improving and revising the Chinese language system, and building a global Chinese language system while maintaining the characteristics of Chinese source language.

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