Conceptual Metaphors in Chinese Political Texts and the Translations

-- A Study based on "International Review"

Zhaoying He

School of Southwest Petroleum University, Chengdu 610500, China

Abstract

Metaphor is a manifestation of the information function of human language, which also symbolizes a country's culture. Metaphor helps people understand abstract concepts and complex situations and recognize the world ultimately. For example, the use of metaphor employed by politicians conveys political messages to increase the persuasive power of political discourse. Therefore, the accuracy of metaphor translation is extremely important. Based on the conceptual metaphor theory of cognitive linguistics, taking China-US trade war as example, selecting the "International Review" from May to August in 2019, this thesis summarizes types of metaphors, discusses the corresponding translation strategies, and explores the specific reasons for the different translation strategies. This thesis mainly has three research findings. First of all, there are ten types of metaphors in "International Review". Among them, war metaphor and natural metaphor appear most frequently; travel metaphor and human metaphor are in the second level; the frequency of family metaphor, container metaphor, disease metaphor, orientation metaphor, mechanical metaphor and animal metaphor are lowest. Secondly, the translation strategies adopted by the conceptual metaphor of "International Review" can be summarized into three types: literal translation; conversion; free translation. Literal translation is the most widely adopted translation strategy, which is applicable to various types of metaphors followed by free translation, and translation is the least common. Finally, when the corresponding expression is found in both Chinese and English languages, literal translation is applied. In this situation, the task of translation is relatively easy. When the metaphor in the source text can be changed into the metaphor that is familiar to the target language, conversion could be adopted since Chinese and English are completely two different cultural systems, thus readers can have a more accurate understanding of the source text through the shift of metaphor. When the metaphorical features are not obvious or have been normalized, free translation is adopted. This study enriches the research results of conceptual metaphor analysis, helps to grasp the discourse translation and dissemination of political metaphors, improves our awareness and sensitivity to political language, and provides ideas for future metaphor translation in political texts.

Keywords

"International Review"; Political Texts; Conceptual Metaphor; Translation Strategy.

1. Introduction

This project selects the "International Review" published on CCTV news from May to August 2019 which focused on the topic of "China-US trade war". The text of the project has flexible language with strong political nature and relevant economic terms, so it is a great challenge to translate such texts. "China-US trade war" was officially launched on May 10, 2019 when the

United States raised tariffs on $200 billion list goods imported from China. As soon as the "war" started, it aroused strong repercussions from the international community and has strong representative and practical significance. From May to August, the "trade war" was in the most intense period. In view of a series of hegemonic acts of the United States, "International Review" was the first to win people's attention. Once the article was published, it received strong response from the society.

Metaphor is everywhere in our life. This is not only a rhetorical device, but also a way of thinking. Secondly, metaphor plays an important role in political life. Metaphor provides politicians with an opportunity to transform abstract and incomprehensible political concepts into concrete and tangible materials. People use metaphor to explain obscure political theories. At the same time, metaphor provides great help to political expression because of its euphemism and concealment. Based on the conceptual metaphor theory of cognitive linguistics, this paper selects the metaphors in the "International Review" in the translation project. The article has a certain timeliness and reality, and provides relevant ideas for the metaphor translation of political texts in the future.

To sum up, metaphor translation is of great significance, but this kind of translation faces many difficulties. This paper focuses on metaphor translation in political texts. Taking "International Review" as the text and Layoff's conceptual metaphor as the theoretical basis, this paper summarizes the types of metaphor and makes targeted translation strategies. With the development of China- US economy and trade, the importance of political and economic news translation has become increasingly prominent. However, according to the author, the translation research in this field is still immature. Most metaphor translation studies are still limited to the literary perspective, and metaphor is widely used in political texts. Therefore, this paper discusses the English translation of political texts in "International Review" from the perspective of conceptual metaphor, which aims to improve the translation quality and make news readable and communicable.

2. Conceptual Metaphor Theory and its Translation Studies

This chapter first expounds the main contents of conceptual metaphor from the perspective of conceptual metaphor theory, and summarizes its development. Secondly, it discusses the research of metaphor translation from multiple perspectives, and obtains the research value and significance of this paper.

2.1. Definition of Conceptual Metaphor Theory

"In people's daily life, there is a metaphor in every three sentences." [1] Metaphor is indispensable for people's communication. In the 1980s, Lakoff, an American cognitive linguist, first proposed conceptual metaphor. It is mentioned in his book that "metaphor is not only a rhetorical device, but also a mode of thinking, and metaphor transcends language itself." [2]After that, scholars at home and abroad began to study the connotation and basic use fields of metaphor. After continuous development and exploration, metaphor has developed and expanded, and has been improved from the perspective of cognition, functional grammar and so on.

Lakoff believes that metaphor is the norm. It not only exists in our language, but also has been deeply embedded in our brain and thinking. It has become a thinking system and runs through our daily communication. Metaphor is not a simple rhetorical device. Through metaphor, we can find the mode of thinking of human brain. "From the perspective of cognitive linguistics, metaphor is not only an important linguistic feature, but also a powerful help for people to recognize abstract concepts."[3] In other words, human beings cannot live independently of metaphor. With the help of metaphor, people transform obscure concepts into familiar and

tangible things, and metaphor helps people discover the world. People understand the world and feel the world through metaphor, which is an interaction. It is driven by this interaction that human language and thinking continue to develop, and human society will continue to progress. "Metaphor can be seen everywhere in human behavior." [4] This is the power and charm of metaphor.

2.2. Relevant Researchers on Metaphor

For a long time, scholars at home and abroad have regarded metaphor and translation as two relatively independent disciplines. In recent decades, more and more scholars have begun to study the relationship between metaphor and translation, organically combining the two relative disciplines, and metaphor translation has become an independent branch. In this section, the author collects relevant literature and materials, and tries to explore the current situation of metaphor translation research at home and abroad from multiple perspectives.

2.2.1. Metaphor Translation from Different Perspectives

With the enhancement of metaphor awareness, scholars began to explore metaphor translation. The research perspectives of metaphor translation mainly include:

Many scholars have studied metaphor translation from the perspective of conceptual metaphor theory. Dou Zhi [5] found that the factors affecting metaphor translation strategies mainly include language factors and cultural factors. On the one hand, because the metaphorical expression in the original text is systematic, in order to avoid the semantic loss caused by a large number of modifications, we should choose the strategy of translating the same conceptual metaphor; On the other hand, due to the language characteristics of English itself, in order to maintain the simplicity, structure and logic of English expression, sometimes it is necessary to change the expression form of conceptual metaphor, or even change metaphor into simile.

From the perspective of culture, Shi Yeliadvocates that we should analyze whether the Chinese and Western cultural images in the conceptual metaphor system are consistent, and then classify them to find the corresponding translation methods. She believes that "in Chinese-English translation, we can boldly translate directly under the common conceptual metaphor system. The translator describes images by borrowing some features in the source language and matches words for figurative translation." [6]

On metaphor translation from the perspective of aesthetics, Mao Lianxiu discusses the metaphor translation strategies from three aspects: taking the readers as the main bodies; satisfying expectation of target language readers; stimulating readers' creativity on the basis of text uncertainty. [7]

2.2.2. Metaphor Translation Approaches at Home and Abroad

Literature review shows that the translation methods of metaphor at home and abroad are very different, which can be embodied in Maalej's "three-step" metaphor translation method and the combination of literal translation and free translation in China.

Maalej proposed a "three-step" metaphor translation strategy: the first step is to restore the metaphor and ontology; The second step is to compare cultural differences; The third step is to construct metaphor according to the actual situation.[8] The "three-step" strategy is applicable to most metaphor translation, which provides ideas for the study of metaphor translation strategies.

In China, the combination of literal translation and free translation is the most commonly used translation method. Zhuo Jiani advocates two translation strategies: literal translation plus annotation and image transformation.[8] When images are equivalent, literal translation can be adopted directly. When images are not equal, they can be divided into two situations: the first is that the translator chooses the appropriate image in English for conversion; The second

method preserves the Chinese image by adding notes to the literal translation of the source domain. This method not only retains the source language style, conveys the real emotion, but also helps the target language readers to understand.

3. Conceptual Metaphor and its Translation Strategies in "International Review"

This chapter summarizes the types of conceptual metaphors in the "International Review", combined with the types and frequency of keywords, and analyzes specific translation examples to explore the translation skills and Strategies of different metaphors.

3.1. The Types of Conceptual Metaphor in "International Review"

In order to identify the metaphorical expressions in "International Review", this paper uses the MIP metaphor recognition program proposed by Pragglejaz Group to extract 174 metaphorical expressions from the corpus of 16352 words.

At the same time, taking the source domain of metaphor as the classification standard, this paper summarizes the above metaphorical expressions into 10 types of conceptual metaphors, namely journey metaphor, war metaphor, family metaphor, disease metaphor, container metaphor, human metaphor, natural metaphor, mechanical metaphor, orientation metaphor and animal metaphor. Among them, war metaphor and natural metaphor appear the most frequently, followed by journey metaphor and human metaphor, and family metaphor, disease metaphor, container metaphor, orientation metaphor, mechanical metaphor and animal metaphor appear the least.

This paper makes statistics on the use of conceptual metaphor in "International Review", as follows:

Table 1. Statistics on the use of conceptual metaphor in "International Review"

NUM	CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR	TYPES OF KEYWORDS	FREQUENCY
1	War Metaphor	30	58
2	Natural Metaphor	21	36
3	Journey Metaphor	17	21
4	Human Metaphor	20	24
5	Disease Metaphor	4	5
6	Family Metaphor	6	7
7	Container Metaphor	4	6
8	Mechanical Metaphor	5	10
9	Orientation Metaphor	3	4
10	Animal Metaphor	3	3

It can be seen from the table that war metaphor and natural metaphor run through the whole "International Review"; Although travel metaphor, disease metaphor and human metaphor appear relatively few times, the examples of each type are very classic; Family metaphor, container metaphor, mechanical metaphor, orientation metaphor and animal metaphor appear the least, but they enrich the discourse characteristics of political texts and add color to political texts.

3.2. C-E Translaton Stategies of Conceptual Metaphor in "International Review"

This study will adopt three translation strategies: literal translation, substitution and free translation, deeply explore the specific examples in the "International Review", and find out the specific translation strategies for different types of conceptual metaphors.

3.2.1. Literal Translation of Retaining Complete Metaphor

The metaphor suitable for this translation strategy usually has the following characteristics: The metaphor exists both in English and Chinese cultures. The cultural characteristics are very obvious and will not cause deviation in understanding or damage to the original information. This translation strategy is usually applicable to war metaphor, container metaphor, disease metaphor, natural metaphor, human metaphor and mechanical metaphor.

例1："对于贸易战，中国早就表明态度：不愿打，但也不怕打，必要时不得不打。面对美国的软硬两手，中国也早已给出答案：谈，大门敞开；打，奉陪到底。"-2019年5月13日（战争隐喻）

译文：For the trade war, China has long made its position clear: We prefer not to fight, but it not means we are afraid to fight. We shall fight when it is necessary. Faced with the hard and soft tactics of the United States, China has long given the answer: Talk? The door is open. Fight? We will fight to the end.

War metaphor means "X is a war". War metaphor appears most frequently in "International Review". Modern China was oppressed by western powers. It was under the leadership of the Communist Party of China that new China was established. Therefore, war metaphor is an important part of Chinese political discourse. Its origin domain is "war", and its target domain is "disputes and contradictions between countries". The images of war related disputes, bloodshed and sacrifice are mapped into the interest contradictions between countries. In the "International Review", the China-US trade conflict is metaphorized as a "trade war".

This is a classic sentence in the "International Review". It has been reprinted and commented by major news media for many times. Once a few words are "typed", the public calls it stimulating. The four words "hit" were literally translated into "fight", with a clear attitude and straightforward expression. The four "fight" in parallel restore the original momentum and strengthen the tone of the original text; At the same time, the word "fight" also has a certain sense of fuzziness and obscurity. It can refer to both trade war and war in the real sense. It is more appropriate to use it here. The word "fight" is not an unwarranted response to China's attack on the United States, but China is announcing to the United States and even the world that China encourages peace, mutual assistance and mutually beneficial development, but it will never bow to hegemonism.

例2："这正如习近平主席所说，中国经济是一片大海，而不是一个小池塘；狂风骤雨可以掀翻小池塘，但不能掀翻大海；经历了无数次狂风骤雨，大海依旧在那儿！"-2019年5月13日（自然隐喻）

译文： As our president Xi Jinping said, "Chinese economy is not a pond, but an ocean. Big winds and storms may upset a pond, but never an ocean. Having experienced numerous winds and storms, the ocean will still be there!"

This is also a classic sentence in "International Review", which is a climate metaphor in natural metaphor. Climate metaphor is very common in daily life. We usually use "cloudy and sunny" to describe people's sadness and joy. In political texts, climate metaphors often express positive or negative attitudes in a certain field. "Pond" and "sea" are classic examples of China's economy. China's economy is a sea, not a small pond. No matter how violent the "storm" is, China's economic development will not stop. In this sentence, China's economy is metaphorically

transformed into a sea and a small pond. The translation chooses literal translation, which is translated into "ocean" and "pond" respectively.

The translation here adopts the translation method of retaining metaphor, that is, China's economy is regarded as the sea and the external adverse environment is regarded as "storm". On the one hand, it has greatly enhanced the strong self-confidence of the Chinese people. China has the determination to overcome all difficulties and the courage to avoid all dangers; On the other hand, such expressions convey a powerful message, indicating that China's attitude is not afraid of power and hegemony. China has long expressed its attitude that "it is unwilling to fight, but it is not afraid to fight, and it has to fight when necessary."

3.2.2. Substitution of Native Metaphor

Sometimes, metaphor in the source language is not common in the target language, but there is another metaphor in the target language that can perfectly match the original metaphor. At this time, metaphor is transformed into a metaphor with similarity in the local language. This translation strategy is applicable to family metaphor.

例3: "自去年以来，美国企业便掀起了出走潮，将产业链转移至其他国家，以便更好地应对中国及其他市场的需求。"-2019年5月25日（家庭隐喻）

译文1：Since last year, U.S. companies going to other countries become a trend, to better respond to demand from China and other markets.

译文2：Since last year, U.S. companies have been on a flight to other countries to better respond to demand from China and other markets.

Family metaphor means "X is family (family member)". In Chinese traditional culture, family has always played an important role. Family metaphors are used in political texts to narrow the distance and make the original slightly obscure political texts more "grounded". The source domain is "family" and the target domain is "international relations". Here, American enterprises are metaphorized as children, forming a "exodus tide". The translation has been translated into "trend", and the second translation has been translated into "flight".

"Running away" is usually the behavior of children running away from home. Here, the United States adopts "runaway" to find development opportunities abroad, which shows that the American economy has been "terminally ill", forcing enterprises to seek survival opportunities. Therefore, translating "tide" into "flight" can reflect the urgency of American enterprises to seek a "way out". The problems facing the United States are imminent. It is urgent to find a way to solve the problems. If it is translated into "trend" at this time, firstly, it cannot reflect the urgency of the situation, secondly, it cannot achieve a visual impact, and finally, "trend" is a positive word to express an optimistic state, which obviously does not conform to the context, so "flight" is the most appropriate.

3.2.3. Free Translation of Abandoning Metaphor

In political and economic texts, there are many reasons for discarding metaphors: some metaphors are obviously inconsistent with the writing characteristics of such texts; Some metaphors are already very traditional, and there is little need to retain them; Some metaphors have been classified into terms, and it is difficult to realize their independent existence. In this case, translators can abandon the metaphorical translation of the original text. This translation strategy is often used in travel metaphor, location metaphor and animal metaphor.

例4: "美国发起的对华贸易战，不过是中国发展进程中的一道坎儿，没什么大不了，中国势必化危为机，借此来检验自身的能力，使国家变得更加强大。"-2019年5月13日（旅途隐喻）

译文1：The US-sponsored trade war with China is just a bot in China's development process. It is no big deal. China is bound to turn crises into opportunities to test its capabilities and make the country stronger.

译文2：The US-sponsored trade war with China is just a predicament in China's development process. It is no big deal. China is bound to turn crises into opportunities to test its capabilities and make the country stronger.

Journey metaphor means "X is a journey". Travel metaphor is the most frequent metaphor in "International Review". Travel is a long-distance spatial displacement behavior from the origin to the destination. It includes "start point", "end point", "path", "displacement body" and other elements. Journey is a very effective source of metaphor. National development, like travel, will not be smooth, but will go through ups and downs and challenges. It is these difficulties that make the journey more meaningful, and it is these ups and downs that make the country stronger and stronger. Its source domain is "journey" and its target domain is "national development". The concepts of travel related traffic congestion and accessibility are mapped to the national development goal domain. Here, the "China-US trade war" in the process of China's development is metaphorically translated into "坎儿". The first translation is translated into "bot" and the second translation is translated into "predicament".

The word "坎儿" has dialect characteristics. Although "bot" can vividly describe the obstacles encountered in national development, it is a little hasty in political texts. At the same time, "bot" originally refers to swamps and depressions, which are difficult to get out, while "坎儿" refers to the difficulty that is not heavy. Therefore, on the one hand, the word "predicament" conforms to the formal and rigorous tone of the political text, on the other hand, it shows the excellent quality of China. It is inevitable that the country has experienced hardships in its development process. China can rely on its tenacious and indomitable quality to overcome difficulties, overcome fears and cross "坎儿".

例5: "锐评指出，眼下，在美国国内上窜下跳、抱着'零和'博弈和强权政治旧思维不放的新右翼，才是美国真正的敌人。"-2019年5月18日（方位隐喻）

译文1：Sharp comments pointed out that someone in the United States goes up and down, holding the old mentality of "zero-sum" game and power politics is the real enemy of the United States.

译文2：Sharp comments pointed out that someone that plays an active role in the United States, holds the old mentality of "zero-sum" game and power politics is the real enemy of the United States.

Orientation metaphor, means "X is in someplace". Orientation metaphor is a metaphorical concept of other target domains. It takes spatial orientation as the source domain and then constructs it. Spatial orientation originates from the interaction between man and nature. It is the basic concept of human survival. Although positional metaphor does not appear much in "International Review", it is the finishing touch. The source domain is "location" and the target domain is "state behavior". Images such as location and action state related to location are mapped into national behavior, that is, national behavior should be generous and appropriate. Here, the action secretly provoked by the United States is metaphorized as "jumping up and down", which has been translated into "go up and down" and "play an active role".

"Jumping up and down" is a dynamic expression, which shows that the United States cannot keep its own course and provoke it for its own interests. This dynamic orientation vocabulary is translated in the way of free translation, expressing the implied meaning of "jumping up and down". If "up and down" are translated, firstly, it does not accord with the characteristics of short and concise political texts. Secondly, "go up and down" is misleading, so that Western audiences cannot understand its connotation. Therefore, "play an active role" is the most appropriate.

4. Conclusion

This paper systematically combs the metaphors in the selected "International Review", and summarizes three translation strategies; literal translation of retaining metaphor, substitution of native metaphor, free translation of abandoning metaphor. On the whole, " literal translation of retaining metaphor " is more suitable for metaphor in political texts; Due to the difficulty of replacing metaphor and limited by the differences between different cultures, this translation strategy is not often used in political texts; When the original text is intended to emphasize or the metaphor has been regularly standardized, metaphor is "abandoned".

When choosing literal translation strategies, such metaphors can find completely corresponding expressions in both Chinese and English. The readers fully understand the expression of the original text, which is conducive to transmitting the original text to the target text, to connect the cultural image of the original text with the connotation of the target text. This is a very ideal state for the translator, and the translation is relatively simple; When choosing translation strategies, because Chinese and English are completely different cultural systems, people in Chinese and Western cultures often use different metaphors to express the same concept, that is, they use different source domains to express the same destination region. The focus of translation is not the original form of expression of the text, but the readers' ability to accept the translation. Through the method of substitution, the metaphor in the original text is replaced by the metaphor familiar to the target language readers, that is, to achieve the same effect, so as to make the target language readers understand the original text more accurately; When the free translation strategy is selected and the metaphorical features are not obvious or have been regularized, and if the deliberately retaining the metaphors leads to the translationese, the free translation processing method can be considered in the translation.

China's Belt and Road Initiative has been developing and growing. China has become the focus of attention of the world. It is our mission and responsibility to convey the voice of China and the Chinese story correctly. As the representative of political texts, "International Review" has certain enlightening significance for improving China's foreign political discourse translation. Through the analysis of its metaphor and translation strategies, it can provide some help for metaphor translation in political texts in the future.

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