

# Translation of Conceptual Metaphor in Chinese Diplomatic Discourse: Based on CRP Model

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**Abstract**—As a way of thinking and experiencing the world, conceptual metaphor plays a vital role in creating realities. The use of conceptual metaphor in diplomatic discourse is an indispensable discursive mode and strategy of publicizing diplomatic concepts and notions. With the aid of MIPVU, conceptual metaphors employed in Chinese diplomatic discourse are identified and classified minutely in this paper. Translation problems of the conceptual metaphors are figured out according to the model of comprehension and translation model constructed under the guidance of Cognitive Reference Point (CRP). Meanwhile, BNC and COCA are also utilized to judge whether the translation is appropriate or not. Finally, feasible translation strategies and methods in diplomatic discourse are put forward based on the CRP translation model, and illustrated with authentic examples.

**Index Terms**—conceptual metaphor, cognitive reference point, translation models, diplomatic discourse

## I. INTRODUCTION

No aspect of human interactions is immune to metaphorical thinking and diplomatic discourse is definitely replete with them. Thompson (1996, p.185) holds that “politics without metaphors is like a fish without water”, demonstrating the close connection between metaphors and diplomatic discourses.

The proposal and promotion of some far-reaching strategic diplomatic and economic initiatives has made China’s concepts of governance and diplomatic notions greatly draw the international community’s attention; therefore, it is important to deliver these notions effectively and precisely. However, the construction and propagation of Chinese diplomatic discourse which serves as a critical instrument to fulfill this mission are far from satisfactory (Xi & Wang, 2017). Apart from the prejudice and divergent ideological stances, the primary reasons lie in the inadequate discourse interpretation, lack of audience awareness, and the lagging of propagation respectively (Ye, 2012; Xi & Wang, 2017); Thus, it is urgent to ponder how to deliver China’s diplomatic notions and stances precisely and properly.

Unfortunately, the efforts in this regard are not made adequately. Firstly, previous researches have concentrated on the translation of metaphors in literal texts, which cannot be applied to the translation of metaphors in diplomatic discourse directly due to the particular features of diplomatic discourse. Yang and Zhao (2020) have proposed the principle of Political Equivalence + Aesthetic Re-presentation (PEAR), but given the complexity and particularity of diplomatic discourses, no consensus has been reached among scholars. Secondly, the researchers mainly summarize the translation strategies or methods of metaphors from the traditional perspective, and they rarely delve into the cognitive process of conceptual metaphor that play a significant role in translation, so the translation problems cannot be resolved systemically and pointedly; Thirdly, most researchers only deal with the translation of conceptual metaphor by picking up some typical examples, which is not persuasive and systematical enough.

Recently, the new norm of merging translation studies and Cognitive Linguistics contributes to elucidating the cognitive process of translation and offering a theoretical basis for resolving translation difficulties, providing insights to the translation of conceptual metaphors (Wen, 2018; Wu & Yang, 2020). This paper tends to explore the translation of conceptual metaphors in diplomatic discourse by constructing CRP models, and aims to answer three questions: (1) What types of conceptual metaphors are employed in diplomatic discourse? (2) What are the problems concerning the translation of conceptual metaphors in diplomatic discourse? (3) What translation strategies and methods can be adopted to the translation of conceptual metaphors in diplomatic discourse?

## II. COGNITIVE REFERENCE POINT AND CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR

### A. Rationale of CRP Perspective to Conceptual Metaphor

Cognitive reference point (CRP) is introduced by Langacker (1991) to Cognitive Grammar (CG). As the basic cognitive ability of human beings, CRP is the source power of almost every cognitive activity. “Virtually, any sort of conceptual content affords the possibility of construing one entity as a reference point for locating another” (Langacker

1991, pp. 169-171).

Conceptual metaphors involve conceptualizing one entity in source domain which is abstract or less prominent with reference to another entity in target domain which is concrete and prominent based on the similarities, which allow two domains to be placed in the same domain. This projecting process logically echoes with the process of conceptualizing the target with reference to the cognitive reference point though certain mental path. Both characterize dynamicity and unidirectionality. On one hand, for conceptual metaphors, distinct but related source domains can form a chain by a narrowing scope, analogues to the chain of reference points formed by a narrowing scope (nested-locative) or by approaching to it along an attention path (chained-locative) (Langacker, 1999). Besides, the same target domain can be comprehended through different source domains. Similarly, people may choose different entities as the cognitive reference points to construe the same target. Additionally, the same source domain can also be used to conceptualize different target domains as long as they share the similarities allowing them to form the conceptual mapping. Similarly, different targets can be invoked by the same cognitive reference point. On the other hand, regardless of how source domains or reference points vary, the direction of the mental path of conceptualizers is fixed. Besides, both conceptual metaphors and cognitive reference point are embodied, and they are closely associated with the interactions between human bodies and the objective world.

What have been discussed above fully proves the feasibility of investigating conceptual metaphors based on the process of cognitive reference point, laying solid foundation for building the comprehension and translation models to conceptual metaphors respectively.

### B. CRP Model to Comprehension of Conceptual Metaphor

The operational mechanism of conceptual metaphor comprehension includes the generation mechanism of the speaker or writer and the interpretation mechanism of the hearer or reader. However, the former is expression-driven whereas the latter is comprehension-driven. With regard to conceptual metaphors, in order to conceptualize some abstract and complicated entities, the speaker or writer takes the concrete and easily accessed entities as his or her cognitive reference point. While conceptualizing the source domains, the speaker or writer takes them as the cognitive reference points to comprehend the target domains via the mental contacts between them. The meaning delivered by the conceptual metaphors is constructed during this process.

According to Langacker (2004), specific properties of the mental contacts between the cognitive reference point and the target are uncertain, and the operative process from R to T is arbitrary, and mainly depends on the contexts and the common knowledge. However, Wu and Wen (2010) reckon that this idea is too general to explain the specific language phenomenon clearly. They refine the mental process from R to T, and argue that the process from R to T can be interpreted as the dynamic meaning construction process. In this process, the ontological meaning of the reference point is the basis and limited by the intra-sentential context and discourse context. Particularly speaking, the ontological meaning of the cognitive reference point initially provides the information for conceptualizers to understand the target, and when the reference point is positioned in a certain context, the domain invoked is further narrowed down so as to help conceptualizers to reach the mental address precisely, allowing the conceptualizers to grasp the meaning clearly and correctly. From this perspective, when the reader or the listener interacts with the source domain which serves as the cognitive reference point, everything associated with it may be invoked and enter their minds, providing the raw material for the reader or the listener to understand the target domain. Then, the sentential and contextual contexts can assist in understanding which features or properties are projected onto the target domain so as to understand it correctly. This process can be presented in the cognitive model below (See Figure 1).

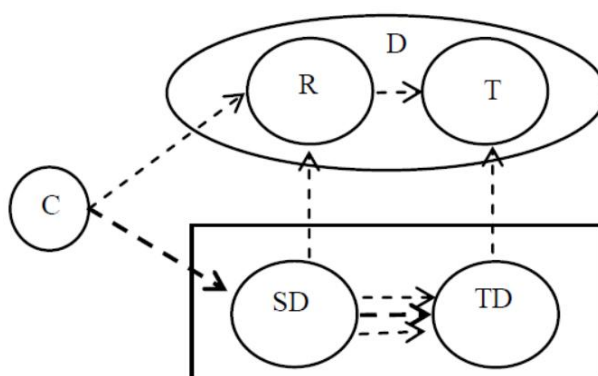


Figure 1 Mechanism of the Generation/Interpretation of Conceptual Metaphor

In Figure 1, C circled by the small ellipse represents conceptualizers. SD and TD circled by two ellipses in the rectangle refer to the source domain and the target domain of conceptual metaphors respectively. The two thinner dotted arrows between SD and TD represent the mappings between them. The thicker dotted arrows from C to SD and TD symbolize the mental path through which conceptualizers understand the target domain from the source domain. R and

T circled by two small ellipses in the big ellipse above symbolize the cognitive reference point and the target; D in the big ellipse represents the cognitive domain invoked by the reference point R; the dotted arrows from C to R and T represent the mental path which conceptualizers construe T with reference to R. The two dotted arrows from SD to R, and from TD to T show that SD and TD of conceptual metaphor are corresponding to R and T of the cognitive reference point model. As a whole, the process of generating or understanding conceptual metaphors is accordance with the process of accessing T from R.

Translation is a cognitive activity involves comprehending the source language and constructing the translation in the target language (Jin, 2021). Thus, the clarification of comprehending conceptual metaphors from the perspective of cognitive reference point lays solid foundation for building the models of translating conceptual metaphors.

### C. CRP Model to Translation of Conceptual Metaphor

When translating conceptual metaphors, the source domain is the cognitive reference point for the translator to reach the target domain based on the cross-mappings. In the decoding process or comprehending process, the translator's cognitive reference point corresponds to that of the speaker or writer. How to handle the cognitive reference point of the source language so as to construct the same or similar conceptual meaning and achieve the cognitive equivalence is the priority for translators.

Only when the translator identifies the cognitive reference points adopted by the speaker or writer, can he or she understand the conceptual meaning of conceptual metaphors precisely, and then select the appropriate cognitive reference points and translate conceptual metaphors properly so as to convey the conceptual meaning precisely; otherwise, translation problems may occur easily.

Figure 2 presents the translation model of conceptual metaphors. C represents the translator (conceptualizer), SD and TD refer to source domain and target domain of a metaphor respectively, R and the T0 symbolize the cognitive reference point and the target in cognitive reference point model, which are projected onto S1 and T1 respectively. S1 and T1 refer to the source domain and the target domain of the metaphor in the source language respectively; the source domain and target domain of the metaphor in the target language are represented by S2 and T2. Since T1 and T2 refer to exactly the same thing; therefore, the dashed arrow between them is bidirectional. Their relationships are represented by the dotted arrows, among which the thicker ones symbolize the mental path from the translator to the source domains to the target domains in both the source language to the target language. The reason why the ellipse representing the target language is dashed lies in the fact that there may be no corresponding metaphors in the target language, which means that the translator paraphrases or deletes the conceptual metaphors.

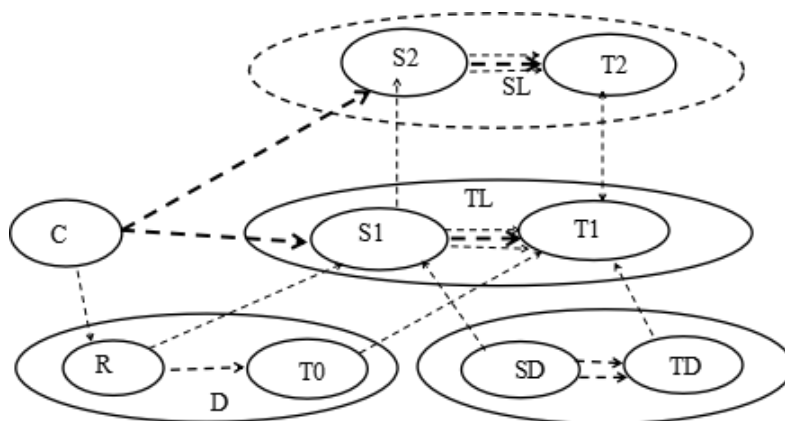


Figure 2 Conceptual Metaphor's Translation Model

Overall, the translation of conceptual metaphor is a cognitive activity involving transferring the conceptual meaning constructed by the speaker or writer in the source language to the target language. It is closely related to the cognitive reference point which can reveal the comprehension mechanism and the meaning construction mechanism of conceptual metaphors. It should be noted that this translation model is idealized, and the translation of metaphors in real conditions will be affected by several factors, especially when they are used in a specific type of discourses which to a large extent affects the translators' selection of the original cognitive reference points.

## III. CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR IN CHINESE DIPLOMATIC DISCOURSE

### A. Identification and Classification of Conceptual Metaphors

In order to detect the conceptual metaphors employed in diplomatic discourse, a small bilingual parallel corpus is built, with all the data being collected from the ministry of foreign affairs of the People's Republic of China which is devoted to expounding diplomatic policies and covering diplomatic events. The total Chinese and English words are 44941 and 29327 respectively.

By employing the MIPVU (Metaphor Identification Procedures Vrije University) proposed by the Pragglejaz Group

which is the refined and extended version of MIP (Metaphor Identification Procedure) and after a time- and effort-consuming process, 1135 metaphors are extracted from the bilingual parallel corpus. These metaphors are categorized into structural metaphors, orientational metaphors and ontological metaphors firstly, and then they are sub-categorized into different types of conceptual metaphors based on their source domains (see Table 1). The other types mainly consist of some famous sayings, idioms, some lines in ancient poetry. Their distributions and key metaphorical expressions are presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1  
CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS IN THE CORPUS

Types of Conceptual Metaphors	Metaphorical Expressions	Frequency	Percentage
Human metaphors	携手, 长臂管辖, 大秀肌肉.....	427	37.62
War metaphors	前线, 战胜, 战役.....	196	17.26
Object metaphors	甩锅, 总钥匙, 旗帜.....	105	9.25
Journey metaphors	道路, 路径, 进程, 赛跑.....	83	7.31
Construction metaphors	基础, 建设, 走廊, 筑牢.....	65	5.73
Plant metaphors	成果, 硕果累累.....	53	4.67
Natural metaphors	风云, 大循环, 降温, 肆虐.....	41	3.61
Machine metaphors	重启, 助推器, 压舱石.....	41	3.61
Oriental metaphor	深化, 下行, 高质量, 加深.....	40	3.52
Family metaphors	大家庭, 铁杆兄弟, 天下一家.....	20	1.76
Game metaphors	出局, (零和) 博弈.....	19	1.67
Others	岂曰无衣, 与子同袍, 布丁好不好吃, 吃了才知道, 对症下药.....	45	3.96
总计		1135	100

### B. Problems of Conceptual Metaphor Translation

After exhaustively evaluating the translation of conceptual metaphors in Chinese diplomatic discourse based on the translation model and with the aid of BNC and COCA, three distinct types of translation problems (undertranslation, overtranslation and mistranslation) are identified.

#### (a). Undertranslation

Undertranslation refers to the phenomenon that the meaning encoded by the metaphors in the source language is not translated adequately, resulting in the loss of some information throughout the translation. Based on the translation model built in Part 2, the source domain is the cognitive reference point adopted by the source language users and the readers to conceptualize the target. The prerequisite to render the conceptual metaphors correctly is to identify the cognitive reference points adopted by the source language users and to interpret their meanings precisely. If the translator fails to identify the original cognitive reference points clearly and understand the meanings adequately, some information may be lost, and undertranslation occurs.

##### Example 1:

SL: 携手抗击疫情, 深化金砖合作。(2020/4/28)

TL: Deepening BRICS Cooperation to Combat COVID-19.

##### Example 2:

SL: 国际司法或仲裁机构行使管辖权, 须以当事国同意为基础。(2020/9/2)

TL: In exercising their jurisdiction, the international judicial or arbitrary bodies must seek the consent of the countries concerned.

In Example 1 and 2, the metaphorical images “携手” and “基础” in the source language are omitted in the target language. In Example 1, the speaker takes “携手” as his cognitive reference point to conceptualize the notion that different countries work together to combat the fatal disease, which shows China’s diplomatic stance toward epidemic response. However, the translator deletes it in the target language, and the contexts cannot help the target language readers to get the same conceptual meaning conveyed by the speaker, so this translation neither conveys the meaning of working together adequately nor shows China’s attitude towards fighting against COVID-19. In Example 2, “基础” originally refers to the foundation of buildings which plays a vital part in supporting the buildings; here, it is adopted by the speaker to conceptualize the necessity and importance of seeking for the consent of the countries concerned for the international judicial or arbitrary bodies to exercise their jurisdiction. However, the translator deletes this conceptual metaphor, resulting in the inadequate delivery of the original conceptual meaning conveyed by the speaker. It is because the translator doesn’t fully interpret the conceptual meanings encoded by the cognitive reference points adopted by the speaker, or at least doesn’t pay enough attention to them that he or she chooses to exclude conceptual metaphors in the target language.

##### Example 3:

SL: 第二, 坚持同舟共济, 携手战胜疫情。(2020/4/28)

TL: Second, we should come together in the spirit of partnership to jointly combat COVID-19.

In Example 3, “同舟共济” originally refers to the situation where people take the same boat when they get across the river, and then it metaphorically extends to the meaning of joining hands to tide over the difficulties. Here, the speaker uses it as his or her cognitive reference point to conceptualize the situation where all the countries in the world work together with mutual assistance to handle the fatal disease, and what “同舟共济” emphasizes is both cooperation and mutual help; therefore, rendering it into “come together in the spirit of partnership” does not convey the meaning of mutual help adequately. Since there are no corresponding conceptual mappings in the target language, and at the same time it is hard to find the source domain in the target language which can express the same or similar meaning, the translator has to choose to paraphrase the conceptual metaphor. But the translator does not fully deliver the conceptual meaning.

(b). *Mistranslation*

Mistranslation occurs when the translator renders conceptual metaphors incorrectly. This typically happens when the translator doesn't grasp the meaning of the source domains or when the translator does not deal with it correctly in the target language. In other words, the translator does not construe the cognitive reference points adopted by the source language user precisely, or the translator is unable to choose the appropriate cognitive reference point in the target language.

Example 4:

SL: 巴基斯坦作为中国的铁杆兄弟, 送来了自己储备的几乎全部口罩。(2020/2/15)

TL: Pakistan, our iron-clad brother, sent us virtually all the masks in its stock.

The speaker takes “铁杆兄弟” as his cognitive reference point to conceptualize the fact that China and Pakistan have very close relationships, and they are just like brothers. “铁杆” means that their relationships are strong and unbreakable, which is just like a “iron pole”. Here, the translator renders it into “iron-clad” directly which means something that is “inflexibly entrenched and unchangeable”. However, according to the research results of BNC and COCA, it can be found that it is rarely used to modify the strong relationships among people; therefore, it is wrong to translate “铁杆兄弟” into “iron-clad” literally, which may make the target language readers feel puzzled. This mistranslation is mainly because the translator does not deal with the cognitive reference point in the target language correctly due to his or her lack of the language proficiency.

Example 5:

SL: 让中国以更坚实的步伐, 实现全面小康, 摆脱绝对贫困, 迈向中华民族的伟大复兴。(2020/2/15)

TL: Our country will march on in more determined strides to usher in moderate prosperity in all respects, to eradicate absolute poverty, and to realize the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

In Example 5, “迈向” is used metaphorically. The speaker takes the action of human beings' walk as the cognitive reference point to conceptualize the development of China's rejuvenation. It is translated into “march on” which means to “walk through the streets in a large group in order to protest about something”, and it is always associated with demonstration or protest; therefore, the connotative meaning of “march on” is totally different from that of “迈向”. This translation may lead to the misunderstanding of the target language readers, which has negative influences on the China's national image because one of the important functions of conceptual metaphors in diplomatic discourse is to build the positive national image, so this translation is totally wrong. While the translator recognizes or determines the speaker's cognitive reference point and exactly interprets the conceptual meaning, due to a lack of language proficiency, he or she does not manage it effectively in the target language.

(c). *Overtranslation*

Overtranslation refers to the phenomenon that the meaning encoded by the target language is broader than the meaning encoded by the source language. When the translator overinterprets the conceptual meanings conveyed by the source domains of the conceptual metaphors in the source language out of various reasons, that is, the translator interprets the conceptual meanings of the cognitive reference points too broadly, or chooses the inappropriate metaphorical images as his or her cognitive reference points, it is easy for the translator to overtranslate the conceptual metaphors of the source language.

Example 6:

SL: 美国现在要做的是, 停止政治操弄, 摒弃将病毒标签化、政治化的做法, 同国际社会一道抗击疫情, 而不是推卸责任, 抹黑别人。(2020/9/23)

TL: What the US needs to do now is stop the political manipulation, stop labeling or politicizing the virus, and join the rest of the international community in this common fight, rather than scapegoat or smear others.

In Example 6, a human metaphor is employed and the US is compared to a person who refuses to take responsibilities of his own. The speaker takes human being's behavior as his or her cognitive reference point to conceptualize the actions the US takes. “推卸责任” here can be translated into “shift responsibilities”. However, the translator renders “推卸责任” into “scapegoat”, which is definitely overtranslated because the word “scapegoat” refers to a person who is blamed for the wrongdoings, mistakes, or faults of others, especially for reasons of expediency; therefore, the meaning encoded by “scapegoat” is more than what “推卸责任” conveys.

#### IV. STRATEGIES AND METHODS OF CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS TRANSLATION BASED ON CRP MODEL

Before delving into the strategies and methods for translating conceptual metaphors, it is necessary to establish a clear distinction between translation strategy and translation method, which have long been muddled and are sometimes used interchangeably. Translation strategy refers to a set of principles upon which translators base their translation activities in order to achieve specific translation purposes, and it refers to the macro-level plan; on the other hand, translation method refers to the concrete means or steps adopted by the translator in translation in accordance with specific translation strategies (Xiong, 2014). Indeed, the former serves as a general guidance for the latter. This section will first propose metaphor translation strategies in diplomatic discourse, guided by CRP model, on the basis of which specific translation methods will be proposed.

##### A. Translation Strategies

The translation model established above contributes to proposing the translation strategies and the corresponding methods in an idealized situation. However, conceptual metaphors are always employed in certain contexts or discourses, so their translation is by no means isolated from the types of the discourse which have significant influences on the functions of conceptual metaphors (Snell-Hornby, 2001). According to the text typology proposed by Reiss (2004), diplomatic discourse, as a subset of political discourse, falls under the category of typical informative texts whose primary function is to convey information and knowledge; consequently, the conceptual metaphors used in diplomatic discourses are endowed with diplomatic characteristics and functions (Yang, 2018), which greatly affect the translator's selection of cognitive reference points in the process of metaphors' translation.

##### (a). Cognitive Reference Point Maintenance

Cognitive reference point maintenance refers to the process of preserving the source domains of conceptual metaphors in the source language entirely in the target language. On one hand, conceptual metaphors, as a kind of thinking mode, are deeply rooted in people's experience. Although people in the world have different language systems and diverse cultural backgrounds, living in the same planet, they share same physiological structures, sensory organs and cognitive abilities, and they share certain similar practical experiences and process of social development; as a result, they share some non-cultural knowledge in terms of some objective events and have similar cognitive abilities (Xiao, 2005; Zhang & Xue, 2009). As a consequence, there are several similar conceptual metaphors in both source language and target language, allowing the translator to preserve the cognitive reference points adopted in the source language. On the other hand, as a special type of expressive text which is highly politically sensitive, the diplomatic discourse aims to deliver one nation's diplomatic notions, policies and attitudes, which is the solemn promise made by the government of one country to other countries or to the international community to some extent; thus, the primary criteria of translating diplomatic discourse is faithfulness, which means that the translator needs to convey what the diplomatic subjects have said or written precisely and completely so as to guarantee the consistency of the source language and the target language, and tries to maintain the flavor of the source language as well (Gao, 2014). Any inadvertent changes or deletions may impair the precise delivery of diplomatic stances or attitudes; thus, it is necessary to attempt to preserve the cognitive reference points of the diplomatic subjects; correspondingly, the specific method of literal translation is always used under the auspices of this strategy.

##### (b). Cognitive Reference Point Shift

Cognitive reference point shift means that the translator no longer adopts the source domains of the conceptual metaphors in the source language to construe the target domains in the process of translation.

On one hand, the generation of metaphorical concepts is affected by cognitive structure, cultural patterns and relevant background knowledge; hence, its interpretation and translation are also inextricably associated with the culture and cognitive models of the source language as well as the target language. Naturally, the translation of conceptual metaphors is not a straightforward language transfer, but a complicated process of psychology and cognition transfer. Thus, the translation of conceptual metaphors is the transfer of cognition represented by the source language to that represented by the target language. Cognition is closely related to experience. While there is considerable universality in people's life experiences, different countries and nations have distinct natural, geographical, and social environments that profoundly influence people's way of thinking and conceptualizing the world, so it is highly likely that the same event will be conceptualized differently by people from different countries or will elicit diverse, even diametrically opposed connotative meanings. Similarly, explicitly dealing with some conceptual metaphors may impair the target language users' comprehension, or even result in some unwanted misunderstandings that should be avoided at all costs while translating diplomatic discourse. Additionally, in order to persuade target language users or the audience to accept a nation's diplomatic concepts and notions, the diplomatic discourse and its translation must be persuasive; one of the most effective methods is to use conventional expressions that the audience or target language users understand (Zhong & Fan, 2018). Under such circumstances, the translator's ideal choice for accurately and appropriately conveying the content of diplomatic discourses is to convert the source language's original cognitive reference points into those that are understandable to target language users.

##### (c). Cognitive Reference Point Omission

Certain conceptual metaphors are extremely culture-loaded and culture-specific and no metaphorical expressions bearing the similar conceptual meaning exist in the target language. Rendering these conceptual metaphors directly will hinder the understanding of the target language users. However, conveying the meaning precisely and clearly is of great significance in translating diplomatic discourses. Given this situation, the translator has to discard the original cognitive reference points, and attempts to explain the metaphorical meaning as plainly as possible so as to convey the diplomatic concepts and policies effectively.

## B. Translation Methods

### (a). Literal Translation

The specific method to maintain cognitive reference points is to render the conceptual metaphors of the source language directly into the target language. Specifically, the literal translation approach is adopted. There are typically two situations in which a translator can render conceptual metaphors literally: on one hand, when the conceptual metaphors are universal to both the source language and target language users, the translator tend to choose a literal translation method; on the other hand, even some metaphors are culture-specific, they can be understood by the target language users with the help of the contexts.

#### Example 7:

SL: 美国介入南海事务，目的是绑架地区国家，在中国和东盟国家之间打楔子、搞分裂，逼迫东盟国家选边站队。(2020/9/2)

TL: By interfering in issue, the US is trying to hijack regional countries. It tries to undermine and divide China and ASEAN countries, forcing them to take sides.

In Example 7, “绑架” is used metaphorically, which originally means “to take somebody away illegally and keep them as a prison, especially in order to get money or something else for return”. Here, the speaker takes this illegal action as his cognitive reference point to construe the fact that the US. is just like a kidnapper intent on manipulating the regional countries surrounding the South China Sea so as to benefit from it, and this human metaphor demonstrates China’s hostility toward blatant behavior. In the target language, it is rendered into “hijack” which some one uses violence or threats to take control a vehicle, especially a plane, in order to force it to travel to a different place or to demand something from a government. On one hand, both the source language users and the target language users are familiar with the concepts of kidnapping or hijacking; on the other hand, it is known that the hijacking happened in 9.11 Event has great impression on people of the whole world, especially on American people; therefore, translating “绑架” into “hijack”, which can be regarded as a subcategory of kidnapping, can convey the meaning precisely. It accurately conveys not just the original metaphorical feature of the source language, but also China’s diplomatic attitude and stance.

#### Example 8:

SL: 日本友好团体在送往中国的物资上写了一句中国古诗：“岂曰无衣，与子同裳”，表达一衣带水邻邦与中国人民的感同身受。(2020/2/15)

TL: In the toughest times of the fight, people around the world are standing firmly by our side. Japanese groups sent assistance supplies to China, attached with ancient Chinese poetic lines: “Fear not the want of armor, for mine is also yours to wear”, conveying a touching message of empathy from a close neighbor.

“岂曰无衣，与子同裳”，from *The Book of Songs*, is used to encourage the soldiers; here the speaker takes it as the cognitive reference point to conceptualize the help and encouragement from the friendly Japanese groups. Although the target readers may not share this metaphorical image, it is not difficult for them to grasp the meaning through the following contexts, as the sentence following the poetic line clarifies. As a result, it can be translated directly, which benefits not only the spread of Chinese culture.

### (b). Transformation

Transformation refers to the replacement of the metaphorical images of metaphors adopted in the source language for other ones with identical or similar meanings in the target language. Transformation involves two types. Firstly, the metaphors are transformed into distinct categories. Metaphors which are translated in this way are always language-specific and culture-loaded. In this case, the target language users do not conceptualize the targets with reference to the source domains in the source language, or the source domains of the source language have different connotative meanings in the target language. In other words, the connotative meanings implied by the cognitive reference points adopted by the speaker in the source language cannot be activated in the minds of the target language users easily. Secondly, the metaphors are transformed into other metaphors which nevertheless belong to the same category with the original metaphors. This always occurs when the target language users have different cognitive preferences, though the target language users and the source language users share the same conceptual systems.

#### Example 9:

SL: 当然，如果我们能妥善处理这一问题，双边关系会更上层楼。(2020/9/2)

TL: Of course, if we could manage the issue well, it will make the bilateral picture shine.

“更上层楼” is derived from the poem of Climbing White Stork Tower written by a renowned Chinese poet in Tang

Dynasty. Its original meaning is “to see a thousand miles; one should ascend another story”, indicating that if one desires a grander sight, he or she needs to ascent another flight of stairs. It acts as the cognitive reference point of the speaker to conceptualize that if the problems can be effectively addressed, the bilateral relations will continue to improve in the future; otherwise, negative repercussions would be produced. However, the connotative meaning implied by this poetic line cannot be activated in the minds of the target language users who are lack of this cultural background knowledge if it is translated directly; consequently, the source domain of the source language should be converted, which indicates that the translator cannot adopt the cognitive reference point of the source language to conceptualize the target domain in translation. Here, it is converted into a pictorial image that users of the target language can readily comprehend. By doing so, the cognitive reference point adopted by the speaker to conceptualize the alterations of the bilateral relationships is also shifted from the building to the picture. Dealing with this metaphor in this manner facilitates the communication of China’s diplomatic stance on bilateral partnerships.

Example 10:

SL: 面对不分国界、不论民族的全球性挑战，全球治理的重要性不是下降而是上升了。(2020/4/28)

TL: A challenge that respects no border and makes no distinction of ethnicity has only made global governance more important, not less.

In Example 10, the UP-DOWN orientational metaphors are employed as the cognitive reference point of the speaker to conceptualize the degree of the importance of global governance. Although human beings have the similar body structure and embodied experiences and have the similar space cognition, the ways of representing the orientational metaphors are affected by the cultural models and cognitive preferences (Liu & Liu, 2020). The western people tend to measure the importance with reference to MORE-LESS metaphors. Therefore, the translator changes the cognitive reference point adopted in the source language so as to make the translation conform to the conventional expression of the target language, and deliver the meaning more clearly.

### (c). Paraphrase

Some conceptual metaphors are highly culture-loaded, so they cannot be rendered literally and at the same time, there are no corresponding expressions bearing the similar meanings in the target language. In this case, the translator has to give up adopting specific metaphorical images to serve as the cognitive reference points to conceptualize the target domains. This translation strategy permits the use of two translation methods: paraphrasing and deletion.

Paraphrasing refers to translating the conceptual metaphors of the source language into non-metaphorical expression in the target language (van de Broeck, 1981). Those metaphors are always culture specific. Due to the wide differences between the source language and the target language aroused by cultures and cognition, some conceptual metaphors are specific to certain language or culture. Besides, there are no metaphorical expressions in the target language which can express the similar metaphorical meanings, and meanwhile, the contexts surrounding these conceptual metaphors cannot aid the target language users to reason the metaphorical meaning easily. Under such circumstances, given the priority of the precise and clear delivery of the diplomatic notions and concepts, the translator has to abandon the metaphorical image of the source language. In other words, when the “conflicts” between preserving the metaphorical images and delivering the meaning clearly occur and no compromise is possible to be made between them, the latter enjoys the priority so as to achieve the political equivalence (Yang, 2020). In addition, sometimes, in order to make the sentences concise and conform to the conventional expression of the target language, some metaphors also need to be paraphrased.

Example 11:

SL: 俄罗斯、白俄罗斯、韩国等国雪中送炭，迅速派专机将急需的医疗物资送抵武汉。巴基斯坦作为中国的铁杆兄弟，送来了自己储备的几乎全部口罩。(2020/2/15)

TL: Russia, Belarus and the ROK swiftly delivered badly needed medical supplies to Wuhan through chartered flights. Pakistan, our iron-clad brother, sent us virtually all the masks in its stock.

“雪中送炭” is a Chinese idiom. It is a story that the Emperor Taizong of Song Dynasty ordered his officials to send charcoal to the impoverished in snowy weather to keep the cold at bay. Gradually, it means “to help people in their hour of distress”. In this example, it serves as the cognitive reference point of the speaker to conceptualize the fact that when China struggles with the fatal COVID-19, Russia, Belarus and the ROK provide the emergency suppliers for China in time and this metaphorical expression shows China’s sincere gratitude to these countries. However, the target language users who know little about this Chinese idiom cannot fully grasp the meaning if it is translated directly; therefore, the translator has to give up preserving the metaphorical features of the source language, and paraphrases it so as to deliver the metaphorical meaning precisely. Translating it in this manner signifies that the translator conceptualizes the target domain of the source language directly without utilizing any specific metaphorical image as the cognitive reference point.

### (d). Deletion

Strunk and White (1979) proposed that there should contain no unnecessary words and unnecessary sentences in the sentences and paragraphs, which emphasizes the importance of conciseness. This is also the requirement of “Plain English” which emphasizes clarity and brevity, and tries to avoid some redundant structures (Liu & Zhou, 2019). More



importantly, conciseness is one of the essential features of diplomatic discourse. Some metaphors, however, are highly culture loaded and cannot acquire the counterparts in the target language. Additionally, the discrepancies of the language systems between the source language and the target language make it difficult or impossible to paraphrase the metaphors in the target language concisely. Given this situation, omitting the metaphors should be given the priority. But this translation method can only be adopted on the condition that the functions of metaphors are fulfilled elsewhere in the text (Newmark, 2001) and it is also the last choice for the translator to employ, especially in diplomatic discourse, translation of which needs to be as faithful as possible.

#### Example 12:

SL: 中国坚决反对美国的霸凌行径和强权政治, 愿本着不冲突不对抗、相互尊重、合作共赢精神, 与美方共同建设以协调、合作、稳定为基调的中美关系。(2020/8/10)

TL: China firmly rejects the US hegemonic bullying and power politics and remains prepared to work with the US in the spirit of no conflict or confrontation, mutual respect and win-win cooperation and build a relationship based on coordination, cooperation and stability. We must stand firm by multilateralism, by the UN-centered international system, and by the purposes and principles of the UN Charter.

In Example 12, “行径” is used metaphorically. It originally refers to “the path that people walk”, and then it acquires the meaning of “the action or behavior of people”. Here, it is employed as the cognitive reference point of the speaker to conceptualize the disgraceful or bad action of America. In the source language, “行径” is the apposition of “霸凌”. The translator does not render it in the target language. In other words, the translator gives up adopting the image concerning paths as the cognitive reference to the behavior or action of “霸凌”, which is appropriate. This translation makes this sentence more concise. More importantly, it will not impede the transmission of essential and vital information.

## V. CONCLUSION

The research has conducted a comprehensive investigation on the conceptual metaphors in Chinese diplomatic discourse. Various categories of conceptual metaphors are identified, but variations exist in the preferential selection. Several problems concerning the translation of conceptual metaphor in Chinese diplomatic discourse are also figured out and presented systematically. These problems are primarily comprised of undertranslation, overtranslation and mistranslation, which are closely associated with the inappropriate interpretation and selection of the cognitive reference points. According to the CRP model to the translation of conceptual metaphor, three translation strategies (CRP maintenance, CRP shift and CRP omission) are proposed; and under the instruction of the three translation strategies, four translation methods including literal translation, transformation, paraphrasing and deletion are put forward, which can assist the translator in dealing with the translation of conceptual metaphors appropriately not only in diplomatic discourse, but also in other types of discourses.

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