

Critical Metaphor Analysis of Chinese Government Work Report (2018)

Qiushuang Zhang*, Lihong Wang, Qianni Liu

North China Electric Power University Baoding, China

DOI:10.21276/sijll.2019.2.5.3

| Received: 19.07.2019 | Accepted: 27.07.2019 | Published: 30.07.2019

*Corresponding author: Qiushuang Zhang

Abstract

Metaphor, as a common linguistic phenomenon, has been the focus for most linguists. In recent decades, as metaphor highly concentrated on the political discourse development, more and more linguists have begun to emphasize on metaphorical use in politics. However, scholars pay less attention to Chinese political discourse metaphors. Critical metaphor analysis is a new metaphor research method proposed by Charteris-Black in 2004 with the intention to reveal the hidden ideology, attitude and beliefs concealed in discourses. The paper attempts to conduct Critical Metaphor Analysis approach to the analysis of Chinese Government Work Report. With collecting the data of Chinese Government Work Report in 2018 from official website, the paper aims to analyze its potential metaphorical functions and reveal the hidden ideology of the Chinese government work report. Meanwhile, the present paper is supposed to provide a new perspective to the theoretical research in the area of CMA. Besides, it is expected that the research will help government promote its political ideology and help the populace understand better the policies of our government.

Keywords: Metaphor; Critical Metaphor Analysis; Chinese Government Work Report.

Copyright © 2019: This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution license which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium for non-commercial use (NonCommercial, or CC-BY-NC) provided the original author and source are credited.

INTRODUCTION

Charteris-Black [1] proposed the theory Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA) based on the rhetorical metaphor theory. Critical Metaphor Analysis aims to explain the potential intentions of discourse and the influence of metaphor on human thinking and ideology from the perspectives of language, pragmatics and cognition. Critical metaphor analysis is a new and rapidly developing research direction in the West in recent years. It is considered by many researchers to be the most promising field in the cross-research of cognitive linguistics and critical discourse analysis. As an emerging research method, critical metaphor analysis studies deeply the relationship among language, thinking and social culture. And it is widely used in political discourse and economic reports which is attracting more and more Chinese and foreign scholars. However, scholars pay less attention to Chinese political discourse metaphors, and there are very few studies from the perspective of critical metaphor analysis. Therefore, it is worthy of research to explore the function and significance of metaphor in political discourse from the perspective of critical metaphor analysis. With regard to metaphor research in political discourse, Chinese studies starts later than English studies and the number of related Chinese researches was smaller. The words of leaders in political discourse are often more abstract but metaphor

can express the abstract political concept more concrete and vivid with the mapping of metaphors from the source domain to the target domain. And it is easier for the public to understand and accept the government's ruling philosophy. The report on the work of the government is authoritative which is a review and summary of the government's work over the past year. It is also a job expectation and arrangement for the New Year. The report on the work of the government is highly representative and authoritative in political discourse.

Literature Review

There is a long history that the foreign scholars have studied metaphor. The researchers such as Lakoff, Fairclough, Wodak, etc talked about the influence of metaphor on reality since 1990s. Charteris-Black first used the term CMA and he indicates that "critical metaphor analysis is intended to reveal the potential or unconscious intentions of language users through metaphor analysis [2]". In 2005, Koller published *Critical Discourse Analysis and Social Cognition: Evidence from Business Media Discourse*. He linked cognitive theory with critical discourse analysis and illustrated the relationship between metaphor and discourse sociality in detail. In *Washing the Brain: Metaphor and Hidden Ideology*, Goatly [3] analyzed power metaphor, human metaphor and biological

metaphor and their implicit ideologies. In the memoirs of Prologue and Metaphor: Interpreting and Changing the World, Carver & Pikalo [4] explained the important roles of language and metaphor in explaining and changing the world.

In China, more and more scholars conduct metaphor research from the perspective of cognitive linguistics. Shu [5] first discussed the cognitive function of metaphor from four aspects. Wang and Yang [6] analyzed the conceptual metaphors in *Editorial of People's Daily* from the perspective of cognitive linguistics. In addition, domestic researchers also conducted metaphor analysis from different genres in political discourse: Feng [7] analyzed the distinctive speeches of the four American presidents from the perspective of critical metaphor analysis. Liang and Wang [8] analyzed the values of the two parties in the United States taking an example of metaphors in education and medical insurance speeches.

Xia and Wu [9] analyzed the metaphorical representation of G20 economic discourse in Chinese and English media. Ji [10] conducted an analysis of conceptual metaphor in 27 important speeches delivered by General Secretary Xi Jinping on various occasions. This shows that metaphor is widely used in political discourse as an increasingly popular means.

Research Design

This chapter mainly introduces a detailed description of the research method employed in the study. The data in the paper is the English version of Chinese Government Work Report [10], which is collected from the official website of government. The research methods are the combination of quantitative analysis and qualitative analysis. The Government Work Report is a document form of the government of the People's Republic of China.

Research questions

- To identify the types of metaphors in political discourse represented by Chinese Government Work Report [10].
- To manifest the underlying ideology of the Chinese government.
- To analyze the motivations hidden in the choice of certain metaphor.

The data collection

All my data of conceptual metaphors in political discourse are collected from English version of Chinese Government Work Report [10] in official website. Data collection was performed by manual labeling and machine statistics. AntConc3.2.3w was used to calculate the frequency of different metaphors appearing in the texts. All the data are authentic and representative. The content of Chinese Government

Work Report (CGWR) involves three parts: over review of work in the past five years; overall requirements, major objectives and macroeconomic policies for this year's economic and social development; suggestions for the following year. As political discourse, CGWR is typical of formal language and the tone is neutral and objective.

Method of the study

The paper adopts quantitative analysis and qualitative analysis according to the collected data and related theories. This paper employs the critical metaphor analysis methods proposed by Charteris-Black in 2004, namely metaphor recognition, metaphor interpretation and metaphorical explanation, to interpret and analyze the conceptual metaphors appearing in the Chinese Government Work Report [10]. First, the English version of the official work report issued is selected by the government in 2018 as a corpus. After the selection, metaphor keywords are selected and summarized as many as possible in the study, then each type of metaphor is classified. Firstly, an intensive reading of the text is required and more metaphorical expressions should be found, such as "establishing", "promoting", "strategy" and so on. Then, in the research, the metaphorical expression of pure literal meaning is excluded and the mapping relationship between the source domain and the target domain of the metaphor expression is analyzed. Finally, the study analyzes the function of metaphorical discourse, and explained how metaphor transforms abstract political language into concrete and vivid language, and how our government transmits the ruling idea to the people, combining with text and social context and using the knowledge of pragmatics, cognitive linguistics and so on.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Data analysis and discussion is the most important part of the research. Firstly, the paper identifies, selects and classifies the metaphors in government work reports, and then counts the number of occurrences of each type of metaphor. Through data analysis, the study summarizes the types of metaphors in the "Chinese Government Work Report [10]", and which types of metaphors account for the largest proportion. At last, the study analyzes qualitatively the hidden intentions of each type of metaphor to reveal the role of metaphor in the ideology of political discourse and help the public understand the implicit meaning of political discourse.

Metaphor identification in Chinese Government Work Report

Metaphor recognition is the first step in the process of critical metaphor research. Charteris-Black [2] proposed a more standardized approach to critical metaphor analysis "metaphor recognition, metaphor interpretation and metaphor explanation". Critical metaphor analysis divides the metaphor recognition into

two stages: The first stage is to peruse the text to identify the candidate metaphor from the perspectives of language, pragmatics, cognition, etc., especially the disharmony or semantics. The second stage is to analyze the context of metaphor keywords in the corpus

to determine whether their meaning is metaphorical or purely literal. So, the paper shows the metaphor types and the percentage of resonance in Chinese Government Work Report [10] in the form of table.

Table-1: Summary of source domain and resonance in CGWR

Source domain	Type total	Total tokens	Resonance	% of Total Resonance
Machine	16	114	1824	18.7
Construction	21	86	1806	18.5
War	29	59	1711	17.5
Journey	30	53	1590	16.3
Plant	17	50	850	8.7
Circle	19	34	646	6.6
Family	17	34	578	5.9
Body	14	20	280	2.9
Total	168	452	9767	100%

In Table1, the paper makes an identification of metaphors in terms of different source domains. Table1 is the summary of the source domain and resonance of the metaphors found in Chinese Government Report. In Table 1, the first column is the main metaphors of Chinese Government Report. The second column is the number of different types of words or phrases identified as metaphor keywords, such as “jiàn shè, tuī jìn, zhàn lüè”. And the third column is the total number of metaphors. The fourth column “resonance” is proposed by Charteris-Black “To indicate the extent to which metaphor source domains are found in a particular corpus and measure their productivity thereby [12]”. The measure of resonance is that it is the sum of tokens multiplied by the sum of the types of the metaphors.

Critical metaphor analysis of dominant metaphors in reports

After the collection of data, metaphor recognition is finished. The next step is data analysis

which is called metaphor interpretation. Metaphor interpretation refers to determining the relationship between metaphor and the cognitive and pragmatic factors behind it. Metaphors analysis is employed to illustrate the nature and working mechanism of metaphor. The working mechanism of metaphor is to analyze target domains deeply by selecting certain elements. Behind metaphor, there are implicit beliefs and values. So the analysis part is the combination with context and social, cultural factors.

Case analysis of machine metaphor

In Chinese Government Work Report, machine metaphor is the dominant metaphor in the data. Socialist modernization is like machine operation. The details of machine metaphor identified are shown in Table2.

Table-2: Distribution of the machine metaphor

Conceptual Metaphor	Key Words	Total tokens in CGWR
Socialist modernization is like machine operation.	tuī jìn /tuī dòng/ tuī chū/tuī kāi	95
	yùn xíng/tuī xíng	4
	qū dòng/dòng néng/liú dòng/qǐ dòng/dài dòng/qiào dòng	6
	cù jìn/gǎi jìn	9
Total	...	114

In Table2, it shows the distribution of the machine metaphor in CGWR. In Chinese Government Work Report, machine metaphor is the dominant metaphor in the data. In addition, the mapping projection from source domain to target domain is rich. Obviously, this metaphor conveys lots of information. Machine metaphor, as the name implies, means that some abstract features of the target domain are similar to the "machine" features in the original source domain.

The machine is a device assembled from various metal and non-metal parts, each of which plays an important role in energy conversion and information processing. The country is like a huge and complicated machine. The country's economy, politics, culture, environment, etc. are the various parts of the state machine. Only when the various components are functioning properly and form a joint force, the state machine can operate smoothly. In machine metaphors, metaphor keywords

such as “tuī jìn”, “tuī dòng”, “yùn xíng”, and “run” are most frequently used.

Example1: *Advancing* supply-side structural reform demands removing barriers to the market-based allocation of the factors of production and reducing government-imposed transaction costs.

Example2: We have adopted measures that are good for the near term and even better for the long term, made strong moves to *advance* supply-side structural reform, appropriately expanded aggregate demand, and worked for a dynamic equilibrium of supply and demand at a higher level.

In example1 and example2, the source domain is “push the machine” and the target domain is “supply-side structural reform”. In Chinese corpus, the literal meaning of “tuī dòng” is that something is like machine operating by pushed force. However, in the two sentences, “advancing supply-side structural reform” means that the Chinese government should promote the development of supply-side structural reform. Under the new situation, it is necessary to conduct supply-side structural reform in order to develop the economy better. Mapping the source domain “push” to “supply-side structural reform” shows that the government attaches importance to the supply-side structural reform.

Example3: Sixth, with a commitment to implementing the coordinated regional development and new urbanization strategies, we have *promoted* more balanced development, and seen new growth poles and belts developing faster.

Example4: First, we will strongly *promote* high-quality development.

Development is the absolute principle. The essence of a socialist society is to liberate productivity develop productivity, speed up economic development, improve the quality of economic development, and improve continuously people’s living standards. In example3 and example4, the source domain is “push the machine” and the target domain is “development”. Mapping the source domain “push” to “development” shows that the government attaches great importance to development issues. It also reflects the changes in the Chinese government’s requirements for development under the new situation, from the pursuit of economic development to the pursuit of balanced development and high-quality development.

Case analysis of construction metaphor

Socialist modernization is like building. The development of China can also be regarded as construction. The details of construction metaphor identified are shown in Table3.

Table-3: Distribution of the construction metaphor

Conceptual Metaphor	Key Words	Total tokens in CGWR
Socialist modernization is like building.	jiàn lì/ gòu jiàn/chuàng jiàn/gòng jiàn/jiàn shè/gòng jiàn	64
	jué qǐ/chóng sù/sù zào/gǎi zào/dǎ zào	4
	kuàng jià/duǎn bǎn	3
	jī chǔ/tuō dǐ/gēn jī/jī shí	15
Total	...	86

In table3, construction metaphor is also a dominant metaphor like machine metaphor in the data. In present period of China, the main task is the socialism modernization construction. This metaphor reflects the reality and socialist construction and construction is a productive source domain. Architecture is a space for people to live and use in order to meet the needs of social life, using technical means, scientific rules and aesthetic principles. The country is like a big building. The construction of the country requires the careful selection and design of the builders, and the country's development can be solid. Human life is inseparable from the building. The original source domain “building” is projected into the construction of the country. The concept metaphor of the construction is more concrete and detailed, making it more universal and easier for the general public to accept and understand. In construction metaphors,

metaphor keywords such as “jiàn lì”, “jiàn shè”, “gòu jiàn”, and “jī chǔ” are most frequently used.

Example5: China’s commitment to peaceful development should not change and we should work to *build* a new type of international relations.

Example6: We need to continue to reform national defense and the armed forces, and *build* strong and solid modernized border, coastal, and air defense.

Example7: We should prioritize the development of public transportation; improve local amenities like food markets and parking facilities, and work faster to *build* accessible facilities.

In example5, example6 and example7, the word “build” in English data means “jiàn shè” in

Chinese metaphor keywords. The construction metaphor not only gives us an overall view of Chinese socialism modernization construction, but provides some significant viewpoints. Chinese modernization construction in socialism is composed of economic, political, ecological, social and cultural aspects. And Chinese socialism modernization construction is like a building and government and people should cooperate to build in the process of construction.

Example8: We need to speed up the *establishment* of a housing system with multiple types of suppliers, multiple channels for housing support, and encouragement for both renting and buying, so that more people can soon have a place to call home.

Example9: We should improve the measures on offsetting cultivated land used for other purposes, and *establish* a mechanism that allows the surplus quotas produced by linking newly-added cropland quotas with the amount of land used for construction to be adjusted inter-provincially.

In example8, the source domain is “construction” and the target domain is “housing system”. The metaphor keyword “establish” in English data is connected with “jiàn lì” in Chinese data. In metaphorical expression, Chinese government regards the housing system as a building to establish. It shows our government attaches importance to the housing system. In example 9, the source domain is “construction” and the target domain is “cultivated land”. The “establish” means “jiàn lì” in the construction metaphor. Mapping the source domain “build” to “cultivated land” shows that the government attaches great importance to cultivated land issues.

Case analysis of war metaphor

Developing a country is like fighting for a war. In Chinese Government Work Report, war metaphor is also widely used in the data. The details of construction metaphor identified are shown in Table4.

Table-4: Distribution of the war metaphor

Conceptual Metaphor	Key Words	Total tokens in CGWR
Developing a country is like fight for a war.	zhàn lüè/dìng lì/yì jūn/shèng lì/	27
	bù jú/kāi jú/jú miàn	11
	gōng guān/bì lěi/gōng jiān kè nán/zhàng ài	8
	jué shèng/duó qǔ/biàn gé/dǎ pò/tū pò/pò chú	13
Total	...	59

War metaphor, as the name implies, implies that some abstract features of the target domain are similar to the “war” features in the original source domain. China is now in a critical period of socialist modernization. In the face of a severe international and domestic environment, Chinese people need to maintain a high spirit and passion and need a long-term endurance to build a socialist society. Even in an era of peace, we still face all kinds of challenges and conflicts. Strengthening socialist modernization is like fighting a hard battle. It requires the Chinese government and the Chinese people to unite and achieve the victory of socialist modernization. In war metaphors, metaphor keywords such as “zhàn lüè”, “gōng jiān”, “tū pò” are most frequently used.

Example10: Sixth, with a commitment to implementing the coordinated regional development and new urbanization *strategies*, we have promoted more balanced development, and seen new growth poles and belts developing faster. Example11: coordinate efforts to pursue the five-sphere integrated plan and the four-pronged comprehensive *strategy*.

The war metaphor “zhàn lüè” means strategy in English. The mapping projection from source domain “war” to target domain is obvious and vivid. Strategy is

a plan to achieve a global goal from an overall perspective. Strategy is a long-term plan and a great goal. It often takes a long time to plan a strategy, develop a strategy, and achieve the goal of the strategy. The term strategy was originally a military concept. The strategy is characterized by the discovery of a program of ingenuity. Chinese Government Work Report has repeatedly used the term “strategy” to illustrate Chinese government’s “strategic” concept of socialist modernization. Chinese socialist construction involves all aspects. To achieve better development of socialist modernization, it is necessary to formulate a long-term goal. It also shows the confidence and determination of the Chinese government to achieve this goal. Examples 10 and 11 emphasize the “strategic” thinking of coordinated development and reflect the Chinese government's emphasis on coordinated development.

Example12: Work particularly for solid progress in forestalling and defusing major risks, in targeted *poverty alleviation*, and in addressing pollution

Example13: *Poverty alleviation* remains a formidable task; the foundations of agriculture and rural infrastructure remain weak, and the disparities in development between rural and urban areas, between regions, and in income distribution remain substantial.

In example12 and example13, “poverty alleviation” means “tuō pín gōng jiǎn”. The alleviation of poverty is a tough task and the process of poverty alleviation is like a fighting for war. It implies that poverty alleviation needs a long-term plan and strong will in China. Eliminating poverty, improving people's livelihood, and gradually achieving common prosperity are the essential requirements of socialism and an important mission of the Communist Party of China. Building a moderately prosperous society in all respects is the solemn commitment of the Chinese Communist

Party to the Chinese people. The charge for the fight against poverty has blown. With the development of society, the Chinese government has paid more and more attention to people's livelihood issues, especially the poverty issues of ordinary people. The issues of poverty alleviation have become a strategic issue.

Case analysis of journey metaphor

Developing a country is like travelling. The journey metaphor is distinctive in Chinese Government Work Report. The details of journey metaphor identified are shown in Table5.

Table-5: Distribution of the journey metaphor

Conceptual Metaphor	Key Words	Total tokens in CGWR
Developing a country is like travelling.	dài lǐng/yǐn lǐng/yǐn dǎo/zhǐ yǐn/dǎo xiàng/qián xíng/mǎi xiàng	19
	jīe duàn/lù xiàn/zhǔ xiàn/lù/dào	14
	jiā kuài/tàn suǒ	8
	tǎn tú/fāng xiàng/guǐ dào/mù biāo/bù fǎ	12
Total	...	53

In table5, journey refers to distance from one place to another. The journey is not static, but a process of continuous development, including the starting point of the journey, destination and travelers. Socialist modernization is like a journey, and travelers are the Chinese people under the leadership of the Communist Party of China. The road to the development and progress in all aspects of the country is tortuous, and Chinese people must work together to reach and achieve the set goals. Long-term development is not one-stop and China's industrialization is a long-term and hard process. Modernization of a vast country like China cannot be done at one go. The journey metaphor means that the country's development is more than a transition from a developing country to a developed country. In journey metaphor, metaphorical expressions such as “yǐn lǐng”, “dǎo xiàng” and “dào lù” are used more frequently.

Example14: Third, with a *commitment* to innovation-driven development, and a focus on unlocking public creativity, we have achieved a remarkable overall improvement in innovation capacity and efficiency.

Example15: With a *focus* on improving quality, we should ensure stable and optimized grain output.

In example14, the source domain “yǐn lǐng” is projected to the innovation development, reflecting the new direction of our national development. Innovation has always been an important impetus for the development of a country and it has always been an important impetus in promoting the progress of human society. China must adhere to innovation and to

accelerating to build the innovative country. For developing countries, the most important thing is to shift from the big country of manufacture to the big country of innovation. In example15, “focus” means “dǎo xiàng” in Chinese data. It means in the journey of socialist construction, Chinese government attaches importance to grain production. Chinese nation has been advocating “food the first necessity of man” concept, thousands of years creating a very splendid food culture. In the new era, we must promote the high-quality production of grain.

Example16: We should continue to pursue a Chinese *path* to socialist rural revitalization, and work faster to achieve agricultural and rural modernization.

Example17: We should *move forward* with developing the Yangtze Economic Belt, giving primary consideration to protecting ecosystems and pursuing green development.

In example16, “path” represents “dào lù” in the journey metaphor. In the process of journey, there are many roads to choose, and we must choose the best suited road for our development based on our national conditions. The issue of agriculture and rural peasants is a fundamental issue concerning the national economy and the people's livelihood. It is imperative to always solve the “three rural issues” as the top priority of the party's work and implement the rural revitalization strategy. At present, the problem of insufficient and imbalance development in China is most prominent in the countryside. Therefore, the central government proposed to implement the rural revitalization strategy, and clearly stated that solving the “three rural issues” is the top priority of Communist Party of China. In example17, the “journey” of the source domain is

projected onto the construction of ecological civilization. Ecological civilization is a topic of great concern to the people at present. It reflects the national will.

CONCLUSION

Guided by Charteris-Black's CMA theory, the research conducts a critical metaphor analysis study of conceptual metaphors in Chinese Government Work Report [10]. It aims at studying the usage of metaphors in the Reports. It is found that there are eight main types of metaphors in CGWR which are machine metaphor, construction metaphor, war metaphor, journey metaphor, plant metaphor, circle metaphor, family metaphor and body metaphor. The findings suggest that as developing country China's primary goal is to accelerate the development of national economy and promote people's standards of living. On one hand, metaphors reflect the ideology of language users. On the other hand, metaphors reflect the ideology of language users unconsciously, and then guide ideology of others. Thus, in Chinese Government Work Report, metaphors reflect the ideology of Chinese leaders and the leaders guide ideology of the populace. The direct or implied persuasion of metaphor plays an important role in stimulating the public's feelings, shortening the distance between the government and the general public and achieving its persuasiveness. However, there still exist some limitations in this study that should be improved in future studies. The identification and classification of metaphors is relatively subjective. What's more, the scope of the data is still limited and the author of further research should collect more data as evidence.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

At the point of finishing this paper, I'd like to express my sincere thanks to all those who have lent me a hand in the course of my writing this paper. First of all, I'd like to take this opportunity to show my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Associate Professor Ms Zhang Qiushuang, who has given me so much useful advice on my writing, and has tried her best to improve my paper. Secondly, I'd like to thank other professors in the Foreign Languages College, from whom I have learned a lot about English academic writing. Last but

not the least, I'd like to express my thanks to my postgraduate classmates who offered me some useful references about my thesis writing. Without their help, it would be much harder for me to finish this paper.

Needless to say, all the remaining errors are my own responsibilities.

REFERENCE

1. Charteris-Black, J. (2004). *Corpus approaches to critical metaphor analysis*. Springer.
2. Charteris-Black, J. (2011). *Politicians and rhetoric: The persuasive power of metaphor*. Springer.
3. Goatly, A. (2007). *Washing the brain metaphor and hidden ideology* (Vol. 23). John Benjamins Publishing.
4. Carver, T., & Pikalo, J. (Eds.). (2008). *Political language and metaphor: Interpreting and changing the world*. Routledge.
5. Shu, D. *Studies in Metaphor*. (1999). Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.
6. Wang, J. & Yang, Z. (2012). On the feasibility of application of metaphor in political news discourse. *Journal of Northeast Normal University (Philosophy and Social Science)*, (03):111-113.
7. Feng, Q. (2013). Metaphor and political myth as revealed by critical metaphor analysis of American presidents' speeches: from Ronald Reagan to Barrack Obama. *Journal of PLA University of Foreign Languages*, (01):18-22.
8. Liang J. & Wang S.(2013). A Metaphorical Analysis of Contemporary American Political Discourse: The case of educational discourse [J]. *Foreign Language Research*, (4):10-15.
9. Xia, X. & Wu, G. (2018). A case study of metaphorical representation in G20's economic discourse in 2016 from the perspective of critical discourse analysis [J]. *Journal of Educational Institute of Jilin Province*, (04):100-103.
10. Ji, Y. (2018). Analysis of conceptual metaphors of Xi Jinping's political discourses [J]. *Journal of North University of China (Social Science Edition)*, 34(5):122-125.
11. Charteris-Black, J. (2004). *Corpus approaches to critical metaphor analysis*. Springer.