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A Study on the Transformation Mechanisms of Political Metaphors from the Perspective of Embodied-Cognitive Translation Studies

—A Case Study of the Uyghur Translations of *Selected Works of Mao Zedong* (Volumes I-IV)

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Abstract

The interlingual translation of political literature fulfils dual functions: presenting political intentions and reshaping cognitive schemas. Drawing on the "embodiment-cognition-language" chain of Embodied-Cognitive Translation Studies, this paper proposes a continuum model of "source-domain retention-cognitive attenuation" and systematically examines 328 political metaphors extracted from the Uyghur translation of Selected Works of Mao Zedong (Volumes I-IV). The findings are as follows: (1) Translators adopt four successive strategies: embodied-cognitive equivalence, embodied-cognitive reconstruction, embodied-cognitive transplantation and embodied-cognitive attenuation, corresponding respectively to four embodied-cognitive conditions: physiological universality, ecological heterogeneity, cultural default and stylistic adaptation. (2) These four strategies follow a gradient distribution, visually revealing the energy-decreasing path of metaphorical cognitive processing. (3) Through the mechanism of combining "creation and imitation", translators successfully anchor political concepts between Chinese and Uyghur embodied-cognitive systems. Moving beyond the binary "literal-free translation" framework, this research offers an operable paradigm for the effective communication of state discourse in multi-ethnic contexts.

Keywords

Embodied-Cognitive Translation Studies, political metaphor, Chinese-Uyghur translation, Selected Works of Mao Zedong, state-discourse communication

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1. Introduction

As a pivotal theoretical text of the Communist Party of China during the New-Democratic Revolution, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong* (Volumes I-IV) is rich in political, ideological and stylistic features, relying heavily on metaphors for its expression. Since the 1950s, the publication of its Uyghur translations has laid a textual foundation for the dissemination of the Sinicized Marxism-Leninism in Xinjiang (Di & Wang, 2025). Nevertheless, rooted in China's specific natural ecology, social experience and revolutionary contexts, the metaphors in the work demand not merely linguistic conversion in Uyghur rendering, but also cross-cultural reconstruction of cognitive schemas.

Political metaphors function both as rhetorical devices and core cognitive mechanisms (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Nations develop distinct experiential schemas shaped by their natural surroundings, social histories and productive practices. Via cross-domain mapping, such schemas render abstract political concepts concrete and further participate in the construction and circulation of political discourse. Existing research demonstrates that metaphor generation and comprehension are constrained by embodied experience; their source domains largely derive from bodily perception, natural settings and social practice. Hence political metaphors serve not only meaning-construction purposes but also the transmission of ideology and cognitive guidance.

As a cutting-edge theoretical system within cognitive translation research, Embodied-Cognitive Translation Studies provides a fresh analytical framework for metaphor-translation inquiries. Developed by Wang Yin (2021) on the basis of Embodied-Cognitive Linguistics, this theory conceptualizes translation as the transformation of image schemas across different embodied-cognitive systems, with its core principle encapsulated in the interactive chain: "Reality (embodiment)—Cognition (cognition)—Language (language)". Unlike mainstream Western Cognitive Translation Studies, it treats "embodiment" (bodily experience and interactions with reality) and "cognition" (subjective cognitive processing) as equally vital analytical dimensions, thereby systematically addressing how social realities and cultural ecologies constrain semantic generation.

Current scholarship mainly falls into two strands. The first strand investigates literary and classic-text translation under Embodied-Cognitive Translation Studies, stressing that translators must establish embodied-cognitive correspondences between source-language experience and target-language cognition (Guo, 2023; He, 2023). The second strand explores political-discourse translation, arguing that cross-lingual transformation of political metaphors essentially entails readjustment and reorganization of cognitive modes (Wei & Wen, 2024). Still, existing studies of political-metaphor translation mostly consist of case analyses (Wang, 2024; Qin, 2024); few systematically sort out strategy typologies and their underlying embodied-cognitive motivations based on large-scale corpora. Research on Chinese-Uyghur political-metaphor translation remains particularly under-explored and

calls for further investigation.

Against this backdrop, this paper uses the Chinese-Uyghur parallel corpus of *Selected Works of Mao Zedong* (Volumes I-IV) to examine transformation mechanisms of political metaphors within the Embodied-Cognitive Translation Studies framework. Three core research questions are addressed: First, what major metaphor-transformation strategies are deployed in the Uyghur version? Second, how do these strategies reflect the negotiation between Chinese and Uyghur embodied-cognitive schemas? Third, how does cross-lingual transformation of political metaphors facilitate the communication and reception of state discourse in multi-ethnic settings?

2. Interpreting Cross-lingual Transformation of Political Metaphors via Embodied-Cognitive Translation Studies

2.1 Bidirectional Coupling of "Embodiment" and "Cognition" and Its Translation-Studies Implications

Traditional cognitive linguistics emphasizes the embodiment of meaning construction, positing that conceptual systems originate in subjects' perceptual and motor experiences (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999). Yet translation, as a complex cross-lingual and cross-cultural activity, cannot be fully explained solely through the cognitive dimension. Embodied-Cognitive Linguistics proposed by Wang Yin (2021) clarifies the synergistic relationship between "embodiment" and "cognition". "Embodiment" highlights the ecological foundations and social-real-world constraints on language formation, emphasizing shared image schemas forged through human interaction with the objective world. "Cognition", by contrast, underscores divergent cognitive construals of the same objective reality among socio-cultural groups. The two operate in bidirectional coupling: embodiment furnishes material prerequisites for cognition; cognition conducts conceptual integration and semantic construction through subjective construal of embodied reality.

For translation scholarship, this theoretical insight implies that difficulties in metaphor translation stem less from formal linguistic discrepancies than from alignment and negotiation between source-language and target-language embodied-cognitive systems. Political metaphors, in particular, are sedimented products of a nation's natural environment, historical memory and social practice. As Xie Maosong (2024) observes in discussing the intellectual value of *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, its linguistic expressions are deeply intertwined with China's historical practical experience. In Chinese-Uyghur translation, source-language metaphors are mostly anchored in agrarian civilizations of central China and revolutionary-struggle experiences, carrying strong local characteristics. When transferred into Uyghur contexts, translators must build correspondences across disparate embodied-cognitive modes; such cross-embodied-cognitive docking constitutes the logical starting point for political-metaphor translation.

2.2 The "Creation-Imitation" Principle as an Embodied-Cognitive Practice

Embodied-Cognitive Translation Studies regards translation as image-schema conversion across embodied-cognitive systems governed by the combined principle of "creation and imitation". "Imitation" means translators identify universal cognitive structures supported by shared human experience and pursue embodied-cognitive equivalence between source and target languages. "Creation" denotes flexible adaptation amid cultural divergences, realizing effective meaning transfer via image substitution and schema reorganization.

In Chinese-Uyghur political-metaphor translation, the "creation-imitation" principle manifests as follows: where source-language embodied-cognitive schemas correspond to target-language ecological experience (e.g., universal bodily-perception-based metaphors), source-domain retention is prioritized—this represents "imitation". Where embodied-cognitive schemas break down (e.g., metaphors drawing on specific ecological settings or cultural allusions), reorganization, substitution or attenuation is required for cognitive anchoring—this represents "creation". Notably, "creation" is not unconstrained invention, but bounded adaptation subject to requirements for stable political semantics. Translation is therefore essentially embodied-cognitive reconstruction rather than mechanical substitution of linguistic signs.

2.3 Embodied-Cognitive Negotiation in Multi-ethnic Contexts

Political-literature translation is more than linguistic transposition; it reconstructs state discourse within diverse national cognitive systems. Acting as "bidirectional embodied-cognitive intermediaries", translators adapt source-language metaphors according to target audiences' cultural backgrounds, psychological expectations and reception habits (Lou, 2025). Owing to disparities in natural environments and cultural traditions between Chinese and Uyghur, certain metaphors demand substitution, reconstruction or attenuation for cognitive anchoring.

Scholarly work notes that disseminating state discourse across multi-ethnic landscapes requires establishing cross-cultural cognitive common ground to foster understanding and identification (Zhang, 2023). To a large extent, communicative effectiveness hinges on embedding messages within audiences' pre-existing cognitive schemas so as to achieve dual cognitive and affective recognition (Liu, 2023). These macro-level observations validate the importance of embodied-cognitive adaptation in political-metaphor translation and furnish theoretical support for subsequent analyses of concrete transformation mechanisms.

3. Research Methodology and Corpus Description

3.1 Corpus Sources and Screening Criteria

The corpus draws on the 1967 Chinese-language edition of *Selected Works of Mao Zedong* (Volumes I-IV), published by People's Publishing House, and its Uyghur counterpart issued the same year by the Ethnic Publishing House. Rendered by a translation team organized by the Central Bureau for the

Translation of Minority-Languages Works, the Uyghur version was produced by senior bilingual translators and subjected to multiple rounds of review, granting it high authority and standardization.

Political metaphors were screened according to three criteria: (1) expressions featuring evident cross-domain mapping, in which concrete, experiential source domains interpret abstract political target domains; (2) expressions performing political meaning-construction or ideological-guidance functions in the source text; (3) source domains originating from embodied-cognitive experiential spheres including bodily perception, natural surroundings, productive practice or historical-cultural allusions. Sentence-by-sentence screening yielded 328 valid metaphor instances covering all volumes and text types of the original work.

3.2 Analytical Dimensions

This study combines qualitative analysis with case-study illustration to systematically compare image schemas, cognitive pathways and pragmatic functions in source and target texts. Three analytical dimensions are adopted:

1) Source-domain retention: the degree to which metaphorical imagery of the source text is preserved in translations.

2) Cognitive-pathway adjustment: additions, deletions, substitutions and reorganizations of conceptual mapping performed by translators.

3) Embodied-cognitive motivations: physiological universality, ecological heterogeneity, cultural default or stylistic norms driving such translational operations.

Synthesizing these dimensions, the paper uncovers internal logics governing the coordinated operation of "embodiment" and "cognition" in political-literature translation.

4. Embodied-Cognitive Transformation Mechanisms for Political Metaphors in *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*

From the Embodied-Cognitive Translation Studies perspective, the core of political-metaphor translation lies not in word-for-word formal matching, but in whether cognitive structures embedded in source-text metaphors can be effectively activated in target-language contexts. Rather than relying on a single strategy, the Uyghur translation of *Selected Works of Mao Zedong* flexibly employs four mechanisms—embodied-cognitive equivalence, embodied-cognitive reconstruction, embodied-cognitive transplantation and embodied-cognitive attenuation—responding respectively to physiological universality, ecological heterogeneity, cultural default and stylistic adaptation. These mechanisms form a continuum shifting from "source-domain retention" toward "cognitive attenuation".

(Figure Note: Continuum Model of "Source-domain Retention—Cognitive Attenuation". Horizontal gradient from source-domain retention (strong cognition) on the left to cognitive attenuation (weak cognition) on the right; four successive phases: high source-domain retention (embodied-cognitive

equivalence, motivated by physiological universality), partial source-domain adjustment (embodied-cognitive reconstruction, motivated by ecological heterogeneity), introduction of target-language familiar imagery (embodied-cognitive transplantation, motivated by cultural default), metaphor attenuation with core semantics highlighted (embodied-cognitive attenuation, motivated by stylistic adaptation).

4.1 Embodied-Cognitive Equivalence: Source-domain Retention Rooted in Physiological Universality

Fundamental human perceptions of bodily experience and spatiality exhibit substantial cross-lingual consistency, enabling source-domain retention in metaphor translation. Drawing on such physiological universality, the Uyghur translation of *Selected Works of Mao Zedong* adopts the embodied-cognitive-equivalence strategy for universal political metaphors.

Example 1

Source text: "Catching sparrows with one's eyes shut", "fishing blindfolded", being careless, indulging in high-sounding talk, and being content with smatterings of knowledge—such bad habits … still persist among many comrades in our Party. (*Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, Vol. III, pp. 754-755)

Uyghur translation: *"køzni jumuwelip qutʃqatʃ tutuʃ", "qariʁudɛk timsiqilap beliq tutuʃ", bipɛrwaliq qiliʃ, quruq gɛp setiʃ, jerim-jarta bilimgɛ qanaɛtlinip qeliʃtɛk bundaq ɛŋ jaman istil……partijɛmizdiki nurʁun joldaʃlarda helimu saqlinip kelmɛktɛ* (*Maw Zeduŋ Tallanma Esɛrliri*, Vol. III, p. 16).

The source text deploys "catching sparrows with one's eyes shut" and "fishing blindfolded" to construct the image schema of "blind sensory perception leading to futile action", mapping the absurdity of sensory deprivation onto the political target domain of subjective blindness. The Uyghur translation fully reproduces source-domain imagery: *køzni jumuwelip qutʃqatʃ tutuʃ* ("catching sparrows with eyes closed") and *qariʁudɛk timsiqilap beliq tutuʃ* ("fishing like a blind man"). Such absurdity generated by impaired vision constitutes universal cross-cultural cognition requiring no cultural recoding to resonate with target audiences. Leveraging agglutinative morphological features of Uyghur, the translator attaches the comparative suffix *-tɛk* to nominal-verb phrases, unifying multiple discrete metaphorical clauses into pre-modifiers. This reduces cognitive-processing load caused by stacked concrete metaphors and seamlessly embeds earthy source-text imagery into the rigorous grand political narrative of Uyghur.

Example 2

Source text: Reactionary things never collapse of their own accord unless you strike at them. It is just like sweeping the floor: without the broom, the dust will not disappear by itself (*Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, Vol. IV, p. 1029).

Uyghur translation: *ɛksijɛtʃi nersiler, joqatmisaŋ, joqalmajdu. bumu jɛr sypyrgɛngɛ oxʃaʃ, sypyrgɛ tɛgmigitʃɛ, ɛxlɛt haman øzi tʃiqip ketmejdu* (*Maw Zeduŋ Tallanma Esɛrliri*, Vol. IV, p. 19).

This example maps objective laws governing the demise of reactionary forces onto the everyday practice of "sweeping away dust". From an embodied-cognitive perspective, its core lies in precise

preservation of the force-dynamics schema. Morphological combinations such as *tɛgmigitʃɛ* ("until contact is made") and negative verb *tʃiqip ketmejdu* ("will not move away voluntarily") perfectly recreate physical necessity: external intervention brings about displacement of objects. This attests to shared embodied-cognitive intuitions across peoples regarding "spatial contact altering object states". By reproducing this physical causal logic, translators anchor grand political philosophy in audiences' basic labor-derived perceptions.

4.2 Embodied-Cognitive Reconstruction: Imagery Fine-tuning for Ecological Heterogeneity

Where metaphor source domains are tied to particular geography, ecology or cultural backgrounds unfamiliar to target-language audiences, literal source-domain retention may trigger cognitive barriers. Under such circumstances, translators resort to embodied-cognitive reconstruction, adjusting metaphorical imagery within the same cognitive category to sustain translational cognitive coherence.

Example 3

Source text: There is a couplet that portrays such people: "Reeds on the wall: heavy-headed, light-footed, shallow-rooted; bamboo shoots amid mountains: sharp-mouthed, thick-skinned, hollow-bellied" (*Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, Vol. III, p. 758).

Uyghur translation: *mundaq bir dujzi bar ki, u shundaq kisilerni syretlep beridu. uningda mundaq dejilidu: tamda yngɛn qumuʃniŋ beʃi eʁir, tywi tadsiz, jiltizi tejiz bolidu; taʁda yngɛn bambukniŋ utʃi utʃluq, posti qelin, itʃi kawak bolidu* (*Maw Zeduŋ Tallanma Esɛrliri*, Vol. III, p. 22).

The source text draws on physical traits of reeds and bamboo shoots to satirize subjectivists who are hollow inside. Yet reeds and bamboo shoots belong to central-Chinese agrarian ecosystems largely alien to Uyghur lived experience; literal translation would fail to evoke cognitive resonance. The translation adopts source-domain adaptive reconstruction: "reeds growing on walls" becomes *tamda yngɛn qumuʃ* ("vegetation growing against walls"), adapted to oasis ecology, and "bamboo shoots" is rendered as *bambuk* (bamboo). This conversion preserves the overarching "plant-physical-form" cognitive framework, bridging cognitive gaps while retaining the critical rhetorical force of the original couplet.

Example 4

Source text: It is like a ship whose mast-tip is already visible from the shore as it sails in from the sea; it is like the brilliant sun bursting forth, seen from a mountain peak far in the east … (*Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, Vol. I, p. 103)

Uyghur translation: *u-deŋiz jaqisida turup jiraqqa qariʁanda, deŋizdin moma jaʁitʃiniŋ utʃi køryngɛn bir gemɛ, u-egiz taʁniŋ tʃoqqisida turup jiraqqa qariʁanda, ʃerqtin nur tʃetʃip ɛmdila køtyrylywatqan bir qujaʃ……* (*Maw Zeduŋ Tallanma Esɛrliri*, Vol. I, p. 213)

This source-text metaphor cluster of "sailing ship" and "rising sun" foreshadows the revolutionary high tide. Inland audiences lack embodied experience of ocean navigation and fluid surging movements. To overcome geographic cognitive barriers, the translation implements dual reconstruction: cross-domain

schema reshaping and modal transformation. The nautical component “mast” unfamiliar to inland readers is reconstructed as *moma jaʁitʃi* (“house main pillar”), a landmark in traditional terrestrial architecture, retaining core attributes “tallness, forward-looking orientation”. Meanwhile the fluid-imagery expression “bursting forth” is dematerialized and re-rendered as *nur tʃetʃip* (“radiating rays of light”), shifting from fluid-dynamics imagery to visual-light modality. Such adjustments secure stable cognitive grounding for political imagery in target-language contexts.

Example 5

Source text: To seek centralization and unity by means of such erroneous policies is truly like climbing a tree to catch fish — the exact opposite of what one wants. (*Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, Vol. I, p. 230)

Uyghur translation: *bundaq xata sijasɛt bilɛn merkɛzleʃtyryʃ wɛ birlikkɛ keltyryʃkɛ intiliʃ, heqiqɛtɛn, derɛx beʃidin beliq izligɛnlik bolidu, buniŋ netidʒisi ɛksitʃɛ bolup tʃiqidu* (*Maw Zeduŋ Tallanma Esɛrliri*, Vol. I, p. 466).

Example 5 employs the idiom “climb a tree to catch fish” to vividly illustrate the absurd outcome brought about by erroneous lines. Compact in form, this idiom encapsulates a concrete embodied perceptual schema beneath its cultural veneer. The rendition carries out explicit reconstruction of this schema, recasting the terse allusion into a vivid action: dɛrɛx beʃidin beliq izligɛnlik (“seeking fish from the treetop”). This highly visual physical act helps recipients grasp its implication effectively. More subtly, the translator modulates the spatial dimension of the source schema: the original “climb a tree” merely means scaling trees, while the version deliberately adds the locative marker beʃidin (“from the summit / high top”). Such adjustment widens the gap between “waters (where fish belong)” and “lofty treetops”, laying bare the absurdity of subjectivism against objective reality. Evidently, this reconstruction is not a mere substitution of experience; rather, it renders abstract political logic accessible to target readers through embodied perception.

4.3 Embodied-Cognitive Transplantation: Discourse Remediation to Compensate for Cultural Default

Where source-text metaphors hinge on culture-specific historical circumstances inaccessible to target-language audiences, translators deploy embodied-cognitive transplantation, introducing culturally familiar target-language imagery to achieve functional metaphorical equivalence.

Example 6

Source text: The so-called constitutional government in their mouths amounts to nothing but “hanging up a sheep’s head while selling dog meat”. They hang out the sheep’s head of constitutional government, yet sell the dog meat of one-party dictatorship (*Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, Vol. II, p. 694).

Uyghur translation: *ularniŋ aʁzidiki ʃjendʒeŋ «qujruq kørsitip, øpkɛ setiʃ»tinla ibarɛt. ular ʃjendʒeŋ degɛn qujruqni kørsitip, bir partijɛ diktaturisi degɛn øpkini satmaqta* (*Maw Zeduŋ Tallanma Esɛrliri*, Vol. II, p. 749).

The source-text idiom “hanging up a sheep’s head while selling dog meat” denounces political opponents who pretend to champion constitutionalism while practicing dictatorship. In Uyghur cultural cognition, however, “sheep’s head” and “dog meat” carry no comparable value-contrast connotation; literal translation would produce pragmatic misalignment. The translation aptly replaces source-language imagery with indigenous Uyghur proverb *qujruq kørsitip, øpkɛ setiʃ* (“display sheep-tail fat yet sell sheep lungs”). Within local culture, sheep-tail fat signifies high-value foodstuff and sheep lungs inferior produce. Their sharp economic contrast activates target-audiences’ recognition of “passing off shoddy goods as quality merchandise”, preserving critical rhetorical force and setting a model for experiential alignment between Chinese and Uyghur metaphor comprehension.

Example 7

Source text: The saying “playing the lute to a cow” carries a tone of mocking the recipient. Strip away that connotation and read it as showing respect for one’s audience, and only the mockery of the musician remains (*Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, Vol. III, p. 793).

Uyghur translation: *baʃqilar uni qandaq tʃyʃɛnsun? «eʃɛkniŋ quliqiʁa rawab tʃeliʃ» degɛn søzdɛ dujʃjaŋni mɛsxirɛ qiliʃ menisi bar. ɛgɛr biz bu menisini tʃiqiriwetip, uniŋ orniʁa dujʃjaŋʁa hørmɛt qiliʃ menisini kirgyzsɛk, rawab tʃalʁutʃini mɛsxirɛ qiliʃ menisila qalidu* (*Maw Zeduŋ Tallanma Esɛrliri*, Vol. III, p. 84).

The Chinese idiom “playing the lute to a cow” operates on the metaphor of mismatch: sophisticated communication directed at recipients incapable of comprehension. The classical Chinese instrument “lute” lacks widespread cognitive grounding in oasis-ecosystem contexts. The translator implements two-synchronized transplantation: the musical instrument “lute” is substituted for *rawab* (rawap), a iconic local stringed instrument; the addressee “cow” is replaced by *eʃɛk* (donkey), a draft animal pervasive in local agrarian labor. The composite imagery “playing rawap to a donkey” eliminates cognitive barriers caused by artefactual-ecological divergence, seamlessly embedding the serious work-philosophy “respect your audience and know whom you address” within local rural lived imaginaries.

4.4 Embodied-Cognitive Attenuation: Cognitive Mitigation in Service of Political Rationality

Where source-text metaphors are overly intricate, risk interpretive distortion, or where core propositional information resides outside metaphorical imagery itself, translators adopt embodied-cognitive attenuation: metaphorical imagery is stripped away and core semantics foregrounded, safeguarding communicative efficiency of political literature.

Example 8

Source text: Fortunately many comrades in Yan’an have published detailed articles, so let my sketchy notes serve merely as the opening gongs and drums (*Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, Vol. II, p. 623).

Uyghur translation: *helimu jaxʃi, jɛn’ɛndiki burʁun joldaʃlarniŋ bu toʁrida tɛpsilij maqaliliri bar, meniŋ bu jyzɛ nɛrsɛm peqɛt bir muqɛddimɛ bolup qalsun* (*Maw Zeduŋ Tallanma Esɛrliri*, Vol. II, p. 608).

The source-text “opening gongs and drums” derives from Chinese opera tradition, blending temporal (“prelude”) and auditory (“fanfare”) composite imagery. Target-language audiences might lack cultural familiarity with this trope; its colloquial flavour could also clash stylistically within solemn political texts. Accordingly, the translation abstracts away rhetorical imagery, rendering it *muqɛddimɛ* (“prelude, introduction”), retaining only its core temporal-precedence meaning. This strategy reduces cultural-interpretive burden and rules out stylistic incongruities that would distract from core political semantics.

Example 9

Source text: When I was a student returning to my home village, I saw peasants opposing “foreign-style schools”. Back then I shared the same breath with ordinary “foreign-educated students” and “foreign-style teachers” … (*Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, Vol. I, pp. 39-40)

Uyghur translation: *mɛn ilgiri oquʁutʃi waqtimda, jeziʁa qajtip dehqanlarniŋ «ɛdʒnɛbijtʃɛ mɛktɛp»lɛrgɛ qarʃi tʃiqqanliqini køgɛndɛ, mɛnmu bir qisim «ɛdʒnɛbijtʃɛ mɛktɛp oquʁutʃiliri» wɛ «ɛdʒnɛbijtʃɛ mɛktɛp oqutqutʃiliri» bilɛn hɛmnɛpɛs bolup……* (*Maw Zeduŋ Tallanma Esɛrliri*, Vol. I, p. 79)

The idiom “share one nostril for breathing” is a hyperbolic folk trope mapping “identical political stances” onto the physiological fantasy “sharing respiratory organs”. Literal rendering would introduce vulgar bodily connotations, degrading stylistic register in formal political writing. The translation employs formal political written expression *hɛmnɛpɛs* (“sharing one breath, of one mind”). It preserves the core embodied-cognitive link centered on *nɛpɛs* (breath) yet removes the coarse anatomical “nostril” image, achieving smooth stylistic transition from colloquial sarcasm to solemn political prose.

Example 10

Source text: Meanwhile Italy, Romania, Hungary and other countries would day-by-day grow alienated in the pessimistic mood generated by Hitler’s having reached the end of his tether (*Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, Vol. III, p. 843).

Uyghur translation: *italijɛ, rominijɛ, wengrijɛ døletliri bolsa gitlerniŋ halakiti muqɛrrɛlliʃip qalʁan mundaq bir ymidsizlik kepijatta kyndin kyngɛ uningdin jiraqliʃidu* (*Maw Zeduŋ Tallanma Esɛrliri*, Vol. III, p. 175).

Expressions “having reached the end of his tether” and “grow alienated in heart and loyalty” draw on traditional Chinese political-philosophical conceptual networks encompassing *shi* (historical momentum), *xin* (political allegiance) and *de* (political ethics). Retaining such philosophically-laden lexical density when analyzing fast-shifting World-War-II wartime situations risks cognitive overload for target-language readers. The translation therefore implements factual dimensional-reduction attenuation: abstract flux of “momentum fading away” is re-formulated as objective fact *halakiti muqɛrrɛlliʃip* (“doom is sealed”); abstract ethical-psychological “alienation of hearts and loyalties” is transformed into intuitive spatial topology *jiraqliʃidu* (“drift apart, grow distant”). This mitigates source-text philosophical weight while prioritizing clarity of political judgment and fidelity of

military-strategic information transfer.

5. Conclusion

Cross-lingual metaphor transfer in political-literature translation essentially consists in docking, negotiation and reorganization of embodied-cognitive experiences across ethnic groups. Adopting the Embodied-Cognitive Translation Studies framework, this paper systematically investigates political metaphors in the Uyghur translation of *Selected Works of Mao Zedong* (Volumes I-IV). Findings indicate that translators transcend the binary literal-versus-free-translation dichotomy. Four dominant strategies—embodied-cognitive equivalence, embodied-cognitive reconstruction, embodied-cognitive transplantation and embodied-cognitive attenuation—are deployed, forming a continuum ranging from source-domain retention to cognitive attenuation.

When Chinese and Uyghur speakers draw on similar bodily experiences and core cognitive schemas, translators favour embodied equivalence to retain the original metaphor. Moderate divergences in ecological experience that do not impede understanding call for embodied reconstruction to adjust source imagery. Where the source metaphor's cultural background is unavailable to target audiences, embodied transplantation brings in locally familiar references for better equivalence. If complex metaphors obscure political meaning, embodied attenuation prioritises the core propositional content.

These four strategies reveal that political-metaphor translation is far more than linguistic replacement. It is a dynamic choice bounded by embodiment and cognition. Such rendering raises target readers' acceptance of political concepts, and the framework provides useful guidance for translating political writings.

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