

# A Cognitive Approach to Translating Conceptual Metaphors in Legal languages

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Conceptual metaphor refers to the understanding of one abstract idea (the target domain) in terms of another concrete one (the source domain). The attributes of source domain are systemically mapped onto the target domain. According to Zoltán Kövecses (2005), universal bodily experience produces universal primary metaphors, while variation in metaphors is as common as university in metaphors because of differential experience and differential cognitive preferences and styles. Thus, in the process of doing metaphor translation, not all individual manifestations of a conceptual metaphor in a source language(SL) are explained in the target language (TL) by using the same cognitive domain.

Mandelblit (1995) proposes “Cognitive Translation Hypothesis”, in which he proposes two schemes of cognitive mapping conditions, i.e. Similar Mapping Condition and Different Mapping Condition. This paper discusses translation of conceptual metaphors with reference to these two mappings. And it is intended to examine the universality and variation of conceptual metaphors in legal languages, i.e. English and Chinese. We conducted a 2 (mapping condition: similar /different) x 3(conceptual metaphor type: structural /orientational/ontological) within-- subjects repeated--measure ANOVA for the response time (RTs) and error rates, respectively. This design yielded six experimental conditions. A total of 120 English sentences were selected from legal English texts as source data with 20 sentences for each experimental condition. Fifty Chinese-English subjects who majored in English and took legal English translation as a compulsory course were recruited to participate in the experiment. Subjects were required to make verbal translation of the critical word in the English sentence. Response time (RTs) and accuracies were collected by using E-prime 2.0 and Serial Response Box (SRBox, model 200a, Psychology Software Tools Inc., Pittsburgh, PA, USA). We hypothesized that translation would be faster in similar mapping condition than in different mapping condition independent of conceptual metaphor type. The findings will provide evidence in favor of Cognitive Translation Hypothesis in legal context.

## References

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