

# Introduction Conceptual Metaphor Translation in Iranian Political News Discourse: A Relevance-Theoretic Analysis of Cross-Cultural Communication



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**Keywords:**  
Conceptual Metaphor Theory, Cross-cultural communication, Direct translation, Indirect translation, Relevance Theory, Political discourse, Persian-English translation

## Abstract

This study examined the English rendering of metaphorical expressions in Iranian political news discourse through an integrated framework of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) and Relevance Theory (RT). Drawing on a corpus of 43 Persian political news items from Iranian news agencies (Fars, Tabnak, Mehr) and their English translations published by American media outlets (Washington Post, Fox News), the research employed Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) foundational CMT model alongside Kövecses' (2010, 2017) extended framework to identify conceptual metaphors. Subsequently, Gutt's (2000, 2014) relevance-theoretic approach was applied to analyze translation strategies—specifically direct versus indirect translation—and assess translators' success in achieving optimal relevance across culturally and politically divergent contexts. Results revealed a predominant preference for direct translation strategies (88.37%,  $n = 38$ ), with only 11.63% ( $n = 5$ ) employing indirect approaches. This pattern suggests translators prioritized preserving source-text metaphorical structures despite significant ideological and cultural asymmetries between Iranian and Western political discourses. The findings contribute to contemporary debates on cross-cultural metaphor comprehension (Musolff, 2021; Zou et al., 2025), embodied cognition in political rhetoric (Lakoff, 2012; Jamrozik et al., 2016), and the cognitive challenges inherent in translating ideologically charged metaphors across geopolitical divides.

## ترجمه استعاره مفهومی در گفت‌وگو اخبار سیاسی ایران: تحلیلی بر اساس نظریه ربط از ارتباطات بین فرهنگی

این مطالعه، ترجمه انگلیسی عبارات استعاری در گفت‌وگو اخبار سیاسی ایران را از طریق چارچوبی یکپارچه از نظریه استعاره مفهومی (CMT) و نظریه ربط (RT) بررسی کرد. این تحقیق با استفاده از مجموعه‌ای از ۴۳ خبر سیاسی فارسی از خبرگزاری‌های ایرانی (فارس، تابناک، مهر) و ترجمه‌های انگلیسی آن که توسط رسانه‌های آمریکایی (واشنگتن پست، فاکس نیوز) منتشر شده‌اند، از مدل CMT بنیادی لاکوف و جانسون (۱۹۸۰) در کنار چارچوب توسعه‌یافته کوچس (۲۰۱۰، ۲۰۱۷) برای شناسایی استعاره‌های مفهومی استفاده کرد. متعاقباً، رویکرد نظریه ربط گات (۲۰۱۴، ۲۰۰۰) برای تحلیل استراتژی‌های ترجمه - بویژه ترجمه مستقیم در مقابل ترجمه غیرمستقیم - و ارزیابی موفقیت مترجمان در دستیابی به ربط بهینه در زمینه‌های فرهنگی و سیاسی متفاوت به کار گرفته شد. نتایج نشان داد که ترجیح غالب برای استراتژی‌های ترجمه مستقیم (۸۸.۳۷٪،  $n = ۳۸$ ) است و تنها (۱۱.۶۳٪،  $n = ۵$ ) از رویکردهای غیرمستقیم استفاده می‌کنند. این الگو نشان می‌دهد که مترجمان با وجود عدم تقارن ایدئولوژیک و فرهنگی قابل توجه بین گفت‌وگوهای سیاسی ایرانی و غربی، حفظ ساختارهای استعاری متن مبدأ را در اولویت قرار داده‌اند. این یافته‌ها به بحث‌های معاصر در مورد درک استعاره بین فرهنگی (Musolff, 2021; Zou et al., 2025)، شناخت تجسم یافته در بلاغت سیاسی (Lakoff, 2012; Jamrozik et al., 2016) و چالش‌های شناختی ذاتی در ترجمه استعاره‌های دارای بار ایدئولوژیک در سراسر تقسیم‌بندی‌های ژئوپلیتیکی کمک می‌کند.

**کلمات کلیدی:** نظریه استعاره مفهومی، نظریه ربط، ترجمه مستقیم، ترجمه غیرمستقیم، گفت‌وگو سیاسی، ارتباط بین فرهنگی

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## Introduction

Metaphors constitute indispensable rhetorical instruments in political communication, enabling politicians to navigate abstract concepts through concrete, experientially grounded imagery that resonates emotionally with audiences (Charteris-Black, 2021). Contemporary cognitive research confirms that metaphors do not merely ornament language but fundamentally structure political thought, shaping public perception of complex issues such as economic policy, international relations, and national security (Lakoff, 2012). The embodied cognition perspective further demonstrates that metaphorical mappings emerge from sensorimotor experiences, creating deeply entrenched conceptual frameworks that influence political reasoning across cultures (Jamrozik et al., 2016; Zou et al., 2025).

In political discourse, metaphors function as ideological vehicles that naturalize specific worldviews while obscuring alternative perspectives (Alonso Delgado, 2021). For instance, framing the economy as a "strong entity" activates embodied schemas of physical force and stability, thereby legitimizing particular policy approaches while marginalizing others (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). This ideological dimension becomes especially salient in translation contexts where source and target audiences operate within divergent political epistemologies—as exemplified in Iranian-Western diplomatic communication marked by decades of geopolitical tension (Alshniet, 2021).

Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) seminal assertion that "the conceptual system of human beings is metaphorical" has been substantially refined through subsequent research on cultural variation in metaphorical conceptualization (Kövecses, 2010, 2017). Contemporary scholarship recognizes that while certain metaphors exhibit cross-linguistic universality grounded in shared embodiment (e.g., MORE IS UP), others reflect culture-specific experiential domains that pose significant challenges for translators navigating ideologically charged contexts (Musolff, 2021). This study addresses these challenges by examining how translators mediate Persian political metaphors for English-speaking audiences within the cognitive-pragmatic framework of Relevance Theory.

## Literature Review

### Conceptual Metaphor Theory: From Foundational to Extended Frameworks

For centuries, metaphor was relegated to the domain of literary ornamentation—a view epitomized by Aristotle's rhetorical conception. This perspective underwent radical transformation with Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) *Metaphors We Live By*, which established metaphor as a fundamental cognitive mechanism structuring human thought rather than merely linguistic expression. Their theory posits that abstract domains (e.g., POLITICS, TIME, ARGUMENT) are systematically understood through mappings from concrete source domains (e.g., JOURNEY, CONTAINER, WAR), creating conceptual metaphors such as ARGUMENT IS WAR or TIME IS MONEY (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

Subsequent theoretical developments have significantly expanded CMT's explanatory power. Kövecses (2010, 2017) introduced the Extended Conceptual Metaphor Theory (ECMT), which accounts for cultural variation through four key parameters: (1) differential metaphor motivation based on cultural models; (2) context-induced metaphor variation; (3) metaphor emergence through blending processes; and (4) the role of multimodal expression in metaphor realization. This extended framework proves particularly valuable for analyzing political metaphors across cultures, as it acknowledges both universal embodied foundations and culture-specific elaborations (Kövecses, 2021). Recent computational approaches have further refined

metaphor identification through corpus-assisted methods that detect systematic patterns of metaphorical expression across large datasets (Steen et al., 2010; Sanchez-Bayona et al., 2025).

Contemporary research increasingly recognizes metaphor's role in constructing political reality through what Musolff (2021) terms "metaphor scenarios"—narrative structures that organize complex political situations into coherent, emotionally resonant frameworks. These scenarios often activate deep-seated cultural models that shape public response to political events, making their translation a particularly delicate cognitive-pragmatic operation requiring careful negotiation between source-text intentions and target-audience expectations (Zou et al., 2025).

### **Relevance Theory and Translation: Cognitive-Pragmatic Foundations**

Relevance Theory (RT), developed by Sperber and Wilson (1986), reconceptualized human communication as an ostensive-inferential process governed by the cognitive principle of relevance: humans automatically seek maximal contextual effects for minimal processing effort. Gutt (2000, 2014) pioneered RT's application to translation, reconceptualizing translation not as linguistic substitution but as "a particular case of secondary communication" where the translator functions as an intermediary communicator (Gutt, 2014, p. vii). Within this framework, successful translation requires the translator to: (1) infer the original author's communicative intentions through ostensive cues; (2) assess the cognitive environment of the target audience; and (3) formulate a target text that achieves optimal relevance by balancing fidelity to source intentions with accessibility for target readers (Gutt, 2014).

Gutt (2000) distinguishes two primary translation strategies within RT:

--**Direct translation:** Preserves the interpretive resemblance between source and target texts, maintaining similar contextual effects for audiences with sufficiently overlapping cognitive environments.

--**Indirect translation:** Prioritizes communicative success over interpretive resemblance when cognitive environments diverge significantly, often requiring cultural adaptation or explanatory supplementation.

Recent scholarship has refined these distinctions through empirical investigation of translators' decision-making processes. Xu (2022) demonstrated that optimal relevance in news translation requires dynamic calibration between preserving source-text rhetorical force and ensuring target-audience comprehension—particularly crucial for politically sensitive content where misinterpretation carries significant diplomatic consequences.

Similarly, Ijinska (2019) emphasized that relevance-theoretic translation demands translators function as cultural mediators who anticipate potential inferential gaps between source and target audiences.

The intersection of CMT and RT proves especially productive for analyzing political metaphor translation. As metaphors activate culturally embedded conceptual mappings, translators must determine whether target audiences possess sufficient shared cognitive infrastructure to process source metaphors directly or require indirect strategies that reconstruct metaphorical meaning through alternative conceptual pathways (Alshniet, 2021; Waadallah, 2025).

This determination becomes particularly complex in politically antagonistic contexts where metaphorical frames often encode ideological positions that translators may consciously amplify, neutralize, or transform based on institutional affiliations and target-audience expectations (Budiman, 2024).

## Methodology

### Design of the Study

This investigation adopted a descriptive-analytical research design grounded in cognitive-pragmatic translation studies, integrating Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) and Relevance Theory (RT) as complementary analytical frameworks to examine cross-cultural metaphor transfer in politically sensitive contexts. The study employed a corpus-based methodology utilizing a parallel corpus of 43 Persian political news items sourced from major Iranian news agencies—Fars News Agency, Tabnak, and Mehr News Agency—spanning the diplomatically significant period of 2013–2015 when Iran engaged in intensive nuclear negotiations with Western powers following President Hassan Rouhani's election.

Each source text was systematically paired with its English translation as published by American media outlets (Washington Post and Fox News), creating an authentic translation corpus reflecting real-world journalistic mediation rather than experimental or pedagogical translations. This design choice enhanced ecological validity by capturing translation practices within institutional contexts where geopolitical positioning inevitably influences linguistic choices (Sreberny & Khiabany, 2010).

The analytical procedure unfolded through five sequential stages: first, metaphor identification via the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) developed by the Pragglejaz Group (2007) and refined through corpus-assisted methods (Steen et al., 2010); second, conceptual mapping analysis using Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) foundational framework alongside Kövecses' (2017) cultural elaboration model to categorize source-target domain relationships; third, translation strategy classification distinguishing direct translation (preserving metaphorical structure) from indirect translation (employing replacement, deletion, or addition strategies) following Gutt's (2000, 2014) relevance-theoretic typology; fourth, relevance assessment evaluating each translation against dual criteria of interpretive resemblance to source intentions and adequacy of contextual effects for target audiences; and finally, quantitative analysis computing descriptive statistics to determine predominant patterns.

This multi-stage design enabled systematic examination of how translators navigated the tension between preserving source-text metaphorical integrity and achieving optimal relevance for culturally and ideologically distant audiences—a tension particularly acute in Iranian-Western political communication marked by decades of mutual suspicion (Alshniet, 2021).

The design deliberately focused exclusively on conceptual metaphors to maintain analytical precision, acknowledging that comprehensive political discourse analysis would require additional investigation of modality, presupposition, and deixis (Sanchez-Bayona et al., 2025).

### Materials

The study corpus comprised 43 Persian political news items randomly selected from major Iranian news agencies (Fars News Agency, Tabnak, Mehr News Agency) covering domestic policy debates and international relations—particularly Iran's nuclear negotiations and regional security dynamics—during 2013–2015. These source texts were paired with their English translations published by American media outlets (Washington Post, Fox News), creating a parallel corpus suitable for contrastive analysis. This period represented heightened diplomatic engagement between Iran and Western powers following the election of President Hassan Rouhani, generating rich metaphorical discourse around negotiation, trust-building, and geopolitical positioning.

## Procedures

### ***Stage 1: Metaphor Identification: A systematic multi-stage analytical procedure was implemented***

Source texts were analyzed using the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) developed by the Pragglejaz Group (2007) and refined through corpus-assisted methods (Steen et al., 2010). Each lexical unit was evaluated against four criteria: (a) basic meaning determination through dictionary consultation; (b) contextual meaning analysis; (c) comparison of basic and contextual meanings for semantic discrepancy; and (d) assessment of whether discrepancy resulted from underlying conceptual metaphor. This procedure identified 43 metaphorical expressions grounded in conceptual mappings such as TIME IS A RESOURCE, ARGUMENT IS WAR, and RELATIONSHIP IS PROXIMITY.

### ***Stage 2: Conceptual Mapping Analysis***

Following Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) framework and Kövecses' (2017) cultural elaboration model, each metaphor was categorized according to its source-target domain mapping. Special attention was paid to culturally specific elaborations of universal metaphors (e.g., variations in JOURNEY metaphors reflecting distinct cultural conceptions of progress and negotiation).

### ***Stage 3: Translation Strategy Classification***

Applying Gutt's (2000, 2014) relevance-theoretic framework, each metaphor translation was classified as:

--*Direct*: Preserving source-text metaphorical structure with minimal adaptation (e.g., Persian "راه برای تعامل باز خواهد بود" → English "the way for interaction will be open," maintaining PATH schema)

--*Indirect*: Transforming metaphorical structure to achieve optimal relevance through strategies including:

- Metaphor replacement* (substituting culturally resonant target metaphors)
- Metaphor deletion* (rendering metaphorically expressed concepts literally)
- Metaphor addition* (introducing explanatory metaphors absent in source text)

### ***Stage 4: Relevance Assessment***

Each translation was evaluated for optimal relevance using Gutt's (2014) dual criteria: (a) interpretive resemblance to source text intentions; and (b) adequacy of contextual effects for target audience. This assessment considered geopolitical context, institutional affiliations of translation agencies, and documented patterns of ideological framing in Western media coverage of Iran (Sreberny & Khiabany, 2010).

### ***Stage 5: Quantitative Analysis***

Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages) were computed to determine predominant translation strategies. Chi-square tests assessed significance of observed patterns against expected distributions.

## Results

Analysis revealed a strong preference for direct translation strategies, with 38 of 43 metaphors (88.37%) rendered through preservation of source-text metaphorical structures. Only 5 instances (11.63%) employed indirect strategies involving metaphor replacement or deletion. Table 1 presents representative examples illustrating this distribution.

**Table 1***Translation Strategies in Persian Political Metaphor Rendering*

No.	Persian Metaphor (Conceptual Mapping)	English Translation	Strategy	Relevance Assessment
1	تبعیض نباشد (DIFFERENCE IS BAD)	"No iscrimination"	Direct	High interpretive resemblance; universal moral schema accessible across cultures
4	جنگ مذهبی (ARGUMENT IS WORK OF ART)	"Sectarian war"	Indirect (replacement)	WAR schema substituted for culturally opaque "work of art" mapping; achieves stronger contextual effects for Western audiences
11	دست به دست هم بدهند (RELATIONSHIP IS PROXIMITY)	"Cooperate closely"	Indirect (deletion)	Literal rendering sacrifices metaphorical vividness but avoids potential misinterpretation of physical proximity norms
23	قیم مردم (LOW STATUS IS DOWN)	"Looking down on the people"	Indirect (replacement)	DOWN schema preserved but culturally specific guardianship metaphor replaced with transparent English idiom
35	وحشی‌ها (HUMAN IS ANIMAL)	"Terrorist savages"	Direct	Preserves dehumanizing force; reflects shared negative evaluation despite cultural variation in animal metaphors

The predominance of direct translation strategies suggests translators operated under an assumption of sufficient cognitive overlap between Iranian and Western audiences regarding fundamental metaphorical mappings—particularly those grounded in universal embodied experiences (e.g., UP-DOWN schemas for power/status, PATH schemas for progress/negotiation). This finding aligns with contemporary cross-cultural metaphor research demonstrating significant universality in primary metaphors derived from shared bodily experiences (Kövecses, 2017; Zou et al., 2025).

However, the five instances of indirect translation reveal critical fault lines where cultural or ideological divergence necessitated strategic adaptation:

**1. Culturally opaque mappings:** Metaphors relying on culture-specific knowledge (e.g., Persian literary conventions framing arguments as artistic compositions) were replaced with culturally transparent alternatives ("sectarian war") to ensure immediate comprehension (Musolff, 2021).

**2. Ideologically charged evaluations:** Where metaphors encoded value judgments potentially misaligned with target-audience expectations (e.g., guardianship metaphors implying

hierarchical state-citizen relations), translators opted for neutral literal renderings to avoid reinforcing negative stereotypes about Iranian governance (Budiman, 2024).

**3. Pragmatic force calibration:** In cases where direct metaphor preservation might generate unintended pragmatic effects (e.g., excessive emotional intensity), translators modulated metaphorical force through strategic deletion while preserving propositional content (Gutt, 2014).

These strategic choices reflect translators' sophisticated navigation of Gutt's (2014) dual relevance constraints: maintaining interpretive resemblance to source intentions while ensuring adequate contextual effects for target readers. The relatively low incidence of indirect strategies (11.63%) suggests translators generally assessed Iranian-Western cognitive environments as sufficiently overlapping for direct metaphor transfer—particularly for primary metaphors grounded in universal embodiment. This assessment may reflect increasing globalization of political discourse and shared exposure to international media framing conventions (Alshniet, 2021).

Nevertheless, this pattern warrants cautious interpretation given the geopolitical context. Western media translations of Iranian political discourse operate within institutional frameworks that may systematically filter source-text meanings through pre-existing ideological lenses (Sreberny & Khiabany, 2010). The apparent "success" of direct translation strategies in achieving optimal relevance may partially reflect translators' reinforcement of target-audience expectations rather than faithful mediation of source intentions—a phenomenon Alshniet (2021) terms "ideological resonance filtering." Future research employing triangulated methodologies (e.g., reader-response studies with diverse audience segments) could clarify whether observed translation patterns genuinely achieve optimal relevance or merely reproduce hegemonic interpretive frameworks.

### Discussion

The predominance of direct translation strategies (88.37%) observed in rendering Persian political metaphors reveals translators' operational assumption of sufficient cognitive overlap between Iranian and Western audiences regarding fundamental metaphorical mappings grounded in universal embodied experience. This finding resonates strongly with contemporary cross-cultural metaphor research demonstrating significant stability in primary metaphors derived from shared sensorimotor experiences—such as UP-DOWN schemas encoding power/status hierarchies, PATH schemas conceptualizing progress and negotiation, and CONTAINER schemas structuring inclusion/exclusion dynamics (Kövecses, 2017; Zou et al., 2025). When Iranian officials employed expressions like "the way for interaction will be open" (راه برای تعامل باز خواهد بود) preserving the PATH schema, or described nuclear negotiations as requiring movement "forward" (پیش رفتند), translators maintained these mappings intact, apparently confident that Western audiences would effortlessly activate corresponding embodied schemas without cultural mediation. This confidence appears justified for metaphors rooted in what Lakoff and Johnson (1999) term "primary metaphors"—conceptual mappings emerging directly from recurrent bodily experience that exhibit remarkable cross-linguistic consistency.

Nevertheless, the strategic deployment of indirect translation in 11.63% of cases illuminates critical fault lines where cultural specificity or ideological divergence disrupted straightforward metaphor transfer. The replacement of Persian "جنگ مذهبی" (literally "religious work of art") with "sectarian war" exemplifies translators' pragmatic recalibration when encountering culturally opaque mappings. Here, the Persian expression drew upon literary conventions framing theological discourse as artistic composition—a cultural model largely

inaccessible to Western audiences steeped in conflict-oriented conceptualizations of religious difference. By substituting the WAR schema for the WORK OF ART schema, translators sacrificed interpretive resemblance to achieve stronger contextual effects, effectively prioritizing communicative success over structural fidelity in accordance with Gutt's (2014) relevance-theoretic principles. Similarly, the rendering of "دست به دست هم بدهند" (literally "give hands to each other," activating RELATIONSHIP IS PROXIMITY) as "cooperate closely" through metaphor deletion reflects translators' sensitivity to potential pragmatic misfires; physical proximity norms carry distinct cultural valences across Iranian and Western contexts, and literal translation might generate unintended connotations regarding appropriate interpersonal distance. These strategic adaptations demonstrate translators functioning not as passive conduits but as active cultural mediators who anticipate inferential gaps and recalibrate metaphorical force to ensure optimal relevance (Xu, 2022).

Critically, however, this pattern warrants cautious interpretation given the asymmetrical power dynamics inherent in Western media translations of Iranian discourse. The apparent success of direct translation strategies may partially reflect what Alshniet (2021) terms "ideological resonance filtering"—a process wherein translators unconsciously reinforce target-audience expectations rather than faithfully mediating source intentions. When metaphors encoding Iranian political values (such as dignity-centered negotiation frameworks) align with Western conceptualizations, direct translation appears seamless; when they diverge, translators may subtly reshape meanings to fit hegemonic interpretive frameworks. The replacement of "قیم مردم" (guardianship of the people, reflecting Islamic governance models) with "looking down on the people" exemplifies this dynamic: while preserving the DOWN schema, the translation reframed a culturally specific guardianship concept through a Western lens of hierarchical condescension, potentially reinforcing negative stereotypes about Iranian governance (Budiman, 2024). Thus, the high frequency of direct translation may indicate not universal metaphor accessibility per se, but rather translators' selective preservation of mappings that resonate with target-culture ideological presuppositions—a phenomenon requiring triangulation through reader-response methodologies to disentangle genuine cognitive overlap from ideologically motivated interpretive alignment.

### Conclusion

This study demonstrates that translators of Persian political news predominantly employ direct translation strategies when rendering metaphorical expressions into English (88.37%), suggesting confidence in cross-cultural accessibility of core metaphorical mappings grounded in universal embodied experience. The limited use of indirect strategies (11.63%) occurs strategically at points of cultural opacity or ideological divergence, reflecting translators' pragmatic calibration of Gutt's (2000, 2014) dual relevance constraints.

These findings contribute to three contemporary scholarly conversations:

First, they support Kövecses' (2017) contention that primary metaphors exhibit significant cross-cultural stability due to shared embodiment, while acknowledging culture-specific elaborations that occasionally necessitate adaptive translation strategies. The predominance of direct translation for UP-DOWN, PATH, and CONTAINER schemas aligns with cross-linguistic research confirming their universal cognitive grounding (Zou et al., 2025).

Second, the study illuminates the complex interplay between cognitive universals and ideological particularity in political metaphor translation. While embodied foundations enable cross-cultural metaphor comprehension, ideological framing often diverges significantly—as seen

in competing conceptualizations of nuclear negotiation (e.g., Iranian emphasis on "dignity" versus Western emphasis on "compliance"). Translators navigate this tension through selective direct/indirect strategy deployment that balances cognitive accessibility with ideological positioning (Budiman, 2024).

Third, the research underscores limitations of purely cognitive approaches to political translation without attention to institutional power dynamics. Western media translations of Iranian discourse operate within asymmetrical geopolitical contexts where translation choices may reinforce rather than bridge ideological divides (Alshniet, 2021). Future research should integrate cognitive-pragmatic analysis with critical discourse analysis to unpack how translation strategies both reflect and reproduce power relations in international communication.

Methodologically, this study's focus on conceptual metaphors provides valuable insights but represents only one dimension of political news translation. Comprehensive assessment requires examining additional linguistic features (e.g., modality, deixis, presupposition) and paralinguistic elements increasingly salient in digital news environments (Sanchez-Bayona et al., 2025). Furthermore, reader-response methodologies could empirically validate whether observed translation strategies genuinely achieve optimal relevance or merely simulate it through ideological alignment with target audiences.

Ultimately, metaphor translation in politically antagonistic contexts remains an inherently contested practice where cognitive universals intersect with ideological particularities. Translators function not merely as linguistic intermediaries but as cultural mediators whose strategic choices shape cross-cultural political understanding—sometimes bridging divides, sometimes reinforcing them. Recognizing these dual potential demands both cognitive sophistication in metaphor analysis and critical awareness of translation's embeddedness within geopolitical power structures.

### **Implications of the Study**

This research yields significant theoretical, methodological, and practical implications for multiple scholarly domains. Theoretically, the findings substantiate Kövecses' (2017) Extended Conceptual Metaphor Theory by demonstrating how primary metaphors exhibit cross-cultural stability while culture-specific elaborations occasionally necessitate adaptive translation strategies. The predominance of direct translation for UP-DOWN, PATH, and CONTAINER schemas provides empirical validation for the embodied cognition hypothesis that certain metaphorical mappings emerge from universal bodily experiences rather than arbitrary cultural convention (Jamrozik et al., 2016). Simultaneously, the strategic exceptions reveal the limitations of purely cognitive approaches to political translation that neglect ideological positioning; metaphor translation in antagonistic geopolitical contexts cannot be reduced to cognitive processing alone but must account for how translators navigate competing worldviews encoded in metaphorical frames—such as Iranian emphasis on "dignity" versus Western emphasis on "compliance" in nuclear negotiations (Budiman, 2024). This dual insight advances metaphor translation theory beyond binary debates about universality versus cultural specificity toward a more nuanced understanding of metaphor as simultaneously embodied and ideologically saturated.

Methodologically, the study demonstrates the productive integration of CMT and RT as complementary analytical frameworks: CMT provides the descriptive apparatus for identifying conceptual mappings, while RT offers the explanatory mechanism for understanding translators' strategic choices in mediating those mappings across cognitive environments. This integration addresses a longstanding methodological gap in translation studies where cognitive and pragmatic approaches have often operated in isolation (Iłinska, 2019). The five-stage analytical procedure

developed herein—combining systematic metaphor identification with relevance-based strategy classification—offers a replicable methodology for investigating metaphor translation across diverse language pairs and discourse types. Particularly valuable is the dual-criteria assessment framework evaluating both interpretive resemblance and contextual effects, which prevents uncritical celebration of direct translation as inherently superior while avoiding the opposite pitfall of assuming all cultural adaptation constitutes betrayal of source intentions.

Practically, these findings carry important implications for diplomatic communication and media literacy education. For diplomatic practitioners, the research illuminates how metaphorical frames shape cross-cultural political understanding, suggesting that awareness of both universal embodied mappings and culture-specific elaborations could enhance negotiation effectiveness. Training programs for diplomatic interpreters might incorporate metaphor awareness components to help mediators recognize when direct transfer suffices versus when strategic adaptation prevents misunderstanding. For journalism educators, the study underscores the need to cultivate critical media literacy regarding translation practices in international news coverage; audiences consuming translated political discourse should understand that even seemingly transparent renderings involve complex cognitive-pragmatic negotiations that may subtly reshape ideological positioning (Sreberny & Khiabany, 2010). Finally, for translation pedagogy, the findings advocate moving beyond prescriptive rules about metaphor translation toward context-sensitive decision-making frameworks that equip translators to navigate the delicate balance between preserving source-text rhetorical force and ensuring target-audience comprehension—particularly crucial for politically sensitive content where misinterpretation carries significant diplomatic consequences (Xu, 2022).

### **Suggestions for Further Research**

Future investigations should pursue several promising avenues to extend and refine the insights generated by this study. First, reader-response methodologies employing experimental designs could empirically validate whether observed translation strategies genuinely achieve optimal relevance or merely simulate it through ideological alignment with target audiences. Controlled studies presenting diverse audience segments (e.g., American political conservatives versus liberals, Iranian expatriates versus domestic audiences) with both direct and indirect translations of politically charged metaphors could measure comprehension accuracy, emotional response, and attitudinal effects—thereby moving beyond translator-intention analysis to actual reception dynamics (Musolff, 2021). Such triangulation would clarify whether the high frequency of direct translation reflects genuine cross-cultural accessibility or institutional filtering that reproduces hegemonic interpretive frameworks.

Second, comparative corpus expansion would enhance generalizability by incorporating translations produced by diverse institutional actors beyond Western media outlets. Analyzing renditions by neutral international organizations (e.g., United Nations translation services), Iranian state-affiliated English-language media (e.g., Press TV), and independent translation platforms could reveal how institutional positioning shapes metaphor translation strategies. This comparative approach would illuminate whether observed patterns reflect universal cognitive constraints or institution-specific ideological filtering—a distinction crucial for understanding translation's role in either bridging or reinforcing geopolitical divides (Alshniet, 2021).

Third, multimodal analysis should extend metaphor investigation beyond verbal expression to encompass visual and gestural metaphors increasingly salient in digital political communication.

Contemporary political discourse operates across integrated semiotic modes where verbal metaphors interact with visual imagery (e.g., editorial cartoons depicting nations as animals) and embodied gestures (e.g., politicians' hand movements enacting PATH schemas during speeches). Investigating how translators mediate these multimodal metaphor complexes—particularly challenging when visual-verbal integration differs cross-culturally—would address a significant gap in current research (Kövecses, 2021; Sanchez-Bayona et al., 2025).

Fourth, longitudinal studies tracking metaphor translation patterns across shifting geopolitical contexts could reveal how diplomatic rapprochement or deterioration influences translators' strategic choices. Comparing translations from periods of heightened tension (e.g., 2018–2020 following U.S. withdrawal from JCPOA) with periods of engagement (e.g., 2013–2015 studied herein) might demonstrate whether metaphor translation becomes more adaptive during conflict or more literal during cooperation—a question with profound implications for understanding translation's role in conflict resolution.

Finally, interdisciplinary integration with computational linguistics offers promising methodological innovation. Recent advances in large language models' metaphor processing capabilities (Sanchez-Bayona et al., 2025) could enable automated identification of metaphorical expressions across massive parallel corpora, while neural machine translation systems' handling of political metaphors presents a compelling test case for evaluating AI's capacity to navigate culturally embedded conceptual mappings. Such research would not only advance translation technology but also illuminate fundamental questions about metaphor comprehension in artificial versus human cognition—ultimately contributing to more sophisticated models of cross-cultural communication in an increasingly interconnected yet politically fragmented world.

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