



**COGNITIVE LINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE OF METAPHOR TRANSLATION
IN NORTHERN SHAANXI AND HUA'ER FOLK SONGS**

By

LIN YAN

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies,
Universiti Putra Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

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The translation and dissemination of Chinese culture has become increasingly important in the context of globalization. Northern Shaanxi and Hua'er folk songs, which represent the rich traditions of northwest China, are recognized as national intangible cultural heritage. These songs often employ "bi-xing," a technique similar to metaphor in Western literature. Lakoff and Johnson's *Metaphors We Live By* revolutionized metaphor research by introducing a cognitive perspective in which metaphor is seen as a fundamental way of thinking and understanding abstract concepts rather than just a linguistic tool.

This thesis constructs a Chinese-English parallel corpus of Northern Shaanxi and Hua'er folk songs to: 1. classify metaphors in Northern Shaanxi and Hua'er folk songs, 2. analyze translation methods of metaphors according to mapping conditions, 3. explore the factors affecting these songs' metaphor translation process. Using Charteris-Black's metaphor identification approach and Mandelblit and Toury's cognitive translation models, the study explores

the effectiveness of various metaphor translation methods in similar and different conceptual mappings.

This study identifies three main types of metaphor: orientational, ontological, and structural metaphors. Five subtypes of orientational metaphors - Up-Down, Inside-Outside, Deep-Shallow, Front-Back, and High-Low - are characterized by cultural and social contexts. Ontological metaphors, which represent abstract ideas as concrete entities, occur 215 times, while structural metaphors, which organize one concept through another, occur 511 times, with plant-related metaphors being the most common.

Five translation methods were identified: Retention of metaphor (in 75.81% of structural metaphors), omission (47.87% for ontological metaphors), replacement (67.95% for structural metaphors), partial retention (69.44% for structural metaphors), and borrowing (used sparingly). These methods reflect the cognitive and linguistic challenges of translating metaphors between cultures. 'Retention of metaphor' was most effective when the conceptualizations matched between Chinese and English, while 'omission' was more common when there were significant differences.

The study also highlights four key factors that influence the translation of metaphors, which are compared to the essential elements of a young girl from northwest China: Language, poetic structure, culture and the translator. Dialect and reduplication in the language pose a challenge, while the poetic structure and rhyme schemes emphasize the lyrical nature of the songs.

Cultural elements such as flora, fauna and marriage customs have a great influence on the translation of metaphors. Like a matchmaker, the translator must skillfully bridge the gap between the source and target languages.

This study contributes to translation theory by addressing gaps in the translation of metaphors in Chinese folk songs, proposing new methods and laying a foundation for future studies. Further research could expand the corpus and explore the role of translator styles, translation universals, and linguistic features.

Keywords: cognitive linguistic, metaphor translation, Northern Shaanxi and Hua'er folk songs

SDG: GOAL 4: Quality Education

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia
sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**PERSPEKTIF LINGUISTIK KOGNITIF TERHADAP PENTERJEMAHAN
METAFORA DALAM LAGU RAKYAT SHAANXI UTARA DAN HUA'ER**

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Penterjemahan dan penyebaran budaya Cina semakin penting dalam konteks globalisasi. Lagu-lagu rakyat Shaanxi Utara dan Hua'er, yang mewakili tradisi barat laut China yang kaya, diiktiraf sebagai warisan budaya tidak ketara negara. Lagu-lagu ini sering menggunakan teknik "*bi-xing*", yang menyerupai metafora dalam kesusasteraan Barat. Lakoff dan Johnson menerusi *Metaphors We Live By* merevolusikan kajian metafora dengan memperkenalkan perspektif kognitif yang menyaksikan metafora dilihat sebagai cara asas berfikir dan memahami konsep abstrak, dan bukannya sekadar alat linguistik.

Tesis ini membina korpus selari bahasa Cina-Inggeris bagi lagu-lagu rakyat Shaanxi Utara dan Hua'er untuk: 1. mengklasifikasikan metafora dalam lagu-lagu rakyat Shaanxi Utara dan Hua'er; 2. menganalisis kaedah penterjemahan metafora mengikut keadaan pemetaan; dan 3. meneroka faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi proses penterjemahan metafora. Kajian ini menggunakan

pendekatan pengenalan metafora oleh Charteris-Black serta model kognitif penterjemahan oleh Mandelblat dan Toury untuk menilai keberkesanan pelbagai kaedah penterjemahan metafora dalam pemetaan konseptual yang sama dan berbeza.

Kajian ini mengenal pasti tiga jenis utama metafora: metafora orientasi, ontologi, dan struktur. Lima subjenis metafora orientasi — Atas-Bawah, Dalam-Luar, Dalam-Cetek, Depan-Belakang, dan Tinggi-Rendah — dibentuk oleh konteks budaya dan sosial. Metafora ontologi, yang mewakili idea-idea abstrak sebagai entiti konkrit, muncul sebanyak 215 kali, manakala metafora struktur, yang menyusun satu konsep melalui konsep lain, berlaku sebanyak 511 kali, dengan metafora berkaitan dengan tumbuhan menjadi yang paling lazim.

Lima kaedah penterjemahan telah dikenal pasti: Pengekalan metafora (dalam 75.81% daripada metafora struktur), pengguguran (47.87% untuk metafora ontologi), penggantian (67.95% untuk metafora struktur), pengekalan sebahagian (69.44% untuk metafora struktur), dan peminjaman (digunakan secara terhad). Kaedah-kaedah ini mencerminkan cabaran kognitif dan linguistik dalam menterjemahkan metafora antara budaya. 'Pengekalan metafora' paling berkesan apabila konsep dikongsi antara bahasa Cina dengan Inggeris, manakala 'pengguguran' lebih biasa apabila terdapat perbezaan yang ketara.

Kajian ini juga menyerlahkan empat faktor utama yang mempengaruhi penterjemahan metafora, yang diumpamakan seperti elemen penting gadis muda dari barat laut China: Bahasa, struktur puisi, budaya, dan penterjemah. Dialek dan pengulangan (*reduplication*) dalam bahasa menampilkan cabaran, manakala struktur puisi dan skema rima menekankan sifat lirik lagu-lagu ini. Unsur budaya seperti flora, fauna, dan adat perkahwinan sangat mempengaruhi penterjemahan metafora. Penterjemah, seperti seorang telangkai, mesti mahir merapatkan jurang antara bahasa sumber dengan bahasa sasaran.

Kajian ini memberikan sumbangan kepada teori penterjemahan dengan menangani kelompangan dalam penterjemahan metafora menerusi lagu-lagu rakyat Cina, mencadangkan kaedah baharu dan meletakkan asas untuk kajian masa hadapan. Penyelidikan lanjut boleh memperluas korpus dan meneroka peranan gaya penterjemah, universal penterjemahan, dan ciri-ciri linguistik.

Kata Kunci: linguistik kognitif, penterjemahan metafora, lagu-lagu rakyat Shaanxi Utara dan Hua'er.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ST	Source Text
TT	Target Text
SL	Source Language
TL	Target Language
SC	Source Culture
TC	Target Culture
CMT	Conceptual Metaphor Theory
SD	Source Domain
TD	Target Domain

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“天上的星星配対对, /人人都有那干妹妹 (Overhead the stars in the sky appear in good pairs, /Man and woman must have their love affairs).”

“千人万人数上你, /尕妹是花里的牡丹 (Though thousands and tens of thousands girls in the world, /My beloved one is the prettiest peony).”

Northern Shaanxi and Hua'er folk songs

1.1 Preamble

The lines above exemplify the challenges in translating metaphors found in Northern Shaanxi and Hua'er folk songs. Traditionally, metaphors have been perceived as a rhetorical device; however, as Lakoff and Johnson (1980) have shown, metaphors are now regarded as a mode of thinking. The following quote from Davidson (1978, p. 245) sets the theme of this thesis:

“Metaphor is akin to the dreamwork of language, and, much like all dreamwork, its interpretation reflects both the interpreter and the originator.”

This chapter serves as an introductory section for the dissertation, covering essential elements such as the research background, statement of the problem, research objectives and questions, theoretical framework, conceptual framework, significance of the study, scope, and limitations of the study, definition of terms used in this research, and the overall thesis structure.

1.2 Research Background

China's accelerated economic expansion in recent times has not only bolstered its global influence but also amplified the strategic importance of promoting its cultural soft power. As a result, there is a growing interest among foreigners in learning about Chinese culture. Academic attention has progressively shifted towards Chinese folk songs, which are considered integral components of intangible cultural heritage.

Folk songs are compositions collectively created and disseminated among the populace through oral tradition, gaining widespread recognition. Due to their shared characteristics, poetry and songs were consistently discussed in ancient China, with songs regarded as "the poem that may be sung." *The Book of Songs*, dating back to the Western Zhou Dynasty and the middle of the Spring and Autumn Period, is the earliest collection of folk songs, spanning five hundred years (11th century BC-6th century BC).

Folk poetry, or folk songs, serves as the foundation of national literature and a platform for literary interchange and translation (H. Y. Wang, 2014). The translation and introduction of folk songs represent a crucial theoretical and practical aspect of disseminating Chinese classical culture globally. In recent years, there has been a growing academic interest in translating Chinese folk songs (H. Y. Wang, 2014; Zhuo, 2018). However, compared to poetry translation, Chinese folk songs from ancient and modern times have received relatively less international exposure (HASAR & Panahbar, 2017).

The translation of Chinese folk songs has undergone three significant stages: (1) During the Northern Dynasty, minority ethnic folk songs were translated into Han folk songs, which promoted ethnic integration. (2) After the establishment of the People's Republic of China, notable translators like Xue Fan translated modern foreign folk songs into Chinese, including Russian and Anglo-American folk songs, contributing to the development of international friendly relations. (3) In contemporary times, particularly in the 21st century, accomplished translators such as Stephen Owen, Anne Birrell, Wang Rongpei, Wang Hongyin, and others have translated ancient Chinese folk songs, as well as some modern folk songs, including Northern Shaanxi folk songs, into English. This has facilitated international cultural exchange (Y. Hu, 2020).

In China, folk songs exhibit distinct regional and ethnic variations, reflecting the specific cultural traits inherent to each area or ethnic group (J. Z. Zhang, 2016). According to Miao and Qiao (1987), Chinese folk songs are categorized into eleven distinct cultural zones, namely: (1) Northeastern Plain; (2) Northwestern Plain; (3) Jiang Huai Plateau (northern Jiangsu and northern Anhui); (4) Jiang Zhe Plain (southern Jiangsu, southern Anhui, Zhejiang); (5) Min Tai (Fujian and Taiwan); (6) Yue (Guangdong); (7) Jiang Han Plain (Hubei and southern Henan); (8) Xiang (Hunan); (9) Gan (Jiangxi); (10) Southwestern Plateau; and (11) Kejia (Hakka people from various places). Northern Shaanxi and Hua'er folk songs fall under the cultural zone of the Northwestern Plain. Historically, Northwest China has been characterized by a semi-agricultural

and semi-pastoral civilization. Positioned along the ancient “Silk Road,” the region has a rich legacy of cultural interactions with the West.

Northern Shaanxi folk songs encompass local songs from the region, particularly those originating in Northern Shaanxi, Yulin, and Yan’an. In June 2008, the State Council authorized the inclusion of Northern Shaanxi folk songs in the second group of the national intangible cultural treasures list. This recognition underscores their significance as cherished elements of Chinese culture and highlights their valuable contribution to international culture.

Hua’er folk songs enjoy widespread popularity among various ethnic groups in China, including the Hui, Tibetan, Yugu, Sala, Tu, Dongxiang, Han, Baoan, and Mongolian. They are particularly well-received in regions such as Gansu, Qinghai, Ningxia, and Xinjiang. Originating from Northwest China, Hua’er is often referred to as “the soul of Northwest China” and possesses distinctive regional and ethnic characteristics. Acknowledging its cultural significance, Hua’er was designated as one of the first Chinese intangible cultural heritage conservation projects in 2006. Furthermore, in 2009, it was added to the list of intangible cultural heritages requiring global conservation efforts.

Northern Shaanxi and Hua’er folk songs employ a technique known as “bi-xing,” in which the initial two lines establish the tone before delving into the central theme. The Chinese term “bi-xing” is nearly equivalent to the English word “metaphor” in the context of poetry. The Song Dynasty philosopher Zhu

Xi articulated: “*bi* means to compare one thing with another; *xing* refers to saying something else to arouse the words you actually chant.”

The study of metaphor finds its origins in Aristotle, whose works *Poetics* and *Rhetoric* regard metaphor as a crucial rhetorical tool. The book “Metaphors We Live By” by Lakoff and Johnson, published in 1980, advanced the conceptual metaphor theory. From a cognitive perspective, metaphor transcends being merely a rhetorical device; it is also a mode of thinking and a cognitive tool. A conceptual metaphor often takes the form “A is B,” involving a structural mapping from one category domain to another, typically from the “source domain” to the “target domain.”

In the realm of conceptual metaphor translation, recent attention has been directed toward the translation of metaphors in Chinese folk songs, primarily focusing on Hakka Mountain songs (Zhong & Li, 2022), Napo folk songs (X. Fu, 2020), and Northern Shaanxi folk songs (Hui, 2023; H. M. Zhang, 2021). However, a noticeable research gap exists regarding metaphor translation in Hua’er folk songs. Furthermore, the studies mentioned predominantly employ qualitative research methods.

This thesis aims to address this gap by utilizing a mixed research methodology. The approach will explore metaphor types, their translation methods, and the influential factors affecting the metaphor translation process in Northern Shaanxi and Hua’er folk songs from a cognitive linguistic perspective.

1.3 Problem Statement

In the field of translation, folk song translation has long been marginalized. This marginalization stems from several factors. Firstly, folk song translation is inherently linked to the performance of lyrics; its ephemeral nature and subordinate status result in less attention compared to written texts, which can be presented in a permanent format. Secondly, the complexities involved in translating folk songs deter many translators, as few researchers possess expertise in both translation and music theory. Lastly, there is a notable lack of scholars who have explored folk song translation theory. Consequently, this field presents significant research value and promising prospects for future translation endeavors.

In the area of Chinese folk song translation studies, a notable evolution has occurred over the past 70 years, transitioning from intralingual translation (Jian, 1962; Lan, 1986; J. Qin, 1982) to interlingual translation (X. Y. Wu & Zhou, 2013; F. L. Zhou, 2017). Currently, interlingual translation has become the focal point of research on folk song translation. Particularly over the past two decades, there has been a significant acceleration in scholarship, focusing specifically on the interlingual translation of Chinese folk songs.

Moreover, the application of corpus methodology represents a new and underexplored perspective, highlighting a significant gap in current research. Existing corpus methods have predominantly focused on audio datasets for folk music (Q. Guo, 2020; Patel et al., 2021) and cultural inquiries embedded within folk songs (X. Li, 2021). While T. X. Zhang (2010) constructed a

comprehensive corpus of Northern Shaanxi folk songs, it remains monolingual, including only Chinese texts. The only existing corpus for Chinese folk song translation was created by X. M. Zhou (2017), who selected works from Zhuang ethnic epics, folk songs, and dramas. However, this corpus is limited to a multilingual parallel collection of Zhuang ethnic scriptures.

The topic of metaphor translation in Chinese folk songs has only recently gained attention, primarily using Northern Shaanxi folk songs as a case study. Before the 1980s, translations of rhetorical devices in these songs received minimal scholarly attention (Y. Gou, 2016). Contemporary studies, such as those by L. L. Cao and Wang (2021), Che and Liu (2016), Hui (2023), and Q. Li and Hu (2010), approach metaphor translation not merely as a rhetorical concern but through a cognitive linguistic lens, aligning with Lakoff and Johnson's premise that metaphor functions as a mode of cognition rather than a mere rhetorical device.

These studies often concentrate on specific sub-types of conceptual metaphors within Northern Shaanxi folk songs, including emotional metaphors, red color metaphors (H. M. Zhang, 2021), food metaphors (Ai, 2012), and conceptual metaphors (L. L. Cao & Wang, 2021). However, there remains a scarcity of comprehensive discussions regarding the classification of metaphors in these folk songs. While some researchers have identified influential factors in the metaphor translation process—such as the varied conceptualizations of translators (Q. Li and Zhang, 2012) and the importance of prioritizing the target text reader to avoid semantic errors (W. Zhang et al.,

2018; Zhu & Gui, 2021)—these studies represent only a small segment of the overall research, indicating a pressing need for further exploration of these factors.

In contrast, research on the translation of Hua'er folk songs appears to be in its nascent stages compared to the advancements seen in Northern Shaanxi folk songs translation. Limited studies exist on the translation of Hua'er folk songs (L. Du, 2018), and this area has not garnered adequate attention from specialists (Jing, 2017). The predominant issues surrounding the translation of Hua'er folk songs involve qualitative evaluations of translation tactics (Jiang, 2016) and methods or strategies employed by researchers (J. Ma & Ma, 2022). These evaluations often draw on translation theories such as folklore (Jiang, 2018, 2019), ecological translation (Ding, 2019), translation aesthetics (Fei & Ma, 2021; X. Yang, 2019), and skopos theory (S. Li, 2021).

Furthermore, studies focusing on metaphor in Hua'er folk songs have largely centered on the analysis of specific metaphors (J. Ma, 2014), the generalization of metaphorical meanings (Jing, 2018; J. Ma & Wang, 2018), and the exploration of love metaphors (N. Ma, 2020). However, the aspect of metaphor translation remains notably under-researched in the context of Chinese folk songs.

Translation studies grounded in corpora emerged in the 1990s, offering a fresh research paradigm that prioritizes real translation data. This approach is bolstered by corpus statistical methods and high-performance computing,

allowing for efficient analysis of extensive text volumes and significantly enhancing the rigor of text analysis (M. Liu & Shao, 2015). Therefore, this thesis will utilize published collections of Northern Shaanxi and Hua'er folk songs to construct a Chinese-English parallel corpus. The objective is to explore metaphor translation in these songs from a cognitive linguistic perspective. This parallel corpus will provide both descriptive and quantitative data, facilitating a deeper understanding of metaphor translation within the context of Chinese folk songs.

1.4 Research Objectives

This thesis aims to explore metaphor translation in Northern Shaanxi and Hua'er folk songs from the perspective of cognitive linguistics, utilizing a self-built Chinese-English parallel corpus. The primary focus will be on examining metaphor classification, translation methods for these metaphors, and the influencing factors in the translation process, with the following three objectives:

- 1) To classify metaphors in Northern Shaanxi and Hua'er folk songs;
- 2) To analyze the translation methods of metaphors according to mapping conditions;
- 3) To explore the factors affecting the metaphor translation process in these songs.

1.5 Research Questions

The following three questions will be addressed in this dissertation based on the aforementioned study objectives:

- 1) What types of metaphors can be classified in Northern Shaanxi and Hua'er folk songs?
- 2) How do translators translate metaphors in Northern Shaanxi and Hua'er folk songs according to mapping conditions?
- 3) How is the translation process of metaphors in Northern Shaanxi and Hua'er folk songs affected by specific factors?

1.6 Theoretical Framework

In this study, the exploration of metaphor translation in Northern Shaanxi and Hua'er folk songs adopts a cognitive linguistics perspective grounded in three foundational theories: the conceptual metaphor theory by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), the cognitive translation hypothesis proposed by Mandelblit (1995), and Toury's (1995) metaphor translation method. Additionally, the cognitive context, as outlined by Zeng (2009), is integrated. The figure below illustrates the correlation between these theories and the research questions:

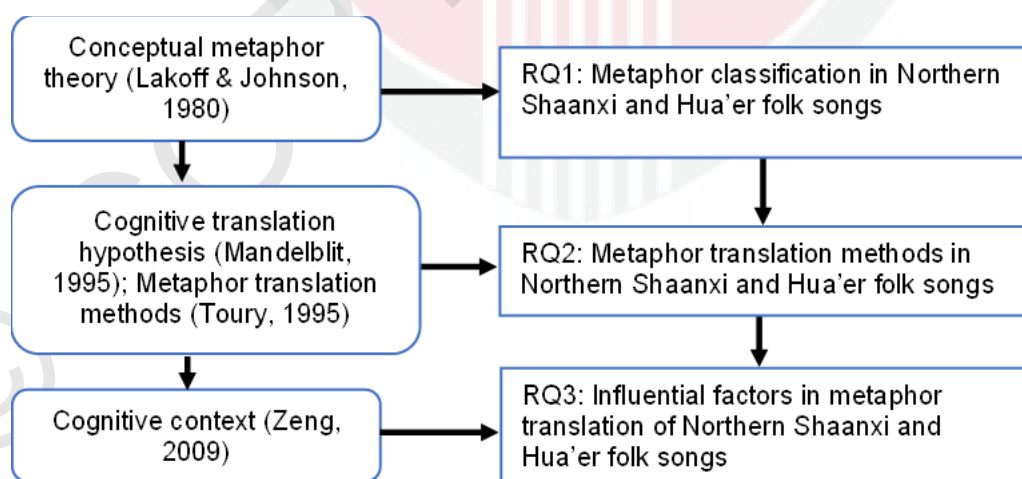


Figure 1.1 : Theoretical Framework for This Study

The forthcoming sections will introduce and delve into these theories.

1.6.1 Conceptual Metaphor Theory

The study of metaphor has evolved considerably across historical perspectives, spanning rhetoric, linguistics, and cognitive domains. Aristotle's foundational work emphasized metaphor as the substitution of one term for another to convey a similar meaning. In contemporary linguistics, the concept of "metaphor" has transcended traditional rhetorical and poetic boundaries, becoming intrinsic to thought and language.

The term "conceptual metaphor" debuted in Lakoff and Johnson's 1980 book "Metaphors We Live By." Here, metaphor is portrayed as deeply ingrained in daily speech, cognition, and behavior, shaping the conceptual framework that underlies thought and action. A pivotal shift occurred in metaphor studies about three decades ago with the advent of "conceptual metaphor theory" (CMT). Unlike earlier views that treated metaphor as solely linguistic, CMT proposed that it constitutes a fundamental aspect of human cognition. In this framework, metaphorical language emerges from established patterns of metaphorical thought or conceptual metaphors (Gibbs Jr, 2011).

In cognitive linguistics, "metaphor" signifies a conceptual framework built by mapping different domains. Metaphors help elucidate one domain of experience (the target) by drawing parallels with another (the source). Moreover, "metaphorical expressions" refer to linguistic constructs that stem from conceptualizations and align with these mappings.

The conceptual framework often employs expressions such as “TARGET DOMAIN IS SOURCE DOMAIN” or “TARGET DOMAIN AS SOURCE DOMAIN.” Mnemonics, like in the mapping LOVE IS A JOURNEY, represent a set of ontological correspondences defining this mapping. The following is an analysis for the LOVE AS JOURNEY mapping:

- The lovers correspond to travelers.
- The love relationship corresponds to the vehicle.
- The lovers’ common goals correspond to their expected destinations on the journey.

(Lakoff, 1986)

Difficulties in the relationship correspond to impediments to travel (Ortony, 1993). These correspondences are used to justify love by applying the same knowledge people use to justify travel. As mentioned earlier, a metaphor consists of the source and target domains. The target domain is typically more abstract, while the source domain is often more explicit, vivid, and easier to comprehend.

Conceptual metaphor theory offers a powerful lens for understanding how metaphors shape our thoughts and language. This theory provides a valuable framework for analyzing how these metaphors transfer between languages and cultures. This approach examines translation models and explores how these models intersect with the actual practice of translation.

Conceptual metaphors can be categorized into three groups—orientational, ontological, and structural—based on distinctions in the source domain. Below are descriptions and examples of each type of metaphor.

1.6.1.1 Orientational Metaphors

Orientational metaphors, such as “HAPPY IS UP,” infuse concepts with spatial orientation. For example, the English expression “I am feeling up today” illustrates the use of “up” to convey happiness. These metaphors juxtapose one concept with another to provide a directional sense, rather than structuring a system of concepts about each other. Primarily associated with spatial orientation, these metaphors involve terms like up-down, in-out, front-back, on-off, deep-shallow, central-peripheral, and others. These metaphorical orientations are rooted in our physical and cultural experiences, exemplified by the “HAPPY IS UP; SAD IS DOWN” concept:

- I’m feeling *up*. That *boosted* my spirits. My spirits *rose*. You’re in *high* spirits. Thinking about her always gives me a *lift*.
- I’m feeling *down*. I’m *depressed*. He’s really *low* these days. I *fell* into a depression. My spirits *sank*.

(Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 15)

These concepts are grounded in physical experiences; for instance, a slouching posture often relates to feelings of melancholy and depression, while an upright stance is associated with a happier mental state. However, different cultures exhibit diverse orientational metaphors based on opposites

like up-down, in-out, and more. For instance, in some cultures, the future might be perceived as lying ahead, while in others, it might be situated behind.

1.6.1.2 Ontological Metaphors

Individuals can isolate specific elements of their experiences and treat them as distinct entities or substances. By conceptualizing these experiences as objects or substances, they become identifiable entities that can be categorized, grouped, and quantified accordingly.

people can classify elements even when they are not inherently discrete or confined. For example, mountains, street corners, hedges, and similar entities can be distinguished for specific purposes, such as locating mountains, meeting at intersections, or pruning hedges. Most human endeavors necessitate creating imaginary borders that differentiate various physical occurrences, similar to how we perceive and organize events as beings defined by boundaries.

Ontological metaphors, which conceptualize events, activities, emotions, and ideas as substances, stem from diverse human experiences with physical objects, particularly our bodies. This parallels the way fundamental spatial orientation experiences lead to orientational metaphors. An example of an ontological metaphor is: THE MIND IS A MACHINE, where the mapping relationships between the source domain (SD) and the target domain (TD) are as follows:

- We're still trying to *grind out* the solution to this equation. My mind just isn't *operating* today.
- Boy, the *wheels* are *turning* now!
- I'm a little *rusty* today.

(Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 28)

In the MACHINE metaphor, the mind is conceptualized with attributes such as an on/off state, a productivity level, a capacity for productivity, an internal mechanism, a source of energy, and an operating condition.

1.6.1.3 Structural Metaphors

A structural metaphor is one in which two concepts are symbolically related. This type of metaphor compares the structure of one category concept to that of another. Combining two different category concepts in this way can simplify the understanding of abstract concepts for people.

Metaphors clarify highly abstract concepts or ideas by drawing parallels with real-world examples. In the conceptual framework of "ARGUMENT IS WAR," understanding an argument involves comparing it to various aspects of war, as illustrated in the examples below:

- Your claims are *indefensible*.
- He *attacked* every weak point in my argument.
- His criticisms were *right on target*.
- I *demolished* his argument.
- I've never *won* an argument with him.

- You disagree? Okay, *shoot!*
- If you use that *strategy*, he'll wipe you out.

(Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 5)

The metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR significantly influences how people debate within a specific cultural context. In these discussions, we perceive our opponent as an adversary, challenge their claims while defending our own, and strategically advance or retreat. Similarly, we develop plans and employ tactics to strengthen our argumentative positions. This metaphor shapes our approach and actions in debates, evident in the structured nature of argument attacks, defenses, and counterattacks-even when devoid of physical conflict.

In the context of "ARGUMENT IS WAR," the abstract concept of an "argument" is better understood through the more concrete and familiar concept of "war." This mapping allows us to conceptualize and discuss arguments as if they were battles or wars, complete with attacks, defenses, and winners or losers. This metaphor shapes how we understand and conduct arguments, influencing our language use, strategies in debates, and even our perceptions of winning or losing. It guides our actions and understanding when engaging in discussions or debates.

Metaphors often bridge the gap between different concepts or experiences. Although argument and warfare are distinct activities, the metaphor "ARGUMENT IS WAR" provides a conceptual framework that influences how

we perceive and discuss arguments. Despite their differences, this metaphorical structure guides both language and perception.

Conceptual metaphor theory offers a fresh perspective on metaphor translation (X. Zhang, 2012). Therefore, this theory serves as a common theoretical foundation for scholars discussing various metaphor translations. According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), metaphors permeate all aspects of life, and Northern Shaanxi and Hua'er folk songs, rooted in personal experiences, inherently embody metaphorical elements. These songs integrate metaphors and imagery from everyday elements such as flowers, trees, animals (cows, sheep, horses, and donkeys), rivers, mountains, the wind, the moon, and stars.

1.6.2 Cognitive Translation Hypothesis

In cognitive linguistics, metaphor is recognized as a cognitive phenomenon that extends beyond mere linguistic expression. The Cognitive Translation Hypothesis, proposed by Mandelblit (1995), explores metaphorical equivalence and its translatability at a conceptual level. It suggests that metaphorical phrases rooted in a cognitive domain distinct from comparable expressions in the target language require more time and present greater challenges during translation.

Mandelblit identifies a primary challenge in translating natural language as the mismatch between the metaphorical mapping systems employed in the source and target languages. When these languages use different metaphorical

mappings to convey the same idea—particularly when those mappings are conceptual rather than linguistic—translation involves not only transferring content but also shifting the underlying conceptual frameworks through which the world is perceived.

Mandelblit's observation aligns with the cognitive perspective on metaphor, suggesting that traditional metaphorical mappings underpin our conceptual framework. This shift in understanding reframes the challenge of metaphor translation from a mere linguistic hurdle to a deeper cognitive issue. When source and target languages utilize different conventional correspondences for the same domain, translators must intentionally adapt their conceptual frameworks to identify suitable target equivalents.

The challenge in metaphor translation extends beyond simply moving from one language to another; it involves shifting from one cognitive framework to another. If metaphors are viewed as fundamental structures of thought rather than mere linguistic expressions, translating them becomes not only a linguistic task but also a cognitive adaptation from one conceptual system to another.

The Cognitive Translation Hypothesis categorizes metaphor translation into two conditions: Similar Mapping Conditions (SMC) and Different Mapping Conditions (DMC). Mandelblit asserts that when the source language (SL) and target language (TL) share similar mapping conditions, translating the SL metaphor can be accomplished by selecting an equivalent TL metaphor or, in

less ideal situations, a TL simile. However, if the SL operates under different mapping conditions than the TL, translating the metaphor becomes more challenging and time-consuming. In such cases, the translator may convey the SL metaphor using a TL simile, or through paraphrasing, footnotes, explanations, or omissions (Mandelblit, 1995). Consequently, different translation methods will be employed for SMC and DMC.

Thus, according to the Cognitive Translation Hypothesis, the metaphor translation process in Northern Shaanxi and Hua'er folk songs can be conceptualized as depicted in the figure below:

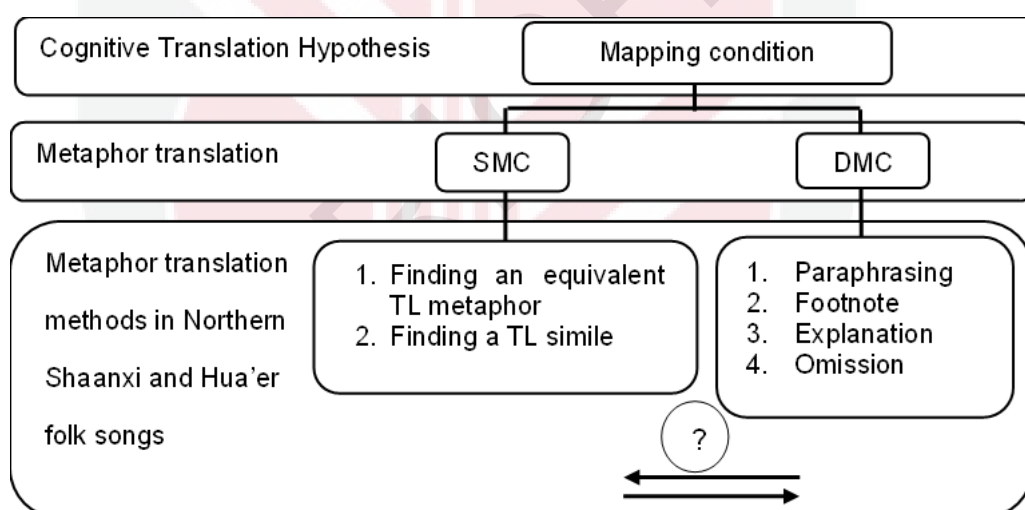


Figure 1.2 : Cognitive Translation Hypothesis for Northern Shaanxi and Hua'er Folk Songs

The translation process of metaphors in Northern Shaanxi and Hua'er folk songs, as indicated in Figure 1.2, involves two scenarios for translators: Similar Mapping Conditions (SMC) and Different Mapping Conditions (DMC), resulting in Source Domain (SD) and Target Domain (TD) for the target text. Successfully replicating the mapping relationship from the source text to the

target text depends on numerous factors. Translators may employ various methods for translating Chinese metaphors into English, contingent upon the mapping conditions.

Toury (1995) advocates a target-oriented approach and delineates four metaphor translation strategies: (1) Direct translation of metaphors (M-M): This strategy retains the source language metaphor in the translation to preserve its impact and connotations. (2) Replacing the original metaphor with another metaphor (M1-M2): Translators substitute the source metaphor with a different metaphor in the target language to convey the same underlying meaning. (3) Translating the metaphor into a non-metaphor (M-P): This approach converts the source metaphor into a literal expression, often used when the metaphor poses linguistic or cultural challenges. (4) Not translating the metaphor at all (M-0): In this strategy, the source metaphor remains untranslated, relying on the reader's familiarity with the source culture to interpret its meaning.

In this thesis, both the Cognitive Translation Hypothesis and Toury's metaphor methods serve as the theoretical foundation for guiding the translation of metaphors in Northern Shaanxi and Hua'er folk songs.

1.6.3 Cognitive Context

The process of selecting translations is intricately connected to context. Halliday, a renowned British linguist, has significantly contributed to contextual theory, categorizing context into cultural, situational, and environmental

components. He emphasizes the interaction of these components with linguistic functions (Halliday & Hasan, 1985). However, Halliday's research primarily adopts a sociocultural perspective, often neglecting psychological and cognitive contexts.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) highlight the interdependence of context and metaphor. Traditional context typically includes linguistic and extralinguistic knowledge, while cognitive context encompasses human cognitive abilities built upon this foundation. Consciously or unconsciously, context profoundly shapes and limits the entire process of comprehension and expression. In reality, translation involves various contextual elements, including cultural, cognitive, situational, and environmental factors.

In translation studies, the cognitive context, as per Zeng (2009), encompasses all factors influencing and constraining a translator's cognition and language processing. This dissertation explores and draws conclusions regarding these influential variables in translating metaphors in Northern Shaanxi and Hua'er folk songs from a cognitive linguistic perspective.

Translation utilizes language as the vehicle for thought (D. Guo, 2006). The diversity of languages, shaped by different cultures, and the necessity of communication in human life are significant factors in the exchange of cultures and knowledge (Janfaza et al., 2012). Therefore, within the cognitive context, language is a primary factor that affects translation activity.

Northern Shaanxi and Hua'er folk songs are classified as Chinese northwestern folk songs, sharing fundamental characteristics. These include colloquial sentence structures with strong regional dialects, abundant rhetoric, and vibrant emotional expressions through lively reduplication in word selection and sentence construction. Additionally, the strategic use of modifiers helps integrate lyrics with melodies seamlessly (Shang, 2014). These unique language characteristics make translating these songs both challenging and intriguing for scholars.

Typically, the upper line introduces the poetic structure, while the lower line elaborates on the theme, with most lyrics exhibiting well-organized parallelism. This structure, rooted in the tradition of the "Book of Songs" era, reflects the folk narrative style and literary thinking (Z. B. Wang, 2021). Similarly, Hua'er folk songs employ rhetorical techniques akin to the expressive metaphors found in the "Book of Songs" and are celebrated as the "*Book of Songs* of the Northwest." The songs' structure and rhythm highlight a robust oral tradition, resulting in a distinctive form of expression (Y. L. Wu, 2008, p. 1). Therefore, the poetic lyric structure emerges as the second factor influencing metaphor translation in Northern Shaanxi and Hua'er folk songs, representing a distinctive and noteworthy characteristic of these folk traditions.

Additionally, cultural context influences decision-making in translation, impacting choices from selecting the text to determining the textual form. Cognitive context is linked to the translator's knowledge, cognitive abilities,

psychological aptitude, judgment skills, and aesthetic sensibilities (He & Zhao, 2016).

Cultural contexts vary among individuals from different backgrounds, shaping their worldviews, life perspectives, and values. Consequently, their interpretations, problem-solving methods, and understandings differ, leading to the idea that metaphors are inherently embedded within cultural contexts (You, 2022). In other words, the more similarities the two cultures exhibit, the more likely they share the same mapping condition (SMC); conversely, the greater the cultural differences, the more likely they will encounter different mapping conditions (DMC) (Mohammad et al., 2007).

Cienki (1999) proposes that conceptual metaphors are relational entities dependent on cultural models. This relationship is akin to the connection between a base (the cultural model) and a profile (the metaphor), where metaphors arise distinctly from specific cultural models (HASAR & Panahbar, 2017). As a result, metaphors reflect a society's cultural beliefs and values, deeply rooted in that particular cultural context.

Translating metaphors often presents challenges stemming from cultural differences between the source language and target language, as well as their respective cultures. These disparities may require alternatives, such as using a corresponding TL metaphor or employing paraphrasing instead of a literal translation. When the source text relies heavily on culture-specific elements,

replicating the SL metaphor and supplementing it with explanations—possibly through footnotes or annotations—becomes essential (Schäffner, 2004).

Translating metaphors between languages that perceive reality differently presents considerable challenges. Understanding this complexity requires acknowledging that distinct cultures bring diverse advantages rooted in unique traditions, lifestyles, methods of conveying experiences, and symbolic representations. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) assert that cultures provide a reservoir of metaphors that help interpret reality, among other functions. Living by a metaphor means structuring one's reality based on that metaphor, which influences perceptions and actions accordingly. Thus, translation is “a mapping from one language to another” (ibid). This perspective emphasizes that translators, when interpreting metaphorical expressions, need a profound level of cognitive and cultural awareness.

The translation of metaphors in literary works necessitates reconstructing the mapping from the source domain to the target domain in the target language, requiring a highly intricate cognitive process. This approach demands the translator's comprehensive understanding of the source language rather than a mere literal conversion of metaphors. Various contexts call for diverse strategies to address cultural nuances and fusions in the target language. Essentially, metaphor translation involves transferring the cognitive nuances expressed in one cultural context to another in the target language.

The cognitive theory emphasizes translation as a form of communication, encompassing both understanding between the translator and the author, and expressiveness between the translator and the readers of the target language. Translation enriches national culture, with the translator acting as a bridge that connects the original writer and the readers while addressing cultural gaps between the source and target languages. The quality of translation and the evolution of translation practices are significantly influenced by the translator's conscious cognitive abilities, which shape the translation process. Acknowledging and enhancing the translator's subjectivity is crucial for advancing translation theories (D. Guo, 2006). Recognizing the translator's unique perspective and experiences greatly contributes to the evolution and refinement of these theories.

The translator's responsibility lies in accurately capturing the original text's context, immersing themselves in the cognitive environment of the author to fully comprehend it, and effectively conveying the meaning and intent of the original work. It is equally important for the translator to consider the cognitive context of the target readers (Yi, 2020), ensuring a more accurate and relatable translation.

This thesis will primarily focus on language, lyric poetic structure, culture, and the role of the translator, among various factors influencing the translation of metaphors in Northern Shaanxi and Hua'er folk songs.

1.7 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework provides the underlying structure and logic that guide an entire research project, encompassing the theories, principles, and methodologies used to explore and analyze the research topic. It serves as the scaffolding that supports the construction of the study from start to finish (Kivunja, 2018). A visual representation of this framework is shown in the following flowchart:

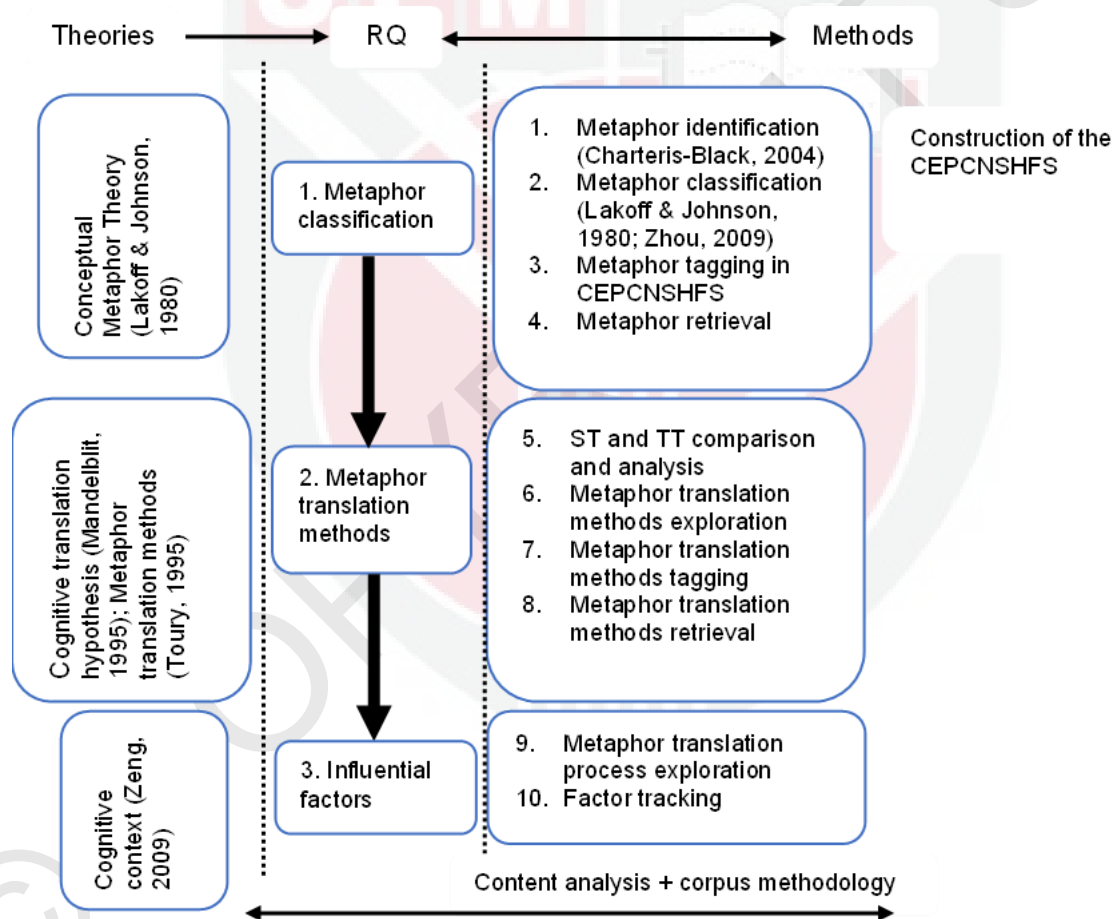


Figure 1.3 : Conceptual Framework for This Study

The conceptual framework of this study delves into the cognitive linguistic perspective of translating metaphors within Northern Shaanxi and Hua'er folk

songs. It incorporates three primary facets: identifying and classifying metaphors, examining metaphor translation methods, and analyzing the influential factors impacting the translation process.

1.8 Research Significance

This research on the translation of Northern Shaanxi and Hua'er folk songs is significant within the realm of Chinese intangible culture. It serves as a representative sample of northwest Chinese folk songs and offers invaluable insights for translation practice and the broader study of these cultural expressions.

Firstly, this research plays a crucial role in preserving and promoting local cultural heritage, particularly in folk song culture. Northwest China boasts a rich tapestry of cultural expressions beyond folk songs, including paper-cutting, grotto art, historic ruins, and ancient tombs. Despite its relatively limited development, this region possesses significant historical, cultural, and geographical characteristics. Northern Shaanxi and Hua'er folk songs act as windows for global audiences to explore the life and culture of Northwest China, with their narratives effectively communicated to target readers through comprehensive study and translation efforts.

Secondly, from a cognitive linguistics perspective, this thesis consolidates techniques for translating metaphors in Northern Shaanxi and Hua'er folk songs, serving as a foundational guide for metaphor translation in other

Chinese folk songs. It offers insights into metaphor classification, translation methods, and factors influencing the translation process.

Thirdly, this thesis explores the theoretical aspects of metaphor translation by leveraging conceptual metaphor theory, the cognitive translation hypothesis, and cognitive context from a cognitive linguistic perspective, providing new insights into this field.

Lastly, this study enhances the corpus-based research approach for translating metaphors in Chinese folk songs. The Chinese-English parallel corpus of Northern Shaanxi and Hua'er folk songs is a valuable resource for teaching, studying, and translating folk song lyrics.

1.9 Scope and Limitation of the Study

Chinese folk songs are categorized into eleven cultural zones. Northern Shaanxi and Hua'er folk songs fall under Northwestern Plain and have been included in the national intangible cultural heritage list. These folk songs share similarities in language, poetic structure, and cultural characteristics, particularly in their use of *bi-xing* (比兴), which corresponds to metaphors in modern language. This shared feature highlights the richness of metaphorical expression in both traditions and underscores their cultural interconnectedness.

Z. B. Wang (2021, p. 254) notes that the translation of folk songs involves both lyric translation and song dubbing. However, the scope of this study is

confined to the translation of lyrics, excluding the specialized process of song dubbing that adapts lyrics for a different language while retaining the original's musical and emotional qualities.

This study has a limitation regarding the corpora size. While the corpus methodology allows for extensive datasets, the complexity and variations among other genres of Chinese folk songs, coupled with specific research objectives, have led to a selective approach in constructing the corpus. Focusing on Northern Shaanxi and Hua'er folk songs—two distinct genres within northwest Chinese folk songs that share significant similarities, particularly in their use of metaphors—this study lays the groundwork for future research endeavors aimed at expanding the corpus size of Chinese folk songs for translation studies.

1.10 Definition of Terms

Metaphor: In this research, metaphor refers to the understanding and encounter of one concept through the lens of another. This phenomenon extends beyond language, permeating everyday life and influencing thought and action (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

Orientational metaphors: In this study, orientational metaphors relate to spatial orientation and cover dimensions such as up-down, in-out, front-back, on-off, deep-shallow, and central-peripheral.

Ontological metaphors: In this study, ontological metaphors refer to those metaphors through which individuals interpret their experiences by conceptualizing them as objects and substances.

Structural metaphors: In this research, structural metaphors denote instances where one concept is metaphorically organized or structured in terms of another.

Mapping: Lakoff and Johnson (1980) employed a naming strategy using mnemonics to suggest mappings that aid in recalling conceptual relationships within the conceptual system. Mnemonic names typically follow the format: TARGET-DOMAIN-IS SOURCE-DOMAIN or TARGET-DOMAIN AS SOURCE-DOMAIN. For example, the mapping name is LOVE IS A JOURNEY.

Parallel Corpus: M. Baker (1995) offers a widely acknowledged classification of corpora, which includes three main types: parallel corpora, multilingual corpora, and comparable corpora. A parallel corpus consists of source language texts in language A alongside their translated equivalents in language B. This type of corpus is valuable for studying translation patterns, as it enables a direct comparison between source and target language texts.

Northern Shaanxi and Hua'er Folk Songs: Northern Shaanxi folk songs are widely circulated in the Loess Plateau region of the northern part of Shaanxi Province. These songs originate from the Northern Shaanxi region, encompassing Yulin City and parts of Yan'an City (Y. Liu & Zhou, 2022).

“Hua’er” refers to a prevalent folk song genre sung by various ethnic groups in northwest China, including the Han, Hui, Tibetan, Tu, Dongxiang, Bao’an, Sala, Yugur, Mongolian, and other communities. Due to its rhetorical elements similar to those found in the *Book of Songs* and other ancient Chinese literary works, Hua’er is often referred to as the “*Book of Songs* in Northwest China” (L. Du, 2019).

1.11 The Thesis Structure

The dissertation comprises five chapters, structured as follows. The first chapter introduces the thesis, providing an overview of the entire structure and establishing the foundation for the subsequent chapters.

In the second chapter, an extensive literature review is conducted, covering the progress of metaphor translation, the translation of Chinese folk songs, and, more specifically, the translation of Northern Shaanxi and Hua’er folk songs. The survey delves into recent research on metaphor translation, emphasizing the distinctive characteristics and challenges associated with translating metaphors in the context of Northern Shaanxi and Hua’er folk songs. Additionally, the chapter underscores the importance of adopting a theoretical framework from a cognitive linguistics perspective and employing a corpus-based research methodology for this study.

Chapter 3 discusses a mixed research methodology involving qualitative and corpus methods. The chapter provides an in-depth exploration of constructing the Chinese-English parallel corpus for Northern Shaanxi and Hua’er folk

songs. Furthermore, it outlines the systematic procedure used to identify metaphors within the corpus.

Chapter 4 presents the study's data analysis and findings, addressing the three primary research questions: metaphor classification, metaphor translation methods, and influential factors in metaphor translation in Northern Shaanxi and Hua'er folk songs. This section offers a detailed discussion and analysis of the results.

Chapter 5 serves as the concluding section, summarizing the essential findings and research conclusions. It reflects on the insights gained from the investigation into metaphor translation in Northern Shaanxi and Hua'er folk songs, acknowledges any limitations, and proposes avenues for future research.

1.12 Conclusion

To contextualize the current study, this chapter explores the historical backdrop of metaphor translation within Northern Shaanxi and Hua'er folk songs. It delves into various aspects, including the problem statement, research objectives, research questions, theoretical and conceptual framework, significance of the research, study scope and limitations, terminology definitions, and the overall structure of the thesis.

This research utilizes a corpus methodology to innovatively investigate the types of metaphors, metaphor translation methods, and influential factors

involved in the translation of these metaphors in Northern Shaanxi and Hua'er folk songs. Furthermore, it serves as a potential catalyst for broader research initiatives on corpus-based cognitive linguistics studies of metaphor translation within Chinese folk songs.



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