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| RESEARCH ARTICLE

## A Framing Analysis of Chinese Political Discourse: Exemplified by the English Version of *The 2021 Report on the Work of the Government*

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| ABSTRACT

This study, underpinned by critical framing theory, analyses the English version of *The 2021 Report on the Work of the Government*, instantiating the Chinese political discourse. First of all, this study extracts key semantic domains and keywords based on an online corpus processing program, Wmatrix. Second, metaphorical surface frames are identified in line with MIPVU, and then conceptual metaphors are summarized. It is found that the metaphorical frames WAR, ARCHITECTURE, and JOURNEY are activated in *The 2021 Report on the Work of the Government* by the use of such metaphorical words and expressions as a *battle*, *lift out of*, *build*, *consolidate*, *speed up* and *step*. This way of discourse framing is intended to construct the image of the Chinese government as a "leader" who encourages the Chinese people to join as "participants" in the state building. The traditional Chinese moral notion of *Gongtianxia*, 'the world being equally shared by all,' is the root of the discourse framing.

| KEYWORDS

Frame; conceptual metaphor; political discourse; moral model; Critical Framing Theory

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### 1. Introduction

Political discourse is a form of reasoning in favor or against a proposed course of action that aims at reaching a reasonable practical judgement (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2013, p.11), while political discourse studies endeavor to analyze and explain the relationship between language and ideology, power manipulation and legitimation (Hu, 2021, p.36). In recent years, scholars around the world have carried out abundant in-depth studies on political discourse from functional, pragmatic, and cognitive perspectives. For example, Wodak *et al.* (2009) and Reyes (2014) probe into the origin and evolution of political discourse as well as the framing strategies of political speech by adopting the Discourse-Historical Approach and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), respectively. Niculescu-Gorpin (2010), guided by Relevance Theory, analyzes how the president and secretary of the United States use metaphorical scenarios to advance their own projects and, at the same time, abolish those of their rivals. From the cognitive perspective, some Chinese scholars (Wang, 2014; Liang & Wang, 2015; Zhang, 2019) dive into political discourse based on Lakoff's (2004) framing theory, offering a new method for political discourse studies. In Section 2, the author will elaborate on these studies conducted by Chinese scholars. In a word, critical framing analysis concerning political discourse is still in its infancy, leaving many a realm to be further studied. *The Report on the Work of the Government*, as a kind of Chinese political document, mainly covers the national policies, the Chinese government's self-construction, and its goals for future development, which constitutes an important part of Chinese political discourse. Therefore, this article, guided by Critical Framing Theory (CFT), attempts to first compare the metaphorical expressions in the Chinese version of *The 2021 Report on the Work of the Government* (hereinafter referred to as the *Report*) with those in the English version of the *Report*, and sum up the differences of metaphorical expressions between the Chinese version and the English version. Second, the author uses the online corpus processing program, Wmatrix, to extract key semantic domains as well as key words, and conducts a critical framing analysis of the *Report*, expecting to contribute to the development of the Chinese political discourse system as well as China's political image.

## 2. About Critical Framing Theory

'Frame', as a psychological concept, was first put forward by Bateson in 1955. According to Bateson (1987, pp.144–148), a psychological frame is a class or set of messages (or meaningful actions), which is used by the communicator to give the receiver instructions or aids in his attempt to understand the messages included within the frame. In the 1970s, the American linguist, Fillmore, first introduced 'frame' into linguistics and established Framing Semantics. Framing Semantics insists that the description of word meaning is definitely related to semantic frame and frame serves as a device for cognitive construction but not the simple structure of language (Yuan & Wang, 2017). Goffman (1974, pp.10–11), an American sociologist, took the lead in studying frames from the perspective of sociology. He assumes that definitions of a situation are built up in line with organizational principles which govern events and people's involvement in them, and the frame is a word that can be used to refer to these basic elements. Framing Sociology aims at delving into the rules that allow human beings to generate a "world" of a given kind (ibid., p.5).

In the late 1990s, Lakoff (2004), based on Framing Semantics and Framing Sociology, first introduced 'frame' into politics studies and founded Framing Theory (FT). Frames can be divided into surface frames, which are activated by words, and deep frames, which can be activated by surface frames, and the surface frames can be further divided into metaphorical frames and non-metaphorical frames, while deep frames consist of moral worldview or political philosophy. (Lakoff, 2006). For surface frames, they are coded as metaphorical when activated by metaphorical words, during which conceptual metaphors are constructed to involve frame-to-frame mapping (Lakoff, 1999). Lakoff (ibid.) considered that human beings deliberate in frames and metaphors. Therefore, metaphors are frequently employed in political discourse to trigger specific emotions in order to build target images and achieve political persuasion. In terms of deep frames in political discourse, when they conform to people's own values, the possibility of political persuasion increases. Because the recipients never accept the facts in a rational way but only accept those match the original frames in their brain through frame reasoning (Wang, 2014). In some cases, the communicator will resort to reframing to change people's way of looking upon the world as well as their common sense (Lakoff, 2004) so as to achieve intended purposes.

In China, some scholars, such as Wang and Zhang (2018), integrate CDA into FT and put forward CFT. CDA mainly focuses on the way in which discourse structure challenges and legitimizes social power as well as dominating relations (Van Dijk, 2009). CDA lays emphasis on macro analysis and stresses the role of ideology in bridging the discourse structure and the social structure, while FT attaches importance to the role of the deep frame and the conceptual metaphor in understanding and accepting discourse (Wang & Zhang, 2018). After incorporating CDA into FT, CFT endeavors to explain the cognitive mechanism concerning the recipient's understanding and acceptance of a language and dives into the relationship between human thinking, language, and society (ibid.). Supported by CFT, Wang (2017) strives to reveal the law of political discourse by discussing how Xi employed reframing to eliminate the negative impact of foreign discourse, during which a discourse system with Chinese characteristics was established in order to formulate foreign exchange strategies. Zhang (2019) concentrates on two ways of framing, including conceptual metaphors and conceptual integration. In the paper, she illustrates the cognitive mechanism of American media concerning the discourse construction of the Belt and Road Initiative from the perspective of social cognition and analyzes the ideology and social power embodied in the discourse from the perspective of social culture. In addition, by taking the U.S. Bowditch Drone incident as an example, Yuan and Wang (2020) carry out a critical framing analysis of the discourse of American mainstream media concerning the South China Sea issue from the perspective of recipient interpretation to unveil the truth.

To sum up, critical framing analysis mainly consists of three steps: First, identifying surface and deep frames as well as conceptual metaphors and analyzing the moral models and social values behind these frames by taking advantage of the corpus. Second, introducing the framing-metaphor model and further explain the relationship between reasoning and the discourse. Third, probing into the ideology through moral model analysis and exploring the reasons for choosing specific frames in a given context so as to investigate the internal relation between frames and moral models (Wang & Zhang, 2018, pp.31–32).

## 3. Differences of Metaphorical Expressions between the Chinese Version and the English Version of the Report

Supported by Wmatrix, an online corpus processing program developed by Professor Paul Rayson of Lancaster University, this study first extracts key semantic domain (BNC Sampler Written as reference corpus) and keywords in the *Report* and then conducts in-depth analyses based on reasonable classifications. Furthermore, the author follows MIPVU (Metaphor Identification Procedure University Amsterdam) (Steen *et al.*, 2010) to identify metaphorical surface frames and, at the same time, summarize conceptual metaphors. Owing to the fact that Wmatrix cannot process Chinese discourse, the English version of the *Report* is selected to be the research object. To ensure that the results based on the English version are essentially equivalent to those of the Chinese

version, this section tries to first illustrate the difference in metaphorical expressions between the Chinese version and the English version of the *Report*.

Newmark (2001) proposed seven methods for metaphor translation, such as reproducing the same image in the target text, replacing the image in the source language with a standard target language image; conversion of metaphor to sense; deletion, etc. Embracing major national policies and guidelines, political discourse makes itself highly authoritative. Therefore, confronted with metaphors in political discourse, translators are inclined to be as faithful as possible and would try their best to retain the original metaphors (Sun, 2018). Generally, translators may adopt the method of deletion in the following two aspects: first, the source discourse contains culture-loaded metaphors whose connotation cannot be understood by the target recipients; second, there is no corresponding expression in the target language to convey the cognitive meaning of the source metaphor (Yang & Zhao, 2020).

After meticulous comparison, the author finds that there are 13 metaphors in the Chinese version that are not reflected in the English one. However, only one of them is related to the WAR metaphor, which will be discussed in the next section, and the rest are not related to the three types of metaphors discussed in this article. Thus, the author only chooses two of them for explanation due to the length of this article. In example (1), 步伐 *bufa* 'pace' in the Chinese version is a metaphorical vocabulary, but it is omitted in the English version. 步伐 *bufa* serves as the source domain, and the target domain comes to THE PROCESS OF INNOVATION AND TRANSFORMATION. However, in English, there is no corresponding expression that can express the cognitive meaning. Therefore, the translator omits it so that the target readers are able to grasp the information accurately. In example (2), 鱼水情深 *yushuiqingshen*, 'be close as fish and water' is a typical Chinese expression. If translated literally, it will hinder English recipients from understanding the sentence. Through the metaphorical expression 鱼水情深 *yushuiqingshen*, the *Report* intends to indicate the intimate relationship between the Chinese people and the army. The English version chooses *bond* to convey the original intention instead of rendering the expression with Chinese characteristics literally. Only in this way can the target recipients receive the information equivalent to that conveyed in the Chinese version.

(1) Chinese version: 大力促进科技创新，产业转型升级步伐加快。

English version: We vigorously promoted innovation in science and technology and accelerate industrial transformation and upgrading.

(2) Chinese version: 各级政府要大力支持国防和军队建设，深入开展“双拥”活动，谱写鱼水情深的时代华章。

English version: We in government at all levels should vigorously support the development of national defense and the armed forces, and conduct extensive activities to promote mutual support between the civilians and the military, so as to forge an ever closer bond between the people and the military in the new era.

Apart from the aforementioned circumstances, metaphorical expressions in the Chinese version of the *Report* are consistent with that of the English version. Hence, the following statistics and framing analysis based on the English version are applicable to the Chinese version.

#### 4. Analysis of Metaphorical Frame in the 2021 Report

Table 1 Key Semantic Domain of the English Version of the 2021 Report<sup>1</sup>

| Item   | O1  | %1   | O2    | %2    | LL     | LogRatio | Semtag                 |
|--------|-----|------|-------|-------|--------|----------|------------------------|
| T1.1.3 | 452 | 3.33 | 4846  | 0.5+  | 915.46 | 2.73     | Time: Future           |
| S8+    | 344 | 2.53 | 4225  | 0.44+ | 622.03 | 2.54     | Helping                |
| A2.1+  | 255 | 1.88 | 3939  | 0.41+ | 370.7  | 2.21     | Change                 |
| A5.1+  | 185 | 1.36 | 2905  | 0.3+  | 264.37 | 2.18     | Evaluation: Good       |
| A1.1.1 | 381 | 2.81 | 12189 | 1.26+ | 187.03 | 1.16     | General actions/making |

<sup>1</sup> All the statistics in the table are extracted from Wmatrix. Due to the length of this article, only the most typical 20 items are listed.

|         |     |      |      |       |        |      |                                   |
|---------|-----|------|------|-------|--------|------|-----------------------------------|
| S1.2.5+ | 64  | 0.47 | 433  | 0.04+ | 178.27 | 3.4  | Tough/strong                      |
| F4      | 85  | 0.63 | 912  | 0.09+ | 172.05 | 2.73 | Farming & Horticulture            |
| M7      | 229 | 1.69 | 5888 | 0.61+ | 170.74 | 1.47 | Places                            |
| I1.1    | 137 | 1.01 | 2654 | 0.27+ | 153.83 | 1.88 | Money and pay                     |
| W5      | 46  | 0.34 | 225  | 0.02+ | 153.24 | 3.87 | Green issues                      |
| I3.1    | 145 | 1.07 | 3381 | 0.35+ | 126.22 | 1.61 | Work and employment:<br>Generally |
| A2.1-   | 37  | 0.27 | 250  | 0.03+ | 103.14 | 3.4  | No change                         |
| N3.2+   | 84  | 0.62 | 1606 | 0.17+ | 95.88  | 1.9  | Size: Big                         |
| I1.1-   | 34  | 0.25 | 242  | 0.02+ | 91.82  | 3.32 | Money: Lack                       |
| G1.1    | 132 | 0.97 | 3542 | 0.37+ | 91.48  | 1.41 | Government                        |
| I2.1    | 108 | 0.8  | 2634 | 0.27+ | 87.73  | 1.55 | Business: Generally               |
| B2+     | 23  | 0.17 | 195  | 0.02+ | 55.41  | 3.07 | Healthy                           |
| X8+     | 54  | 0.4  | 1179 | 0.12+ | 51.72  | 1.71 | Trying hard                       |
| S5+     | 144 | 1.06 | 5811 | 0.6+  | 38.27  | 0.82 | Belonging to a group              |
| S8-     | 38  | 0.28 | 885  | 0.09+ | 33.14  | 1.61 | Hindering                         |

In Table 1, O1 and % 1 respectively refer to the frequency and relative frequency of the semantic domain in this corpus. O2 and % 2 are the frequency and relative frequency of the semantic domain in the reference corpus. LL is the log-likelihood ratio of the key semantic domain, which indicates the significance of the semantic domain. When the value of LL is greater than or equal to 6.63, the semantic domain embraces high significance. As can be seen from the table, significant semantic domains in the *Report* are as follows: future, helping, change, action, strong, farming, places, money and pay, government, business, belonging to a group, hindering, etc. On the whole, the *Report* mainly sums up the measures taken by the Chinese government in the post-covid era, the Chinese people's joint efforts in fighting against Covid-19, poverty and other problems, steady development of the national economy, education and other mechanisms, and basic stability of employment, social and public security.

According to statistics, the *Report* mainly adopts ARCHITECTURE, WAR, JOURNEY, COOPERATION, PLANT, and CONTAINER frames. Because of the length of this article, only the three most representative ones are selected to conduct analysis on their surface and deep frames.

#### 4.1 Analysis of WAR Frame

Table2 WAR Frame in the English Version of the 2021Report

| Metaphorical Frame | Metaphorical Vocabulary   | Frequency |
|--------------------|---------------------------|-----------|
| WAR Frame          | lift/lift out/lift out of | 7         |
|                    | control                   | 6         |
|                    | battle/battle against     | 5         |
|                    | success/successfully      | 4         |
|                    | achievement/achieve       | 4         |
|                    | hit                       | 4         |
|                    | prevention/prevent        | 3         |
|                    | fight/fight against       | 3         |

|  |                       |   |
|--|-----------------------|---|
|  | alleviation           | 3 |
|  | eradicate/eradication | 3 |
|  | against               | 1 |
|  | combat                | 1 |
|  | containment           | 1 |
|  | fall back             | 1 |
|  | reemergence           | 1 |
|  | eliminate             | 1 |

In the *Report*, there are mainly two conceptual metaphors related to the WAR frame: EPIDEMIC PREVENTION AND CONTROL IS WAR, and POVERTY ALLEVIATION IS WAR. The source domain is WAR, and the target domain is EPIDEMIC PREVENTION AND CONTROL and POVERTY ALLEVIATION. *Battle, fight, combat*, etc. activates the surface frame of WAR. the *Report* adopts the WAR frame to stress the urgency of epidemic prevention and control as well as the significance of poverty elimination, which always contains factors such as "battlefield", "soldier", "enemy", "ruthlessness". The Chinese people's joint efforts in responding to the pandemic correspond to soldiers' dauntless fighting on the battlefield [Example (3)]. Helping the poor get rid of poverty corresponds to rescuing them from the war [Example (4)]. And taking targeted measures to achieve satisfying results in epidemic prevention and control corresponds to adopting appropriate military strategies to defeat enemies in the war [Example (5)]. In example (6), the metaphorical expression 挂牌督战 *guapai duzhan* in the Chinese version is omitted in the English version, which attributes to the fact that there is no equivalent expression in English. Provided that 挂牌 *guapai* 'listing' and 督战 *duzhan* 'supervise military operations' are translated literally, the target readers may feel confused. In the Chinese version, 挂牌督战 *guapai duzhan* is the source domain, and ASSISTANCE MEASURES FOR POOR AREAS is the target domain, which can achieve an effect similar to those of previous examples.

- (3) We will cultivate and promote the core socialist values, carry forward the great spirit forged in the battle against Covid-19 and in the fight against poverty, and foster civic virtue.
- (4) All remaining poor rural residents, totaling 5.51 million in early 2020, were lifted from poverty, as were all of China's remaining 52 poor counties.
- (5) We achieved major strategic success in our response to Covid-19, and China was the world's only major economy to achieve growth.
- (6) Chinese version: 对工作难度大的贫困县和贫困村挂牌督战，精准落实各项帮扶措施。  
English version: Counties and villages facing difficulty in poverty eradication were placed under special supervision to see they fully implemented all assistance and support policies.

WAR metaphors can trigger fear, which is frequently adopted in political discourse. In many cases, WAR metaphors are always exaggerated to emphasize the threat of poverty, drugs, and terrorism to society (Bartolucci, 2012). WAR metaphors in the *Report* enable the Chinese people to pay more attention to Covid-19 and poverty and realize that these two enemies pose a threat to people's health and the development of Chinese society. Due to fear of disastrous consequences, the Chinese people are inclined to support relevant policies of the government and participate in the fight against the epidemic and poverty. In the WAR frame, confronted with common enemies of the nation, the epidemic, and poverty, the public tends to unite as one and exercise concerted efforts to combat for a better future. What's more, anaclysis is more likely to appear when people live in fear. Here in the *Report*, the Chinese government acts as a parent of a family, directing the nation to extricate itself from the predicaments. By employing WAR metaphors, the government expects to enhance its credibility among citizens and, at the same time, set up a reliable and responsible image to the outside world.

**4.2 Analysis of ARCHITECTURE Frame**

Table3 ARCHITECTURE Frame in the English Version of the 2021Report

| Metaphorical Frame | Metaphorical Vocabulary  | Frequency |
|--------------------|--------------------------|-----------|
| ARCHITECTURE Frame | implement/implementation | 39        |
|                    | strengthen               | 28        |

|  |              |    |
|--|--------------|----|
|  | build        | 20 |
|  | carry out    | 15 |
|  | consolidate  | 10 |
|  | create       | 9  |
|  | establish    | 5  |
|  | formulate    | 5  |
|  | foundation   | 3  |
|  | construction | 3  |
|  | restore      | 2  |
|  | underpin     | 1  |
|  | shape        | 1  |

The ARCHITECTURE frame enjoys the highest frequency in the *Report*, which is entailed by words such as *implement*, *strengthen*, *build*, *consolidate*, etc., to show a positive outlook. ARCHITECTURE as the source domain is mapped to the IMPROVEMENT OF INNOVATION SYSTEM, POLICY FORMULATION, and GOVERNMENT CONSTRUCTION. In example (7), innovation system upgrading denotes the renovation of buildings. To be more specific, the blueprint in the architectural project (source domain) is mapped to a ten-year action plan for basic research (target domain); the foundation of a building is mapped to the development of national laboratories to underpin the whole project, and the improvement of strategic scientific and technological capability corresponds to the construction process. As for Example (8), the target domain comes to ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT. To achieve healthy and sustainable development, the priority is to stabilize the foundation of economic recovery, which is similar to a building in that only when the foundation is firm enough can the building last for a long time. In examples (9) and (10), the *Report* takes a moderately prosperous society in all respects and national rejuvenation as the construction objectives. The ARCHITECTURE frame is activated in these two examples, aiming to remind the Chinese people that long-term efforts are required to accomplish the projects.

- (7) To improve China's innovation system, we will work faster to enhance our strategic scientific and technological capability underpinned by the development of national laboratories, strive to make major breakthroughs in core technologies in key fields, and formulate and implement a ten-year action plan for basic research.
- (8) We should stay confident, meet challenges head-on, and consolidate the foundation for economic recovery to ensure sustained and healthy economic and social development.
- (9) We attained a complete victory in the fight against poverty, and we scored decisive achievements in securing a full victory in building a moderately prosperous society in all respects.
- (10) Together, we can shape a bright future of rejuvenation for our great nation.

The ARCHITECTURE frame lays emphasis on the importance of the plan, the stability of the foundation, and the duration of the process, in which the Chinese government acts as a "contractor" that supports citizens as "constructors" to accomplish the project. The ARCHITECTURE conceptual metaphor creates a sense of mutual support (WAGECHE, 2016). The *Report* activates people's pursuit for a better life through the architectural metaphor and encourages people to participate in national construction. In the past, the Chinese people suffered from turbulence and wars of invasion. Therefore, they are more willing to work together to build a peaceful, stable, and prosperous society (Song & Yang, 2020). By taking advantage of the ARCHITECTURE frame, the Chinese government integrates itself with citizens with the intention of reminding the Chinese people that they are in a community of a shared future. In other words, the whole nation should be directed by sound plans, first and foremost, lay a solid foundation so that the completion of the project can be guaranteed, indicating the Chinese government's insights, the national value of mutual assistance, and the Chinese people's quality of being down-to-earth.

**4.3 Analysis of JOURNEY Frame**

Table 4 JOURNEY Frame in the English Version of *The 2021 Report*

| Metaphorical Frame | Metaphorical Vocabulary | Frequency |
|--------------------|-------------------------|-----------|
| JOURNEY Frame      | step                    | 22        |
|                    | way                     | 17        |
|                    | goal                    | 11        |
|                    | step up/speed up        | 9         |
|                    | challenge               | 9         |
|                    | move                    | 9         |
|                    | approach                | 7         |
|                    | guide/guidance          | 7         |
|                    | toward                  | 6         |
|                    | go                      | 4         |
|                    | ahead                   | 4         |
|                    | follow                  | 4         |
|                    | embark on               | 1         |
|                    | path                    | 1         |
|                    | course                  | 1         |
|                    | journey                 | 1         |

Such words as *step*, *way*, *move*, etc., activate the JOURNEY frame. The conceptual metaphor underlying the *Report* are ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IS A JOURNEY, and ECOLOGICAL IMPROVEMENT IS A JOURNEY. The source domain is JOURNEY, and the target domain is ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT and ECOLOGICAL IMPROVEMENT. In Examples (11) and (12), ecological improvement corresponds to a journey, during which the traveler may encounter diverse challenges that call for the traveler’s strong beliefs to take reasonable measures in order to arrive at the destination (fulfilling carbon emission goals and establishing ecological shelter forest). In example (13), the words *course* and *steps* activate the conceptual metaphor: DEVELOPMENT IS A JOURNEY. Arriving at the destination corresponds to achieving development, and the difficulties in the course corresponds to imbalances and inadequacies in development. In example (14), the period covered by the 14th Five-Year Plan corresponds to a journey in the course of building China into a modern socialist country in all respects. The accomplishment of phased goals means the completion of part of the journey. The moment the final target is realized, the success is achieved.

- (11) We will take solid steps toward the goals of achieving peak carbon dioxide emissions and carbon neutrality.
- (12) We will move faster to build major ecological shields, develop a national park-based nature reserve system, and expand forest coverage to 24.1 percent of China's total land area.
- (13) In the course of pursuing development, we will take steps to address imbalances and inadequacies in development.
- (14) The period covered by the 14th Five-Year Plan will be the first five years in which we embark on a new journey to build China into a modern socialist country in all respects.

JOURNEY metaphors are target-oriented that take root in the operation of the human body, leading to their simple structures that are easy to understand (Johnson, 1987). The *Report* constructs the Chinese government as the leader of the journey that, by formulating proper policies, guides the whole nation to work together to pursue the Chinese Dream. JOURNEY frame is employed to tell the Chinese people that a bright future is approaching despite the arduous process. Thus, they become more confident in achieving economic development, improving ecological conditions, and even building a modern socialist country. In the JOURNEY frame, a positive attitude is conveyed through the depiction of a bright future to the public, which galvanizes the government to obtain many a support concerning political policies.

#### 4.4 Analysis of Moral Models

In political discourse, the highest level of framing is morality, and politicians usually use framing and reframing to build up connections between policies and moral concepts by taking people's psychology into consideration so as to achieve conceptual manipulation (Wang, 2014). From the analyses in the previous sections, it can be found that the government constructs itself as a "leader" and the citizens as "participants". Both sides are supposed to pull together so that satisfying results can be obtained. The special discourse framing is related to the moral notion of *Gongtianxia* (the world being equally shared by all). As the foundation of traditional Chinese moral culture, *Gongtianxia* becomes the origin of other social and moral concepts (Dai, 2013).

Acting as a "leader", the Chinese government, guided by the concept of *Gongtianxia*, has first demonstrated its efforts in exploring a modern governance model by incorporating modern governance methods and concepts into it. The modern version of *Gongtianxia* governance embraces various forms. Among them, "the integration of people's subjectivity with the leadership of the party and the government" becomes the most representative one, which means that people are hosts of the country whose subjectivity can be realized under the guidance of the party and the government (Yan, 2020).

(15) Yet, local authorities and government departments across the country kept in mind the big picture and shouldered their responsibilities, ... Our people worked hard and fought adversity in close solidarity and with the unyielding spirit of the Chinese nation, thus proving themselves true heroes.

(16) Let us rally more closely around the Party Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core ... and push forward in a concerted effort to complete the objectives and tasks for this year and celebrate the centenary of the Communist Party of China with outstanding achievements.

As can be seen from examples (15) and (16), the Chinese people have joined in state building, and their subjectivity has been given full play, which greatly owes to the Chinese government's insistence on the criterion that everyone should be responsible for the rise and fall of the nation. At the same time, the Chinese people, together with the government, are enlightened by the traditional virtues of perseverance and persistence to endeavor to create a highly civilized society with prosperity, equality, and great harmony.

#### 5. Conclusion

This article conducts in-depth analyses of the English version of *The 2021 Report on the Work of the Government* from the perspectives of conceptual metaphors, frames, and moral models. It is found that: first, the *Report* adopts metaphorical frames such as WAR, ARCHITURE, and JOURNEY. Through discourse framing, the Chinese government is committed to seeking people's agreement and inspiring them to engage in state building. Second, in the *Report*, the Chinese government has set up an intimate relationship with the citizens and has constructed the image of itself as a responsible, positive and reliable "leader". Third, the frames employed by the government are rooted in the traditional Chinese moral notion of *Gongtianxia*, 'the world being equally shared by all', which shows a unique discourse framing with Chinese characteristics. On the basis of CFT, this study helps readers understand the Chinese political discourse system as well as its national values and moral models, providing references for research on political discourse. However, for all the above conclusions that have been reached, there still remain some limitations concerning this research. The author selects only *The 2021 Report* as an example, which may not suffice for the arguments presented in this article to be convincing enough. For future research regarding Chinese political discourse, scholars may try to conduct diachronic studies to find out the evolution of the government's discourse framing.

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