

NGHIÊN CỨU ĐỐI CHIẾU VỀ ẨN DỤ Ý NIỆM TÌNH YÊU TRONG TIẾNG ANH VÀ TIẾNG VIỆT

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Trong bài viết này, tác giả thực hiện nghiên cứu chuyên sâu về các thành ngữ biểu thị cảm xúc YÊU trong tiếng Anh và tiếng Việt nhằm mục đích phân tích và so sánh ẩn dụ ý niệm TÌNH YÊU giữa hai ngôn ngữ này dưới góc độ liên văn hóa và ngôn ngữ. Thuyết ẩn dụ ý niệm được áp dụng để phân tích ngữ liệu tiếng Anh và tiếng Việt một cách độc lập. Bài viết này cũng nhằm chứng minh rằng ẩn dụ ý niệm TÌNH YÊU trong tiếng Anh và tiếng Việt chịu ảnh hưởng không chỉ bởi các yếu tố sinh lý học mà còn cả các yếu tố văn hóa.

Từ khóa: ý niệm hoá ẩn dụ, tình yêu, ẩn dụ ý niệm, hoán dụ ý niệm, thành ngữ tiếng Việt, thành ngữ tiếng Anh, ngôn ngữ học tri nhận.

This paper undertakes an in-depth investigation of the idioms that express the emotion (EIs) of LOVE in English and Vietnamese and aims to offer excellent opportunities for cross-language and cross-cultural comparison and analysis into metaphorical conceptualization of LOVE between the two languages. The analysis of the data was carried out for the English and Vietnamese individually following the Conceptual Metaphor Theory. This paper also aims to prove that the metaphorical conceptualization of LOVE in English and Vietnamese is influenced by not only physiological, but also cultural factors.

Keywords: metaphorical conceptualization, love, conceptual metaphor, conceptual metonymy, Vietnamese idioms, English idioms, Cognitive linguistics.

ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE METAPHORICAL CONCEPTUALIZATION OF LOVE: A CONTRASTIVE STUDY

1. Introduction

Cognitive linguistics has stressed the vital importance of conceptual metonymies and conceptual metaphors as the two fundamental types of cognitive models (Huang, 2002) in which people comprehend abstract concepts (Kövecses, 2000). Conceptual metonymies and conceptual metaphors serve as a means of viewing one concept in terms of another concept, of finding coherence across unrelated events, and of providing conceptual schemata (or folk theory/cultural models) through which humans can understand the objective

world (Quinn, 1991). In other words, we think about social reality in terms of cultural models (Geeraerts, 2003). A cultural model (or folk model/ideational system/naïve understanding) is defined as a system of connected ideas or a coherent organization of human experience about a domain in such a schema which is shared with other members of one's cultural group, and is inherently constituted by conceptual metonymy and conceptual metaphor (Kövecses, 2005).

LOVE is the most fundamental of human needs (Greenberg & Paivio, 1997). It is regarded as a complex and salient emotion (Murphy, 1996). There are varieties of love: family love (e.g., love for parents, siblings, and children); friendship love, i.e., non-kinship or non-

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sexuality love (e.g., love for teachers); religious love (e.g., love for God); love of things; love in a romantic sense (Tissari, 2005); and marital love (Tissari, 2001). LOVE in this paper focusses on romantic or sexual love.

This paper is based on conceptual metonymies and conceptual metaphors to describe and analyze the idioms that express LOVE in English and Vietnamese. The relevant dimensions of cross-linguistic and cross-cultural variation in the articulation of the emotion are provided. To this end, the description of semantic patterning of English emotions expressing idioms is presented first, followed by that of Vietnamese. The similarities and differences between the two languages will then be analyzed and discussed. In order to focus the discussion, we deliberately chose only salient features from the emotion, so it is not intended to be a comprehensive description. This paper also aims to prove that metaphors and metonymies involved in the idioms have a strong link not only to physiological, but also to cultural, influences.

1. LOVE in English

1.1. Conceptual Metonymies for LOVE

The English data reveals that loving visual behaviours appear to be salient (Kövecses, 1988). The eye contact signals LOVE that an individual holds toward someone:

- (1) a. *give somebody the glad eye*
 b. *have a roving eye*
 c. *the apple of somebody's eye*
 d. *make eyes at somebody*
 e. *can hardly take one's eye off somebody*
 f. *cast sheep's eyes at somebody*

It is conventional that the picture of the beloved makes an indelible impression on the lover's eyes which are a window and a portal to one's soul (Miller, 1997), and then impresses on to the lover's heart. The idiom in (1c) comes from the Bible: "he found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye" (Deuteronomy 32:10). The idiom refers to the pupil of the eye and the ancient idea that the eye's pupil is apple-shaped. In Greek mythology, the apple preserves its wonderful symbolic power in courtship as well as the rites and customs of marriage. For instance, a happy couple in the seventh century B.C. might share an apple as a symbol of their marriage and hopes for a fruitful union. The apple is therefore symbolic of ecstasy, fertility and LOVE (McCartney, 1925).

Increased body heat is also regarded as an index of LOVE in English. In a fiery love affair, the experiencer's body temperature is assumed to become hot. This is in consistent with the metonymy INCREASE IN BODY HEAT STANDS FOR LOVE (Kövecses, 2000):

- (2) a. *have the hots for*
 b. *have a warm corner in one's heart for somebody*

In intense LOVE, individuals show an inability to function normally, or they can experience interference with accurate perception:

- (3) a. *like a moth to the flame*
 b. *only have eyes for somebody*
 c. *see nothing but somebody*

LOVE entails intimacy and physical contact with the loved one. Lovers have a desire to exhibit some intimate verbal behaviours, which are seen as expressions

of LOVE (Sternberg & Grajek, 1984). These represent a metonymy INTIMATE BEHAVIOUR STANDS FOR LOVE (Kövecses, 1990):

- (4) a. *bill and coo*
b. *sweet nothings*

The idioms in (4) refer to a talk between lovers which is no doubt very intimate and sentimental. The idiom in (4a) evokes an image of the two birds that bill and coo: they touch beaks and make noise to each other. This alludes to words of affection exchanged by lovers. Swearing in the sense of solemnly undertaking to do or give something, as special loving verbal behaviour, is also found in the English data:

- (5) *plight/pledge one's troth to somebody*

1.2. Conceptual Metaphors for LOVE

The detailed examination of the English data has shown that the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A UNITY is prominent and central in English (Beger & Jäkel, 2009). LOVE represents a fusion of two halves:

- (6) a. *made for each other*
b. *a match made in heaven*
c. *hung up on somebody*
d. *tie the knot*

The idioms in (6) refer to “perfect harmony, an idyllic state” (Kövecses, 1986, p. 63). The two parts or lovers form an ideal unity in which they are maximally complementary to each other. They are dependent on each other: one part seems to be incomplete and cannot really function normally without the other part. Such a conceptualization is correlated to the physical or chemical unity in real life. A teapot and its lid can be an example of some physical unity.

Oxygen and hydrogen that form an atom of water can be a good example of a unity of chemical elements. This knowledge is carried over to the domain of LOVE. Lovers desire to be physically together, in each other's company as much as they can. The closer lovers get to each other, the more they approach UNITY (Tissari, 2005). This is based on the metonymy EMOTIONAL EFFECT IS PHYSICAL CONTACT (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

LOVE is characterized as interpersonal. In a LOVE relationship, a lover is considered “only a half, the other half is made up by the beloved” (Kövecses, 1986, p. 63), forming the unity. This conceptualization dates back to Plato, who tells us through Aristophanes that in order to punish them for *hubris* (i.e., arrogant pride or presumption), Zeus cleft human beings in two (Kövecses, 1988, p. 18). As a consequence of this conceptual frame, we see LOVE as a kind of need. LOVE is interpreted as an attempt to find the other half, or a matter of defining oneself in terms of another person (Solomon, 1994). Lovers are therefore supposed to share everything and not to care about one another's social standing: e.g., *warts and all*, or *think the world of somebody*. When in LOVE, the individuals even love their partner's faults. LOVE is supposed to be mutual, or the lovers love each other to an equal degree (Kövecses, 1986, 1988).

The UNITY metaphor implies a cohesive force that ties the two partners together. However, just similar to the weak/strong physical quality of the tie, the LOVE relationship is either weak or strong and may weaken as time goes by. In other words, the two physical objects that form a unity can become a single unit one day. This knowledge is mapped on to LOVE: the unity of the LOVE relationship may cease to exist together, as indicated in the

idiom *be on the rocks*. As we have seen, LOVE is not only portrayed as physical closeness, but also “the spiritual merger of two souls into one” (Stearns, 1994, p. 172). The pursuit for union with someone else is the primary end (Soble, 1997; Tissari, 2005). Thus, LOVE is described as a process: it comes from movement, it develops and grows. These give rise to the durative conceptualization (Glynn, 2002) LOVE IS A JOURNEY (Kövecses, 1986):

- (7) a. *go for somebody*
- c. *go steady*
- b. *go over well*
- d. *at the crossroads*
- e. *go one's separate ways*
- f. *on the rocks*

The individuals in LOVE are travellers on a journey and their LOVE goal is seen as a destination that can be reached by means of different routes. The idioms in (7) refer to different kinds of journeys: a car trip and a sea voyage, as indicated in (7d) and (7f), respectively. (7f) also refers to the richness of the English seafaring tradition (Lakoff, 1993).

The conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY is cognitively highly motivated (Aksan & Kantar, 2008). It inherits the features of the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY, which is based on the EVENT STRUCTURE metaphor (Lakoff, 1993). LOVE IS A JOURNEY is consistent with primary metaphors that are based on universal human experiences (Grady, 1997) such as PURPOSES ARE DESTINATIONS. There is an asymmetry between the source domain of JOURNEY and the target domain of LOVE. LOVE, as an abstract concept, is expressed in terms of a JOURNEY, as a concrete concept. The correspondences between the two domains can be ontological and epistemic.

Ontological correspondences equate some part of LOVE with some part of a JOURNEY. Epistemic correspondences equate some process connected with LOVE with the corresponding process connected with a JOURNEY. For instance, a JOURNEY has a starting point and an end point, and so has LOVE (i.e., ontological mappings). On a JOURNEY, people can encounter obstacles which are equated with difficulties in the LOVE relationship that lovers may have to overcome (i.e., epistemic correspondences) (Lakoff, 1987), as shown in (7d-f). In addition, LOVE IS A JOURNEY implies that the romantic relationship is not in the couple's active control. The metaphor reflects the three central aspects of falling in LOVE: passiveness, lack of control, and pleasantness (Kövecses, 1986). The data in (8) shows that the experiencers of LOVE are not actively involved in the process. This gives rise to the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A NATURAL/PHYSICAL FORCE in English:

- (8) a. *sweep somebody off their feet*
- b. *steal somebody's heart*
- c. *throw oneself at somebody's feet*
- d. *fling oneself at somebody*
- e. *make a move on somebody*
- f. *attracted to*
- g. *mashed on*
- h. *hung up on somebody*
- i. *can hardly take one's eyes off somebody*
- j. *fall for somebody*
- k. *fall in love*
- l. *fall for somebody's hook, line and sinker*

The force can be natural (e.g., wind, flood, and storm), mechanical, magnetic, and magical, as indicated in, for example, (8a), (8c-d), (8f), and (8h), respectively.

The conceptualization is grounded on our awareness of the external world. Thanks to revolutionary discoveries, we have learnt about natural forces, magnetism, electricity, gravity, and the like. We could observe, measure, and test them. These experiences are carried over the target domain of LOVE. In general, the force produces some great effect on the experiencers, who are passive. The act of *falling*, as shown in (8j-1) implies something that happens to the experiencers, not something that they do (Kövecses, 1986). The experiencers cannot help but undergo the impact, which can lead to their lack of control over the situation.

An alternative conceptual metaphor that underlies the collected idioms in English is LOVE IS FIRE (Coleman, 1999, pp. 108-109). The metaphor is experientially based on increased body heat:

- (9) a. *an old flame*
 b. *like a moth to the flame*
 c. *carry a torch for somebody*

The idioms in (9) refer to the heat waves inside the body that individuals experience when in LOVE (Niemeier, 2000). LOVE is understood in terms of fire, since fire involves burning with physical light and warmth. The FIRE mappings also allude to its possible consequences: the experiencers may have to suffer from the emotion, because when there is too much heat, the person or thing is consumed or burned out and consequently, the person becomes dysfunctional.

Like the other idioms in (9), *carry a torch for someone* (9c) in general means 'love someone'. However, this idiom has an additional sense of 'be in love with someone, but that person may be involved with another person'. This is to say that

the mapping based on the domain of FIRE fails to explain the complete meaning of the idiom. This part of the meaning of the idiom would therefore have to "be learned independently and on top of the mappings that characterize the "fire system" (Kövecses, 2001, p. 98).

The conceptual metaphor LOVE IS LIGHT (Coleman, 1999; Tissari, 2005) is conceivably related to LOVE IS FIRE, since fire gives off light. In addition, when in LOVE, people are likely to show happiness in their eyes. Such happiness can be conceived as LIGHT (Tissari, 2005). This conceptual metaphor is also consistent with the generic-level metaphor POSITIVE EMOTIONS ARE LIGHT (Stefanowitsch, 2006):

- (10) a. *the light of one's life*
 b. *think the sun shines out somebody's backside*
 c. *take a shine to somebody*

We have previously shown that LOVE is conceptualized as a NATURAL/PHYSICAL FORCE that passivizes the experiencers: lovers cannot help falling in LOVE. An alternative conceptual metaphor LOVE IS MAGIC (Coleman, 1999) evokes the same notion: LOVE has control over the experiencers. People in LOVE lose their common sense (Kövecses, 2000):

- (11) a. *cast her spell*
 b. *be gone on somebody*
 c. *be spellbound*
 d. *lose one's heart to somebody*

The quality of magic that LOVE possesses may result in madness in LOVE (Tissari, 2005, p. 153). This gives rise to the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS INSANITY:

- (12) a. *wild about somebody*
 b. *be dead nuts on somebody*
 c. *rave about someone*
 d. *drive one out of one's mind*
 e. *head over heels in love*
 f. *wear one's heart on one's sleeve*

In this metaphor, corresponding to the individual under the influence of insanity is the individual in LOVE. The behaviours of an insane individual are carried over to those of an individual in LOVE. And the person makes an individual mad is the object of LOVE (Kövecses, 1986). The metaphor implies an ultimate lack of control. When madly in LOVE, the individuals will become spellbound and be in possession of void faculties or show a complete loss of rationality (Harvey & Shalom, 1997). The folk theory suggests that when in LOVE, the experiencers usually become silly and absent-minded. Even though there is no scientific evidence proving that the people in LOVE necessarily lose their minds, the naïve understanding (i.e., folk theory) can sometimes directly contradict the facts of the scientific research.

In summary, the physiological effects accompanying LOVE in English include loving visual behaviours, increased body heat, interference with accurate perception, and intimate verbal behaviours. LOVE is

metaphorically conceptualized as A UNITY, A JOURNEY, A NATURAL/ PHYSICAL FORCE, FIRE, LIGHT, MAGIC, and INSANITY.

2. LOVE in Vietnamese

2.1. Conceptual Metonymies for LOVE

LOVE evokes some form of intimate contact with the loved one (Greenberg & Goldman, 2008). Our data shows that LOVE in Vietnamese, as in English, is expressed via lovers' exchange of glances:

- (13) a. *đầu mày cuối mắt*
 start brow end eye
 'give somebody the glad eye'
 b. *liếc mắt đưa tình*
 glance furtively eye give love
 'give somebody the glad eye'

The alternative dominant biological index of LOVE in Vietnamese is that the individuals experience overall body agitation:

- (14) a. *xao lòng*
 get stirred intestine
 'be interested in somebody'
 b. *hừng tình*
 aroused love
 'get aroused with love'

As a corollary of agitation, people in the throes of LOVE demonstrate actions showing a loss of control:

- (15) a. *lấp ló* *như chó tháng bảy*
 appear and disappear in turn like dog July
 'display actions of less control due to love'
 b. *nhí nhắt như chuột ngày*
 fidget like mouse daytime
 'display actions of less control due to love'

The idiom in (15a) refers to the copulation season of dogs – July. Dogs usually become lascivious and seek their partners during this time. They are bustling and appear impatient. Mice in (15b) display actions showing a loss of control. They often search for food at night and hide in the daytime. Therefore, if they have to find food in the daytime, perhaps due to hunger, they move restlessly and nervously. The behaviours

seen in dogs and mice are profiled as the physiological effects of LOVE.

As already mentioned, LOVE entails intimacy and physical contact with the loved one: lovers are physically drawn to each other and have a desire to touch and to be touched (Greenberg & Goldman, 2008). They exhibit some physical contact, such as hugging, walking hand-in-hand or shoulder-to-shoulder. These represent a metonymy INTIMATE BEHAVIOUR STANDS FOR LOVE (Kövecses, 1990):

- (16) a. *áp* *mận* *ôm* *đào*
embrace plum hug peach
'be physically close together for love'
- b. *dập dừu* *trúc* *mai*
flit about bamboo-like phyllostachys apricot
'be physically close together for love'
- c. *đầu* *gối* *tay* *áp*
head rest on hand embrace
'be physically close together for love'
- d. *má* *tựa* *vai* *kề*
cheek lean against shoulder adjoin
'be physically close together for love'
- e. *môi* *kề* *má* *áp*
lips adjoin cheek embrace
'be physically close together for love'
- f. *đầu* *gối* *má* *kề*
head rest on cheek adjoin
'be physically close together for love'

As members of a traditionally agricultural society, Vietnamese people value gardens highly. *Mận* and *đào*; *trúc* and *mai*, as indicated in (16a) and (16b), respectively signal this. Vietnamese people often refer to these plants not just as general domestic trees in their gardens, but with a specific allusion: *mận* and *trúc* allude to a male adult; *đào* and *mai* to a female adult. These plants are personified, which can hug or flit about like a couple in LOVE. These intimate behaviours

signify LOVE. The behaviours also evoke attachment and integrity between the two people in LOVE. Lovers experience a sense of existing in the hearts and minds of their partners and of being their recipient of the partners' empathy, care, closeness, and compassion (Greenberg & Paivio, 1997). Embracing cannot exclusively characterize LOVE (Kövecses, 2000), since we can embrace our friends, our parents, and our teachers. However, the metonymy encodes typical response of LOVE.

As in English, when in LOVE, lovers in Vietnamese culture often exhibit a special intimate verbal behaviour: swearing to confirm their LOVE and loyalty:

(17)

a. *chỉ non thề biển*
point mountain swear sea
'swear to confirm one's love'

b. *hẹn ngọc thề vàng*
plight one's troth pearl swear gold
'swear to confirm one's love'

c. *hẹn non thề biển*
plight one's troth mountain swear sea
'swear to confirm one's love'

The traditional gesture of pointing to the mountain and the act of swearing are to declare the partners' commitment to staying together: agreeing to marry and remain faithful. Such an act also shows the lovers' efforts to stay in the love relationship through the hard times and find mutually acceptable solutions to any obstacles or conflicts that may arise.

2.2. Conceptual Metaphors for LOVE

Like the other emotions, romantic LOVE in Vietnamese is structured in metaphorical terms. The dominant conceptual metaphor that underlies a wealth of the collected Vietnamese idioms is LOVE IS A UNITY, which is also found in English. The idioms in (18) exhibit union between lovers (Greenberg & Paivio, 1997):

(18)

a. *nồi nào úp vung nấy*
pot PART cover lid PART
'a match made in heaven'

b. *như đũa có đôi*
like chopsticks have pair
'made for each other'

c. *kề kề như sam*
always close by like clam
'made for each other'

d. *gối phượng chăn loan*
pillow male phoenix blanket
female phoenix

'made for each other'

e. *như bóng với hình*
like shadow with shade
'made for each other'

f. *chắp cánh liền cành*
stick together wings adjoin
tree branch

'made for each other'

g. *đính như keo*
sticky like glue
'made for each other'

h. *hoa đâu bướm đấy*
flower there is butterfly there is
'made for each other'

i. *tâm đầu ý hợp*
heart match mind harmonize
'made for each other'

LOVE is conceptualized as a UNITY. The word *unity* has its etymological root of a Latin word *unus*, meaning 'one' (Kövecses, 2000). The unity can be physical, biological, and spiritual, as shown in (18a-b), (18c-h), and (18i), respectively. The conceptualization is grounded in the experiential experience of Vietnamese. For instance, the physical unity is evoked via an image of a saucepan and its lid and a pair of chopsticks. It is a pot in its real sense if it forms a pair with the lid. Similarly, a pair of chopsticks only functions properly when they are in pair. Thus, the absence of one impedes the normal functioning of the other (Kövecses, 1990). The biological unity can be seen in clams which are in nature always together, in the interrelationship between flowers and butterflies, or the sticky quality of glue. The physical and biological clinginess is conceptualized as emotional dependence: i.e., UNITY.

In traditional Vietnamese culture, a butterfly, as in (18h), represents LOVE, specifically young LOVE. Happily flitting about from flowers to flowers, a butterfly signifies a happy social life for the young and young at heart. In addition, a butterfly symbolizes an undying bond between lovers. A perfect gift for a new married couple is traditionally an image of a butterfly and a flower embroidered on handkerchiefs or towels for the couple's home. Representative of the *đương* 'yang' energy – the energy of LOVE – this symbol can energize the two lovers.

LOVE is a relationship, and as such it is conceptualized as a bond holding the two halves together. This conceptualization is, as we have seen, based on our knowledge about physical things in the objective world. The tie can then be understood as either weak or strong. If the tie is strong, the LOVE is strong, and if the tie is weak, then the LOVE relationship is weak. The stability of LOVE is then understood in terms of the stability of the physical entity. It can further be suggested that UNITY is essential for LOVE to last.

Lovers expect to stay together for the rest of their lives; their LOVE bond between them is inseparable, unbreakable, and lasting (Quinn, 1991). LOVE is therefore a maintained commitment of a lover to the beloved (Lakoff & Turner, 1989). The maintained commitment, as a component of LOVE (Noller, 1996), includes distinctive features: faithfulness or fidelity, loyalty, and responsibilities (Fehr, 1988). This gives rise to the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS COMMITMENT:

- (19) a. *đầu bạc răng long*
hair snow-white teeth get loose
'lifetime commitment to each other'

- b. *ăn đời ở kiếp*
eat life live destiny
'lifetime commitment to each other'
- c. *mãn đời trọn kiếp*
end life complete destiny
'lifetime commitment to each other'
- d. *ba sinh hương lửa*
three lives joss-stick burn
'lifetime commitment to each other'
- e. *kết bạn trăm năm*
make friend 100 year
'lifetime commitment to each other'

In traditional Vietnamese culture, LOVE is considered an important life event and is expected to last forever. Breakup is seen as a dishonourable matter, resulting in much pressure from the families on the couple, and in turn from the neighbourhood, on both the lovers and their families. The long-lasting LOVE relationship in (19) is therefore undertaken by the active and conscious efforts of the two parties involved: their lifetime commitment to each other. The LOVE lasts long as the two lovers move onwards. The LOVE relationship between the two parties in (19) is secure and indestructible till death parts them. The idiom in (19d) refers to an act of burning incense by the two lovers to swear to stay together forever (Dung, Anh, & Hào, 2000). The commitment binds the two lovers and forms the foundation on which the LOVE relationship can grow. It serves as the force that enables the romantic relationship to withstand adversity and overcome obstacles. The commitment fosters a sense of continuity, stability, and connection between the two individuals that is expected to last a lifetime (Levinson, Ponzetti, & Jorgensen, 1999).

LOVE in Vietnamese culture involves a relationship, as in (19e). Thus, the emotion partakes of friendship that typically characterizes human relationships (Kövecses, 2000). LOVE “at least ideally involves or assumes friendship between the two lovers” (Kövecses, Palmer, & Dirven, 2002, p. 138). Vietnamese people see their romantic partner as their closest friend with whom they can share or communicate all *niềm vui nỗi buồn* ‘happiness and sadness’, including secrets and innermost feelings. The idiom indicates the level of closeness and commitment. A hundred years in Vietnamese culture implies longevity.

For its maintenance, LOVE requires cooperation, dedication, and compromise. LOVE demands shared responsibility and sacrifice, a level of mutual attention and care (Greenberg & Paivio, 1997). When in LOVE, people usually want to fulfil the lover’s needs and have their own needs fulfilled by their lovers (Quinn, 1991). This yields the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS RECIPROCATING OF OBJECTS:

(20)

- a. *chia bùi sẻ ngọt*
share buttery taste share sweet
‘be madly in love with somebody’
- b. *chia cay sẻ đắng*
share pungent share bitter
‘be madly in love with somebody’
- c. *chung chăn chung gối*
share blanket share pillow
‘be madly in love with somebody’
- d. *trao xương đổi thịt*
give bone exchange meat
‘be madly in love with somebody’
- e. *thương nhau bồ hòn cũng ngọt*
love each other soapberry also sweet
‘warts and all’

- f. *thương nhau củ ấu cũng tròn*
love each other water chestnut¹ also round
‘warts and all’

The idioms in (20) indicate an interexchange, a sexual partnership and a trade-off of concerns (Solomon, 1990). They share themselves (e.g., 20d) and their possessions (e.g., 20c) with the beloved (Sternberg & Grajek, 1984). They share positive things (e.g., sweetness) and even negative things (e.g., bitterness). Lovers in Vietnamese are expected to give and gain. They do not care about how much they gain in a love relationship or about how much they give to the other party. They naturally share without expecting much in return; they even accept inequality, as indicated in (20e-f). When in LOVE, people are willing to tolerate their partners’ shortcomings or the less pleasant aspects of the other: e.g., ugly appearance. A water chestnut or water caltrop with barbed spines in (20f) will never become round. Soapberry in (20e) will never become sweet, either. However, LOVE can wear down such inequality. This indicates the value and degree of one’s LOVE in Vietnamese culture.

The alternative conceptual metaphor that underlies the Vietnamese data is LOVE IS MAGIC, which is also available in English:

(21)

- a. *phải bùa phải bả*
get spell get poisoned food
‘be head over heel in love’

¹ Water chestnuts are floating aquatic plants whose fruits are nuts with barbed spines.

- b. *ăn phải bùa mê thuốc lú*
eat spell medicine of forgetfulness
'be head over heel in love'
- c. *như bị ma ám*
like get possessed with a devil
'be head over heel in love'
- d. *mê mẩn tâm thần*
completely bewitched heart mind
'be spellbound'

In Vietnamese superstition, *bùa/bùa mê, bả*, and *thuốc lú*, as in (21b-c), can have a magic power and bewitch people. A folk belief holds that the cast-off skin of a cicada or the slough of *con ruốc/tép* (a very small marine shrimp) are the two major materials used to make a spell (Dung, Anh, & Hào, 2000). People under the influence of spells will lose their faculties, be misled, and be out of control. It is clear from the idioms in (21) that LOVE in Vietnamese culture is associated with bewitchment. LOVE exerts the pull of sexual attraction on someone. The lovers are fascinated with their partners. LOVE in Vietnamese enters someone like a magic spell, which evokes a sense of powerlessness over the lovers. As in English, this conceptual metaphor reflects the central aspects of falling in LOVE: passiveness, lack of control, and rapture.

A wealth of the collected idioms in Vietnamese shows that LOVE is conceptualized as *DUYÊN/ PREDESTINED ARRANGEMENT*, which is nonexistent in English idioms:

(22)

- a. *vừa duyên phải lứa*
fit dependent origination well-suited couple
'have got it badly'
- b. *duyên ưa phận đẹp*
dependent origination fond fate beautiful
'have got it badly'

- c. *cá nước duyên may*
fish water dependent origination luck
'have got it badly'

The idioms in (22) refer to the Buddhist² concept of *duyên* 'dependent origination' or *nhân duyên* 'predestined relationship' which is cultivated from a previous life (Chang & Holt, 1991). The concept of *nhân duyên* (or *yinyuan* in Chinese) stems from the Sanskrit word *hetupratyaya* (Chuang, 2004). *Nhân* (*yin/hetu*) refers to a principal cause, while *duyên* (*yuan/pratyaya*) is defined as "secondary causation" (Chang & Holt, 1991, p. 30). For instance, seed is principal cause; rain, water, climate, weather, and the seed-grower are secondary causes (Chuang, 2004). *Duyên* and *nhân duyên* are used simultaneously by the Vietnamese to depict the development of a love relationship or the lack thereof. It is via *nhân duyên* that the two lovers "serendipitously cross paths" (Chuang, 2004, p. 40). In Vietnamese traditional culture, influenced by Chinese myths and fatalism, the concept of *duyên* also refers to the fate, as indicated in (22b) or luck/fortune, as indicated in (22c) that brings the two people together to become lovers, and husband and wife in the future. Vietnamese believe that LOVE is affected by karma/the law of causality, which is predetermined by one's previous deeds

² Buddhism "was the earliest foreign religion to be introduced in Vietnam, arriving from India in the first century A.D. in the form of the Mahayana sect via China and the Hinayana sect via Thailand, Cambodia, and Laos. During the tenth century feudal reign of Vietnam, Buddhism was considered a state religion. Mahayana Buddhism became the faith of most Vietnamese, whereas Theravada (Hinayana) Buddhism was confined mostly in the southern delta region" (Srichampa, 2004, p. 105).

(Niwano, 1980). Therefore, if *không có duyên* ‘not to have *duyên*’ or *nhân duyên trắc trở* ‘bad *nhân duyên*’, the two lovers may part ways or are in conflict with each other. Yinyuan can, then, bring a love relationship to fruition and can also harm the relationship due to the seeds planted in one’s *kiếp trước* ‘past life’ (Chuang, 2004). In addition, *duyên* emphasizes the fatalistic nature of LOVE that is out of control of human beings. Therefore, Vietnamese speakers appear to adopt a more traditional model as a passive undergoer of LOVE, rather than “rational makers or creators of LOVE” (Aksan & Kantar, 2008, p. 284).

Intriguingly, our Vietnamese data in (23) indicates that LOVE is understood in terms of the source domain of HEAVINESS, which gives rise to the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS INTERNAL HEAVINESS:

- (23) a. *nặng lòng*
heavy heart
‘be much in love with somebody’

- (24) *một ngày nặng gánh tương tư một ngày*
one day heavy burden lovesickness one day
‘take great responsibility and more commitments to one’s beloved’

Nặng refers to some experience of “mental suffering”, however, the sufferance or endurance in this sense is internal, purposeful, and even desirable.

This section has detailed the metonymic and metaphorical conceptualizations of LOVE in Vietnamese. The emotion is profiled via the experiencer’s intimate behaviour (e.g., hugging), verbalization, exchanges of loving glances. Body agitation and actions

- b. *nặng gánh tương tư*
heavy burden lovesickness
‘be much in love with somebody’
c. *nặng tình nặng nghĩa*
heavy love heavy loyalty
‘be much in love with somebody’

The conceptual distance between the source domain of HEAVINESS/WEIGHT and the target domain of LOVE is striking. The metaphor maps a negative property: weight on to what is generally taken as a good property: LOVE. When in LOVE, Vietnamese people often say the participants have to carry an internal burden. LOVE is conceived as an entity that enters and affects the individual’s heart/container. Consequently, the individual experiences a mental illness, as shown in (23b). We should note that *nặng* ‘heavy’ in Vietnamese implies that the lovers have to bear more responsibility, endure more hardship, and make more commitments both physically and spiritually to their beloved. This is reflected in the *Truyện Kiều* verse number 568:

(Nguyễn Du, *Truyện Kiều*)

showing a loss of control also participate in the expression of LOVE. As an abstract concept, LOVE is not always directly accessible to our understanding. Speakers of Vietnamese therefore have to experience it in terms of other concepts that are concrete and more accessible to their comprehension, such as UNITY, MAGIC, COMMITMENT, *DUYÊN*, RECIPROCATING OF OBJECTS, and INTERNAL HEAVINESS.

3. Cross-linguistic and Cross-cultural Comparison

3.1. Similarities

Table 1 Distribution of Conceptual Metonymies for LOVE in English and Vietnamese

Conceptual Metonymies	English	Vietnamese
LOVING VISUAL BEHAVIOUR STANDS FOR LOVE	+	+
INCREASE IN BODY HEAT STANDS FOR LOVE	+	-
INTIMATE VERBALIZATION STANDS FOR LOVE	+	+
INTIMATE BEHAVIOUR STANDS FOR LOVE	-	+
DISTURBED PERCEPTION STANDS FOR LOVE	+	-
OVERALL BODY AGITATION STANDS FOR LOVE	-	+
ACTIONS OF REDUCED CONTROL STANDS FOR LOVE	-	+
Note: + = existent; - = nonexistent	Total: 4	Total: 5

The eyes have often been depicted as the windows of the soul (Kövecses, 2000, p. 172). Much of our knowledge about the world comes through the eyes (Peña, 2001). In some contexts, gazing at another person's eyes may arouse strong emotion, in this case, LOVE. Lovers gaze into each other's eyes for extended periods of time to show their intense affection. It therefore comes as no surprise that loving visual behaviours, as presented in Table 1, are employed by both English and Vietnamese cultures to indicate LOVE.

Intimate verbal behaviour is also selected to conceptualize LOVE in both languages. As we have seen, LOVE moves the individuals to approach, seek, or get closer to the person that they love. Exchanges of loving words are a potent means to get the two parties united. In other words, LOVE leads the participants to do things to and with the beloved (Frankfurt, 1999). LOVE is not only about

how the participants feel, but also how they behave (Hamilton, 2006). Thus, we can judge whether the individuals are in LOVE by their behaviours, since their intimate behaviours declare their LOVE (Murstein, 1988).

As already discussed in sections 1.1 for English and 2.1 for Vietnamese, LOVE can be defined in terms of inherent properties, such as fondness, affection, intimacy, and sexual desire. However, LOVE is only partly understood in terms of such properties. For the most part, LOVE is metaphorically comprehended. It is primarily construed in terms of concepts for other natural kinds of experience: e.g., JOURNEY or PHYSICAL FORCE. These concepts emerge from our interactions with one another and with the world. Accordingly, English and Vietnamese bear some similarities in the metaphorical conceptualization of LOVE, as illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2 Distribution of Conceptual Metaphors for LOVE in English and Vietnamese

Conceptual Metaphors	English	Vietnamese
LOVE IS A NATURAL/PHYSICAL FORCE	+	-
LOVE IS A JOURNEY	+	-
LOVE IS A UNITY	+	+
LOVE IS MAGIC	+	+
LOVE IS FIRE	+	-
LOVE IS LIGHT	+	-
LOVE IS INSANITY	+	-
LOVE IS COMMITMENT	-	+
LOVE IS <i>DUYÊN</i> /PREDESTINED ARRANGEMENT	-	+
LOVE IS RECIPROCATING OF OBJECTS	-	+
LOVE IS INTERNAL HEAVINESS	-	+
Note: + = existent; – = nonexistent	Total: 7	Total: 6

LOVE IS A UNITY is shared by Vietnamese and English. The two languages employ the same source domain of UNITY to conceptualize LOVE. Lovers aim to merge with their beloved (Soble, 1997). The similarity suggests that both English and Vietnamese believe that the bond between the two lovers is essential for maintaining a love relationship.

The source domain of MAGIC also participates in the conceptualization of LOVE in both English and Vietnamese. For hundreds of years, humankind has been fascinated with things connected with magic, since it often provides explanations for the unknown. People are unlikely to determine how the sensation of LOVE appears, they resort to the magic. The experiencers of LOVE in both cultures are construed to no longer want to be, or to no longer be able to be, in control of their emotions, but let the other individual take control. In sum, LOVE is defined by both English and Vietnamese culture as an

external event destined to happen to the lovers, and is uncontrollable.

3.2. Differences

LOVE in English is metonymically linked to an increase in body heat and disturbed perception, which are absent in Vietnamese. Meanwhile, LOVE in Vietnamese is defined in terms of actions of reduced control. The intensity of the emotion causes the lovers to lose their control. They perform actions that they may not do in normal circumstances.

Notable discrepancies between English and Vietnamese are found in the metaphorical conceptualization of LOVE. The conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A NATURAL/PHYSICAL FORCE, in which LOVE acts as a force and the lovers remain passive against this force, is nonexistent in our Vietnamese data. In other words, the source domain of NATURAL/PHYSICAL FORCE is not encoded in the Vietnamese data. LOVE IS A JOURNEY, LOVE IS FIRE, LOVE IS

LIGHT, and LOVE IS INSANITY are also not applicable in our Vietnamese data. Such conceptualizations of LOVE provide a window on English cultural heritage, and show how the metaphors are influenced by culture.

The metaphors LOVE IS *DUYÊN*/PREDESTINED ARRANGEMENT, LOVE IS COMMITMENT, LOVE IS RECIPROCATING OF OBJECTS, and LOVE IS INTERNAL HEAVINESS are Vietnamese specific, but are marginally present in English. It is noteworthy that LOVE IS *DUYÊN*/PREDESTINED ARRANGEMENT has been inherited from the old days and is still retained and widely used today. It continues to shape Vietnamese present-day views towards LOVE.

Although LOVE IS UNITY is common in both English and Vietnamese, it displays disparity in the expressions of metaphorical imagery reflecting different sociocultural backgrounds. The conceptualization is more elaborated in Vietnamese. Vietnamese has more conventionalized images: a pot and its lid, a pair of chopsticks, pillow and blanket, female and male phoenix. The metaphor's linguistic manifestations are also more varied in Vietnamese than those in English. English encodes UNITY through limited expressions, as indicated in (6). Vietnamese, in contrast, has a variety of conventionalized linguistic expressions that elaborate the same concept, as shown in (18). This is to say that culture has a central role in the selection of linguistic expressions (Aksan & Kantar, 2008).

4. Conclusion

This paper has investigated the semantic patterning of the idioms that express the emotion of LOVE in English and Vietnamese. The idioms have been

analyzed in the framework of cognitive linguistics. This is twofold: we present the semantic patterning of the idioms, and the semantic patterning in turn reveals how English and Vietnamese people talk about and structure the abstract emotional concept of LOVE.

We have shown that, in conceptualizing LOVE, English and Vietnamese have these metaphors in common: LOVE IS A UNITY and LOVE IS MAGIC. However, they do not share the others, such as LOVE IS A NATURAL/PHYSICAL FORCE, LOVE IS FIRE, LOVE IS LIGHT, LOVE IS INSANITY, and LOVE IS A JOURNEY in English, versus LOVE IS COMMITMENT, LOVE IS *DUYÊN*/PREDESTINED ARRANGEMENT, LOVE IS RECIPROCATING OF OBJECTS, and LOVE IS INTERNAL HEAVINESS in Vietnamese. In addition, both English and Vietnamese follow the same metonymic principle: they talk about LOVE by describing the physiological effects of the emotion. Along with the similarities, descriptive differences between the two languages have been provided. For instance, while English profiles disturbed perception, Vietnamese links actions of reduced control to describe LOVE. The discrepancies, both metonymic and metaphorical, show, as we have seen, that the selection of means to express LOVE in each language is to a significant degree culture-dependent (Aksan & Kantar, 2008).

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