

# Cultural Variations in Conceptual Metaphors of Love in English and Vietnamese

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**Abstract:** One central issue in cognitive linguistics that has received interest from researchers in recent years is the conceptual metaphor. This article focuses on cultural variations in conceptual metaphors of love between English and Vietnamese. In order to enhance English teaching and learning, we would like to analyze different possibilities of cultural variations from a cognitive perspective and propose several explanations for those issues.

*Keywords:* Conceptual metaphor, metaphor of love, cultural variations.

## 1. Introduction

For a long time, metaphor has been regarded as an expressive agent that is separated from reality and everyday language. According to Lakoff [1: 202] the word “metaphor” used to be defined as a novel or poetic linguistic expression where one or more words for a concept are used outside of their normal conventional meaning to express a “similar” concept. However, his new concept of metaphor has created a shift in the perception of metaphor. He assigns new features to metaphor and its usage. In his view, metaphor is not only a matter of language, but a matter of thought. In addition, he states that all our existence is metaphorical. He assumes that “... everyday abstract concepts like time, states, change, causation and purpose all turn out to be metaphorical” [1: 203]. Metaphor is viewed as

understanding one conceptual domain in terms of another conceptual domain. A simple way of acquiring this view of metaphor is the following: CONCEPTUAL DOMAIN (A) IS CONCEPTUAL DOMAIN (B). The two domains that involve conceptual metaphor are specifically named. “The target domain is the domain that we try to understand through the use of the source domain” [2: 4]. It is noticeable that a more abstract concept is assigned target and a more concrete or physical concept as their source. Therefore, several domains such as life, arguments, love, friendship and others are chosen as target domains while journeys, building, food, plants and others are source domains. The knowledge we get from experience with the physical world around us enables a natural and logical comprehension of more abstract domains.

Another issue that should be taken into consideration is the difference between the conceptual metaphors and metaphorical linguistic expressions. The latter are words or

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other linguistic expressions that come from the language. Lakoff [1: 203] states that the term “metaphorical expression” refers to a linguistic expression (a word, phrase, sentence) that is the surface realization of such a cross-domain mapping. The concept is explicitly shown on the example of the mapping LOVE IS A JOURNEY. All the expressions that have been used to talk about love and that come from the domain of journey are linguistic metaphorical expressions whereas the corresponding conceptual metaphor that they manifest is LOVE IS A JOURNEY.

## 2. Conceptual metaphors of love in English and Vietnamese

### 2.1. Descriptions of the study

A controversial issue is whether anything can be a source domain for a particular target, in other words, how particular source domains can be selected for particular targets. There seem to be a great number of source domains available for the target concept. However, it is important to notice that not anything can function as a source domain for love.

In fact, love is metaphorically conceptualized in many ways [1]. In addition to LOVE IS A JOURNEY, we understand it in terms of FIRE (*burning* with love), PHYSICAL UNITY (We are as *one*), INSANITY (I’m *madly* in love), ECONOMIC EXCHANGE (She *invested* a lot in that relationship), PHYSICAL FORCES (She *attracts* me *irresistibly*), NATURAL FORCES (He was *swept off* his feet), ILLNESS (She *has it bad*), MAGIC (I’m *enchanted*), RAPTURE (He was *high* on love), WAR (She eventually *surrendered*), GAME (She’s *playing* hard to get) and so on. Our investigation focuses on the following questions.

- Are there any conceptual metaphors of love that can be found in both languages, English and Vietnamese?

- What factors decide the choices of different source domains for target domain LOVE?
- What are variations of those conceptual metaphors of love in English and Vietnamese?

Our analysis is limited to the occurrences of conceptual metaphors of love in English and Vietnamese idioms.

### 2.2. Methods of the study

With an aim to find out conceptual metaphors of love in English and Vietnamese, we have collected 872 idioms indicating social relationships (that is, friendship, love, marriage) of which, we have classified 419 idioms referring to conceptual metaphors of love (accounting for 48%). We then check their occurrences both in English and Vietnamese. Examples then are selected from such a variety of sources as novels, newspapers, magazines, daily interview on radio, television, etc. to illustrate their popularity in daily life.

### 2.3. Results of the study

While the linguistic traditional view focuses on the objective, literal and preexisting similarities between the source and the target, the cognitive linguistic view maintains that the selection of source domains depends on human factors that reflect nonobjective, non-literal, non-preexisting similarities between a source and a target domain. Kövecses [3: 32] assumes that conceptual metaphors are based on a variety of human experience, including correlations in experience, various kinds of nonobjective similarity, biological and cultural roots shared by the two concepts, and possibly others. He supposes that most people comprehend their love experiences and lead their love lives via such conventional conceptual metaphors [3: 32]. It seems that the understanding of love through these source domains provides a sufficiently comprehensive and coherent notion of the concept.

The first question arise here in our study relating to what love is. The triangular theory of love developed by psychologist Robert Sternberg [cited in 3] proposes three components: intimacy, passion and commitment. Intimacy encompasses feelings of attachment, closeness, connectedness, and bondedness. Passion is connected to both emotional and sexual attraction. Commitment is the decision to remain with another. We would include these three components into our analysis.

As can be seen from the table, idioms indicating concepts of love in English and

Vietnamese occupy a great number of occurrences (419/872, accounting for 48.05%). It would be assumed that love is highly conceptualized. This might result from the fact that love is not only an emotion or feeling but a social relationship as well. A variety of source domains found in our study reflect the importance of love in their mind as well as daily life of people speaking these two languages. Our analysis is carried out basing on the principle and classification of six metaphor systems proposed by Kövecses [2] and [3].

No	Conceptual Metaphor System of Love	Vietnamese	English	Total
1	Communication metaphor system	19	46	65
2	State metaphor system	29	33	62
3	Event metaphor system	31	57	88
4	Emotion metaphor system	44	50	94
5	Positive/negative metaphor system	13	19	32
6	Complex metaphor system	57	21	78
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>419</b>

### 2.3.1. Communication metaphor system

In terms of communication, we have collected 65 occurrences of idioms both in English and Vietnamese. Idioms are classified into three groups which characterize different aspects of love. There is a fact that container is a popular source domain in conceptual metaphors. The image of container identifies “the inside- the outside” of the human body with some properties like full/ empty, high/ low, etc. This conceptualization seems to be universal in relevance to emotions and interpersonal relationships including love. In the system of communication metaphor, the number of metaphor LOVE IS A CONTAINER ranks the highest with 51/65 occurrences (78.46%). The nature of love encompasses such a variety of components as belief, attitudes, desire, behavior, etc.

(1). She thinks of Warren. Dear, sweet Warren, that **blue-eyed boy** she loved so, wanted from the moment she saw him, loved in spite of all. (1996. *The Southern Review*. COCA).

The idiom *blue-eyed boy* refers to the beloved. Blue eyes are connected to the innocence and attractiveness of a child. This idiom reflects one aspect of love, that is, attraction.

Love as a container can be observed in the following example, in which the space of the container is the focus.

(2). Thế nhưng **cao không tới, thấp không thông**.... Cũng vì quá tự tin và bản lĩnh, đã bao lần họ để vụt mất thứ quý giá nhất trong cuộc sống. Đó là tình yêu. (03.12.2008. Dantri.com.vn) (But someone is out of their reach. As being overconfident and determined,

they have lost the most valuable thing in their life for many times)

The metaphor LOVE IS A PLAY or A STORY reflects another concept of love. Like a play or a story, love has beginnings, middles and endings. These three broad stages of a story have different properties. In addition, love stories or plays have plots, themes, and characters.

(3). in his journal, Kip wrote, “Our relationship is **a chapter of accidents.**” One of those accidents occurred the following morning. (2014. History. COCA)

### 2.3.2. State metaphor system

The second category of metaphors in our study is state metaphor system. The number of conceptual metaphors of love in terms of state accounts for 14.8% with 62 occurrences both in English and Vietnamese. The conceptualization of love focuses on features of love as a state of being: as a possessed object, a bond, a destiny, a unity, an illness or an economic exchange.

In the metaphor LOVE IS A UNITY, lovers are considered as two complementary parts of a unity to create a perfect union. This enables them to remain their harmony in love. This metaphor contributes to the belief of a true love, an ideal love that can never be replaced. A true love might result from belief that lovers are born for each other and one half can only be perfect with another half: *như bóng với hình, như hình với bóng, ý hợp tâm đầu, nỗi nhớ niềm thương*, etc

(4). *Trở về rồi thì thằng Junkim bám Hương như hình với bóng.... Hai đứa bên nhau như đôi sam.* (Đặng Thân. Những mảnh hồn trần) (When he comes back, Junkim follows Hương like a shadow. ..They are together like kingcrabs).

Another specific case of love as entity is LOVE IS A BOND. Human beings conceptualize love as a strong bond to ensure the stability of this relationship.

Love is conceptualized not only as a possessed object, a bond, a unity but as an

economic exchange as well. Two entities in a relationship tend to exchange interactions with each other. In love relationship, lovers have a relation and interact in many ways: by communication, emotions or behavior. Such phrases as “give and take” occur frequently in daily language.

(5). Marlene, my brother fell in love with you even before I did. I can't hold it against him for loving you. What man in his right mind would not **give** you his **heart** and everything that he was? (2011. World Literature Today. COCA)

### 2.3.3. Event metaphor system

From the data collected, we have classified idioms into 3 major conceptual metaphors in terms of event system. Of the three conceptual metaphors, LOVE IS A JOURNEY is the most outstanding with 58 occurrences both in English and Vietnamese.

Event metaphors are characterized as an event with all the changes, situation, actions, etc. understood in terms of material movements, physical force and space. Lakoff [4] adds that these aspects or main factors of this event system include state, changes, reasons, purposes, ways, difficulties, progress, etc.

From the principle by Lakoff [4], we proposed the three metaphors namely LOVE IS A JOURNEY, LOVE IS A WAR, LOVE IS A GAME.

Our study has gathered 58 idioms in English and Vietnamese referring to this conceptual metaphor of love (with 37 and 21 occurrences in English and Vietnamese irrespectively). In a real journey, two companions travel on the same vehicles and head the common destination. On the way to the destination, something wrong may happen to the vehicles or the vehicles may get stuck, which means it cannot work properly. If the two travelers do nothing to the problem, they are not likely to reach the destination. On the contrary, there are some options for them to choose from. The situation is the same in love, two lovers are

in a very special relationship, in which they follow the same common life goal. Their relationship may face difficulties which hinder its progress. If they do nothing, they cannot satisfy their common goal. However, if they are determined to do something for their relationship, there exist some options for them to choose from.

In event metaphor system, state of an event is conceptualized as a position or a bound area in space. State is a part of event metaphor as it is directly related to the changing process of the entity from a certain state to another. Once they have a better understanding of the metaphor STATE IS A POSITION in event metaphor system, speakers of the language would identify a language expression *I am in love/ I am deep in* as a state; in the meantime the key word is IN which refers to the bound area like a room.

(6). Anh nguyện cùng em tới **chân trời góc bể**, không bao giờ xa nhau. (Diệp Lạc Vô Tâm. Chân trời góc bể. Best short stories 2010-2011) (I wish to go to the end of the world with you, never separated)

Changes are considered the physical movement into or out of a bound space. As a result, a change from a state into another can be demonstrated in *falling in love*.

In addition, causes of the changes are also important in state metaphor systems where causes are understood as the metaphoric force. This enables the use of such language expressions as *drives me crazy/ mad, send, push, keep, etc.*

(7). He realizes that the desire to her can only **carry** them so **far** in the direction of social renewal because the languages of personal hope and public responsibility are philosophically incommensurable. (1990. *Raritan*. COCA)

Another aspect of a motion is the progress. This can be applied to love when we say *we've made a lot of headway in recent months or we're just spinning our wheels*.

(8). I wanted it to be that people who would **cross paths** with me would somehow

benefit from me or be blessed or inspired, (2015. *Christian Science Monitor*. COCA)

To describe different states of love, a variety of language expressions might be utilized. Some time in love, people are separated from each other like *poles apart* or their relationship may *go downhill* as if they are on a journey.

(9). That's when everything started to **go downhill** between Douglas and me. (2007. *Scot on the rocks*. COCA)

Travelers are likely to choose various ways to tackle the problems encountered during their journey. Similarly, lovers possibly manage to find the ways to show their love (*find ways*) or run away (*cao chạy xa bay*).

(10). Thường xuyên tranh cãi mà không có lý do gì có thể sẽ khiến chàng **“cao chạy xa bay”**. (7.8.2015. Báo An ninh thủ đô Anninhthudo.vn) (Frequent arguments without reasons may make the guy run away)

The second metaphor is LOVE IS A WAR. Fighting may occur everywhere in the world of animate beings. Animals fight each other to get what they want such as food, lover, land, control, etc. This happens only when other animals desire the same things or prevent them from getting those things. This is absolutely true to human beings, except for their more complicated and sophisticated ways to do it. As the animals with thinking, people often realize their fighting in different forms, one of which is war. Although different ways may be used to ease the tense or more effective ways have been improved to solve this problem, the essential structures of the battle remain unchanged.

In the fighting between two animals, it is observed that the animals use a variety of ways to achieve love, establish or protect their living area, attack, defend, surrender, etc. The battles between people seem to be the same. What makes it different is that human beings manage to avoid physical conflicts to achieve what they want. As a result, human beings have developed the argument using words. Arguments aim to

what is desired and sometimes they turn out to be violent. Arguments are understood as the real war.

(11). Nonsense, you are little more than a slip of a girl, you would **be prey to** all sorts of men, fortune hunters and the like. You need someone to look after you."(1992. Iris Gower. BYU\_BNC)

The war between two lovers may happen when trying to get what they want, persuade the other to accept the viewpoint, etc. Each side should think what to win and what to lose, a bound area to establish and to defend. The way we conceptualize love is upon the knowledge and experience we get from the material fighting.

#### 2.3.4. Emotion metaphor system

As discussed, love is considered a relationship and a feeling/emotion as well. Therefore, it is understandable that idioms referring to metaphors of love in this system rank the highest. We have classified idioms into groups, in which love is conceptualized as closeness, fire, a force, or a magic/ crazy thing. These metaphors realize the intensity of love. Love as fire can burn everything (LOVE IS FIRE), love as flood can sweep away everything (LOVE IS A FORCE), etc. It can be assumed that the intensity of love always reaches the highest level whatever measurement it is.

The most outstanding is the metaphor LOVE IS A FORCE with 33 idioms in English and 19 idioms in Vietnamese. This results in the belief that a force (natural or physical) has an effect on human beings and they are passive in that relation. Love is conceptualized as a physical force that provides people with more energy. In addition, in an ideal love, people are fully attracted and there are no ways to resist or control themselves. Obviously, it is not quite a clear cut between natural and physical forces. In this study, we include natural force into physical force. Ideas and images of natural forces such as wind, storm, flood, etc seem to

occur in concepts of love. We have collected some idioms like *núi tan biển cạn, nổi tình mây mưa, nhớ mây thương gió* in Vietnamese.

(12). Sao hôm nay lại nói ép cho tôi? Hay là chàng đã **thay lòng đổi dạ** không còn thương thiếp nữa. (Trần Thùy Mai. Trăng nơi đáy giếng)(Why are you saying bad to me? Or you have changed your heart so you no longer love me.)

The situation in English seems to be similar in this example.

(13). He might, I even imagined, grasp my depth and literary genius, introduce me to his famous writer friends, fall deeply in love with me, and **sweep me off my feet** (2010. Town and City. COCA)

We also notice that love can be conceptualized in terms of a magic or crazy thing (27 idioms both in English and Vietnamese). A date between a man and woman who have never met each other before (*a blind date*) can make a romance

(14). Two people could meet on a **blind date**, decide to get married, have a baby, buy a timeshare in Colorado. I mean, there's a lot of time. (2015. Fox. COCA)

or people can be under a spell (*bị bùa mê thuốc lú*) or go crazy (*như điên như dại*) in love.

(15). Qua tháng 9 âm. May ra nó hết bị **bùa mê thuốc lú**, nó bị thằng kia đá, đi với con khác xinh hơn, nó về với em thôi. (Nguyễn Thị Thu Huệ. Lãng quên phiền muộn. Truyện ngắn hay 2002-2003 )(Wait until Lunar September. She is then likely to be out of a spell, abandoned by that guy to hang out with a more beautiful girl, she will come back to you)

(16). Lúc ấy là lúc Lan cảm thấy yêu Phong **như điên như dại**, yêu và thương lẫn lộn. (Nguyễn Minh Châu. Nguyễn Minh Châu toàn tập. Tập 2). (It's the moment Lan feels crazy about Phong, a mixture of love and affection)

#### 2.3.5. Positive/ negative metaphor system

We have gathered only 32 idioms indicating metaphor of love in terms of positive/negative

metaphor system. As a result, an ideal love is considered a valuable commodity and lovers exchange commodity to each other and vice versa.

(17). Em út có đầy nhưng cũng chỉ là kiểu **ăn bánh trả tiền**, buồn quá thì đi, chẳng lưu lại một điều gì để mà mơ, mà nghĩ ngợi (Bùi Ngọc Tấn- Biển và chim bói cá) (Girls are available but only with money-oriented relations. Feeling so depressed, I left without any impression to dream of or think about)

### 2.3.6. Complex metaphor system

To have a better understanding of love metaphors, we have investigated some relevant metaphors in terms of complex metaphor system such as LOVE IS A BUILDING, LOVE IS A MACHINE, LOVE IS A LIVING ORGANISM OR LOVE IS FOOD/NUTRIENT. The common feature shared among these metaphors is the complex source domains. It is assumed that there are correspondences of metaphors in nature with event metaphor system proposed by Lakoff [1]. Complex structure objects, machines or living organisms have correspondences with target domains as theory, mind, body, society, interpersonal relationships and others, as a result, they are considered complex metaphors. In other words, target domains of these metaphors are complex systems while source domains are complex objects (such as a building, a machine, food, etc.)

(18). Brower says, “I love talking to young women. That's how I **recharge** my **batteries**.” (1997. *The Environmental Magazine*. COCA)

Let us take an example LOVE IS FOOD/NUTRIENT illustrated by several metaphorical expressions. Some aspects of the source domains *nutrient* such as the desire for nourishment (*starved, khát khao*), the positive effects of being well nourished (*sustain, new strength, thrive, mẫn nông*), and the negative consequences of a lack of nutrients (*being starved*) have been utilized. As can be seen, the emphasis is chiefly on the “hunger/thirst” and the corresponding “desire/effect” aspect of the

concept of nutrient. Another important point that should be borne in mind is that normal principles of mappings decide the process of utilization and highlighting those aspects. In other words, elements from one domain are mapped onto elements of another. The LOVE IS A NUTRIENT/FOOD metaphor highlights the aspects of desire for love and the consequence of love, while it utilizes the hunger and nourishment aspects of the concept of nutrient. But this correspondence of the aspects of nutrient and love is achieved via detailed mappings.

(19). *Của đáng tội cũng có mấy cô sẵn lòng chàng, sùng sục cả lên, nhưng cô nào cũng **xôi hỏng bỏng không**.* (Hồ Anh Thái. *Mười lẻ một đêm*) (Actually some guys search for him eagerly but they obtain nothing (no sticky rice, no pop corn))

In summary, the data collected in our study has shown a great number of love metaphors. The analysis of these metaphors helps identify their sources in terms of communication, emotions, state, event, positive/negative evaluation, or complex system. In each system, we assign the complex concepts the target source and the more concrete ones the source.

How is it possible that English and Vietnamese share ways of talking and thinking about love to such a great degree? It seems to be “actual human physiology” [5: 162], that is, all human beings share the same comprehension of love.

### 2.4. Cultural variations in conceptual metaphors of love

It is expected that in addition to shared common features, there will also be several cultural variations in conceptual metaphors of love in English and Vietnamese as well as in the metaphorical linguistic expressions. [3: 183] suggests three possibilities for cultural variation expected in the metaphorical conceptualization of a particular abstract target domain, in which two kinds of cultural variation should be distinguished, that is, (a) cross-cultural

(intercultural) and (b) within-culture (intracultural). Our study is limited to the analysis of some cross-cultural variations in conceptual metaphors of love between English and Vietnamese.

#### 2.4.1. Range of conceptual metaphors

In our study, we have observed that almost all the metaphors of love in English can be found in Vietnamese. By contrast, there still exist a number of conceptual metaphors in Vietnamese that do not have correspondences in English. For example, the culturally significant concept LOVE IS DESTINY/ FATE is unique to Vietnamese culture, and so the conceptual metaphor is limited to Vietnamese.

#### 2.4.2. Elaborations of conceptual metaphors

Common conceptual metaphors also show variations in the metaphorical linguistic expressions which are the realizations of a respective metaphor. Two languages may share the same conceptual metaphor, but the metaphor will be elaborated differently in the two languages. "If two languages share the same conceptual metaphor, the linguistic expression of the conceptual metaphor in the two languages may follow a variety of different patterns." [3: 165] The example LOVE IS A JOURNEY can illustrate the distinctive features in metaphorical linguistic expressions between English and Vietnamese. With a modern developed economy, English speakers show the preferences for different means of transport like ship, train, car, etc.

What they experience in their daily life with different modern transportation lays the natural foundation for the comprehension of love. Love, as a result, is realized as a journey on the rock, on the reef, off the track or on a long bumpy road. At the same time, Vietnamese people tend to utilize linguistic expressions related to water, river, mountain such as waterfall (thác), ghềnh (rapids), pass (ải) when conceptualizing love.

#### 2.4.3. Causes of cross-cultural variation

According to Kövecses [3: 186], there appear to be two large categories of causes that bring about cultural variation in metaphor: broader cultural context and natural and physical environment. Trần Ngọc Thêm [6] affirms that the root of all cultural variations lies in the differences of natural conditions and well as social conditions.

- *Social conditions*

The governing principles and key concepts will differ between cultures or cultural groups. To demonstrate the effect of these differences on metaphor, let us consider in some detail the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS DESTINY/FATE. Quite noticeably, Buddhism has made a great influence on Vietnam's culture and almost every aspect of people's daily life. Among Buddhist beliefs, "metempsychosis", the transmigration of human being's soul, is widely rooted in their life. An underlying belief that governs everything in the universe is predestination. The relationships of human beings are not exceptional, of which love is predestined in people's previous lives. Lovers are believed to come to know each other and fall in love because it is the continual affinity of their previous life.

Another conceptual metaphor of love in Vietnamese differentiates from English, that is, LOVE IS A UNITY. Philosophy of Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism, especially the Yin Yang theory of Taoism has a vast influence on Vietnamese culture. Ying and Yang are believed to represent darkness and brightness, female and male, and so forth. The yin is assigned the features of the females: fertile, passive, breeding, dark, cold, wet, and mysterious. By contrast, the yang is described as characteristics of males: active, warm, dry, bright, procreative and positive. In Vietnam as well as in several Eastern cultures like China, it is assumed that everything in the universe is controlled by the law of the unity of yin and yang.



• *Natural and physical environment*

Firstly, as an agricultural country with the focus on rice, vegetables, plants, Vietnamese culture shows a tendency to stability, which is a prerequisite for a rich harvest. In the meantime, Western culture, including English speaking countries, seems to prefer motion. This might be obvious in the data collected in our study. Western people are more likely to travel so the number of idioms reflecting the metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY far outweighs that in Vietnamese (37/21).

Secondly, the natural and physical environment of Vietnam with mountainous areas, rivers and lakes shapes its language, primarily its vocabulary, in an obvious way; consequently, it shapes the metaphor as well. Speakers living in a certain kind of habitat tend to attach themselves (subconsciously) to things and phenomena that are characteristic of that habitat, that is, *pass, rapids, water, rivers*, and they make use of these features and phenomena for the metaphorical comprehension and creation of their conceptual universe, as in LOVE IS A JOURNEY with such idioms as *lên thác xuống ghềnh (up hill down dale)*, *mười hai bến nước (twelve water ports)*. In the meantime, English speakers usually characterized by Western cultures show their preferences to a variety of properties relating to traveling by ships or cars. Natural and geographical conditions with modern transportations are reflected in language expressions like *give someone a wide berth, cross the paths*.

Thirdly, natural conditions also have a profound impact on the mind of the habitants. Western people have a desire to discover, to conquer the new land or new things whereas Vietnamese culture appreciates the existing things. This can be observed in the metaphor LOVE IS A WAR. There are 8 English idioms reflecting this conceptual metaphor whereas only two Vietnamese idioms share this property. To the Western people, love is like a war in which lovers need to struggle for what they desire and sometimes they have to suffer

from injuries or loss to achieve the goal. Vietnamese people want things to be solved in peace rather than having a war.

### 3. Conclusion

The present study revealed the cultural variations in conceptual metaphors of love in English and Vietnamese. 872 idioms indicating social relationships have been collected from a variety of sources as novels, newspapers, magazines, daily interview on radio, television, etc. The most frequent use of the idioms belonged to conceptual metaphors of love (419/872 accounting for 48%). These findings contribute partly to the field of language study from cognitive perspective both in theory and in practice. Regarding theory, the study provides more insightful information about cultural variation, the impact of metaphorical thought and cultural models. Nevertheless, this study has its limitation. The weakness is that the number of idioms referring to conceptual metaphors of love quite small (N=419), thus their use may not represent that of the native speakers of English and Vietnamese. Further research, therefore, should involve a larger and more representative sample of sources so that the drawback of the present research may be resolved.

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## Resources

British National Corpus <http://corpus.byu.edu/bnc/>

Corpus of Contemporary American English  
<http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/>

Đỗ Thị Kim Liên, Từ điển Thành ngữ tục ngữ Việt Nam trong hành chức, Social Sciences Publishing House, Hanoi, 2015.

# Biến thể văn hóa của ẩn dụ ý niệm về tình yêu trong tiếng Anh và tiếng Việt

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**Tóm tắt:** Một trong những vấn đề được các nhà ngôn ngữ học tri nhận quan tâm trong những năm gần đây là ẩn dụ ý niệm. Bài báo này tập trung phân tích các ẩn dụ ý niệm về tình yêu trong hệ thống ẩn dụ sự kiện nhằm chỉ ra những nét tương đồng và khác biệt thể hiện trong hai ngôn ngữ Anh và Việt. Đồng thời, nhằm nâng cao chất lượng dạy và học tiếng Anh, chúng tôi cố gắng lý giải nguyên nhân của những khác biệt đó từ góc độ tri nhận và văn hóa.

*Từ khóa:* Ẩn dụ ý niệm, ẩn dụ về tình yêu, biến thể văn hóa.