

A Cross-Cultural Analysis of the Metaphorical Conceptualization of Sadness in Modern English and Vietnamese

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Abstract: Metaphor is extremely ubiquitous in language (Paprotte and Dirven [1]) and we are especially dependent on it when we discourse on abstract concepts. The revolutionary argument of conceptual metaphor theory is that “abstract thought is only possible through the use of metaphor” (Goatly, [2]). For this reason, metaphor is necessary and frequently utilized to express emotions (Fainsilber & Ortony, [3]). Emotion, as a fundamental component of the human psych, involves a complex subjective experience, a combination of feeling and thought. This paper shows how sadness, an abstract concept, is metaphorically conceptualized in English and Vietnamese. The paper also discusses the commonalities and mismatches in conceptualizing *Sadness* between the two languages.

Keywords: Conceptual metaphors, sadness, cross-cultural, English metaphors, Vietnamese metaphors.

1. Introduction

The conceptual theory of metaphor views individual linguistic metaphors as being realizations or a result of a metaphorical process in our thought (Johnson, [4]); Lakoff, [5], [6], [7], Lakoff & Johnson, [8]; Monti, [9]). These metaphors stem from general mappings between a typically concrete, clearly delineated source domain and a typically abstract conceptual domain – the so-called target domain of metaphors (Lakoff, [7]). On this regard, a metaphor is “a process by which we

understand and structure one domain of experience in terms of another domain of a different kind” (Johnson, [1:15]). Specifically, via metaphors, our experience of source domains guides our understanding of abstract domains such as time, justice and especially emotions (Lakoff & Johnson, [8]); Lakoff & Turner, [10]); Lakoff, [5], [7]). For example, the abstract domain of the emotion of SADNESS in English is understood in terms of the concrete domain DOWN via the SAD-AS-DOWN¹ mapping, which may manifest itself

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¹ In agreement with cognitive analysis, conceptual metaphors are conventionally referred by the capitalized formula, e.g., ANGER IS HEAT.

differently in different languages but is likely to be near-universal (Lakoff, [7]), or at least very widespread.

As the principal way of conceptualizing abstract concepts (Lakoff and Turner, [10: 52]), conceptual metaphors for the emotion of SADNESS reveal how this abstract concept is treated by the language community, how it is realized and finally, they trace back to the cultural worldview. Hence, conceptual metaphors reflect cognitive vision and epitomizes cultural context. The cross-language study of metaphors for SADNESS, therefore, should shed much light on cross-linguistic and cross-cultural similarities and differences in ways of thinking and speaking about SADNESS. However, very little research has been undertaken to deal with metaphorical conceptualizations of SADNESS in English and Vietnamese. This paper is called forth to bridge this gap by exploring affinities and contrasts in ways English and Vietnamese think and speak about SADNESS. The paper also uncovers which speakers' choices of SADNESS metaphors are governed by the universal physical experience and which of them are determined by the cultural model.

The following four sections will be devoted respectively to the methodology, a summary of metaphorical conceptualizations of SADNESS in English, which share substantially with the results of previous studies (e.g., Barcelona, [11]), (the examples illustrating these metaphors are different in the sense that they are all idioms), a presentation of metaphorical conceptualizations of SADNESS in Vietnamese, cross-linguistic and cross-cultural analysis of the conceptualizations between the two languages, and conclusions.

2. Methods of data collection and analysis

While there is a wide range of corpora, such as the Bank of English (owned by Collins COBUILD) or the British National Corpus for English (*BNC*), for the analysis of English, no such corpora are readily available for Vietnamese. We deliberately use standard reference works; granted, this choice limits the scope of this study, the dictionaries are a significant part of public discourse and dictionary entries are, by their nature, extracted from their natural context (Deignan, [12]). They are thus representative of the way in which a speech community constructs its cultural models through language – in this case the way in which the English and Vietnamese cultures conceptualize or encode the emotion in question. We also bear in mind that some of the idioms from dictionaries are often overused to the point of becoming clichés, e.g., *bill and coo* ‘talk in a very loving and sentimental way’, *carry a torch for someone* ‘be in love with someone, but that person is involved with another person’, *hopping mad* ‘be very angry’, however, few doubt that the conceptual metaphors behind them are alive and well. Our aim is to determine the conceptual metaphors underlying them.

The data has been taken from lexicographical works, which are valuable tools for the scientific study of languages (Anshen & Aronoff, [13]) due to their “objective and readily verifiable reference” (Neumann, [14: 126]). We do manual searches of the dictionaries and the lexicographical evidence accounts for 159 idioms (70 idioms in English; 89 in Vietnamese).

According to Kövecses ([15]), conceptual metaphors participate in yielding cross-cultural variation. For example, a language may have

metaphors that another does not have in a conventional linguistic form. Within this context, the paper indicates which source-target mappings are common in the two languages and are potentially transferable, and which correspondences are less transferable or dissimilar due to the physical, social or cultural experiences they are grounded in. The paper focuses on four parameters of comparison: (1) existence/non-existence of the mapping, (2) degree of conceptual elaboration, (3) degree of linguistic conventionalization, and (4) degree of linguistic exploitation (Barcelona, [16]; Soriano, [17]).

3. Conceptual Metaphors for SADNESS in English

In English, according to Barcelona, [11], the physical basis – a low vertical position within physical space – typically goes along with SADNESS. The correlation results in the conceptual metaphor SAD IS DOWN (see also Beger & Jäkel, [18]; Kövecses, [19]; Lakoff & Johnson, [8]; Peña, [20], [21]; Tissari, [22]):

- (1) a. down in the mouth
- b. down into the doldrums
- c. at one's lowest ebb
- d. be low
- e. hit rock bottom
- f. down in the dumps
- g. in low spirits
- h. down in the chops
- i. be beaten to the ground
- j. in the depths of despair

While HAPPINESS is metaphorically classified as being UP (Lakoff & Johnson, [8]), SADNESS is viewed as DOWN. The image in (1a) refers to a person's facial expression with

the corners of the mouth drawn downwards in the opposite of a smile. The downwardness is caused by the contraction of the muscles at the corners of the mouth. This is widely recognized as a sign of being out of spirits. The lowness of spirits in (1c) correlates with despondency, and so is the lowness of ebb in (1f), involving the movement of the tide out to sea. The idiom in (1b) refers to the sailing knowledge of the English culture. The word *doldrums* was used by sailors to refer to the region of sultry calms and baffling winds within a few degrees of the Equator, where the northeast and southeast trade winds converge. Here sailing ships were not able to move because there was no wind. The crews became demoralized and depressed through inactivity (CID², 2006).

Additional evidence for the DOWN metaphor can be seen in (2), correlated with heaviness or weight:

- (2) a. with a heavy heart
- b. with a sinking heart
- c. one's heart sinks in one's boots

The coherence of the 'DOWN', 'HEAVY', and 'SINKING' metaphors is intuitively supported by our physical experience: what is heavy or sinking tends to be down; what is light tends to be up (Yu, [23]). This is associated with our experience of carrying heavy loads or observing other people or animals carrying a burden, and of sinking ships or objects. In addition, the mappings of HEAVY and SINKING have an overall negative cognitive connotation: they imply an unpleasant experience (emotional in the case of SADNESS; physiological in the cases of HEAVINESS and SINKING); and they deprive the experiencers of certain capacities: to think, as indicated in *at your wits' end*; to move around freely in the

² Cambridge Idioms Dictionary (2006)

cases of HEAVINESS and SINKING. The implication in the idioms in (2) is that sad individuals are pushed down by something.

Unlike HAPPINESS, which is significantly associated with LIGHT, SADNESS in English is conceptualized as darkness. This gives rise to the conceptual metaphor SADNESS IS DARKNESS (Barcelona, [11], Stefanowitsch, [24]):

- (3) a. a black day
- b. long dark night of the soul
- c. dust and ashes
- d. in the pits

The experience of SADNESS is portrayed as a black cloud shrouding the experiencer. The saddened context is replete with *dust and ashes*. A pit in (3d) is dark and hard to escape from (Peña, [20]). A long night in (3b) evokes absence of light. Orbell (1985, as cited in Krupa, 1996, [25: 133]) suggested that the evening is often the time when people begin to remember their sorrows. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that DARKNESS is associated with the projection of SADNESS. In addition, black is accepted as a symbol of unhappiness (Dobrovolskij & Piirainen, [26]). It is the colour of death and derives from Christian traditions of wearing black in mourning. This is quite different from Vietnamese culture, where the colour of white is seen as the colour of mourning, although in big cities such as Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City nowadays, people wear black clothing in funerals, which is imported from Western cultures. The idiom in (3c) conveys a feeling of great SADNESS. The phrase comes from the Bible: “And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes.” (Genesis 18: 27) and “He hath cast me

into the mire, and I am become like dust and ashes” (the Book of Job 30:19).

The conceptual metaphor SADNESS IS DARKNESS is also confirmed by psychotherapy. During a therapy session (i.e., non-verbal languages of emotional literacy), Sherwood ([27]) (an Australian school psychologist) described her patient, named Mary. Mary was eight years old and encountered great SADNESS, resulting in school failure. After discussing with Mary, Sherwood let her work with water colours. Mary was asked to paint the colours of her feelings: i.e., Mary could paint what she felt. The paintings started out “flooded by very dark colours, blacks and blues, but gradually over 28 days began lighten up and yellows, pinks, and gentle greens started to dominate” (Sherwood, [27: 61]). This is to say that SADNESS is significantly associated with DARKNESS, while HAPPINESS is with LIGHT. This is not to suggest that HAPPINESS and SADNESS are primarily understood as opposites, but each of them is conceptualized on its own terms (Stefanowitsch, [24]).

Perhaps as a corollary of DARKNESS, the experiencer of SADNESS reaches a situation of no exit. No positive outlook seems to be available:

- (4) a. in a bad way
- b. reach at the end of one’s tether
- c. at the end of one’s rope
- d. lead a dog’s life

The examples of (4) show that the experiencer of intense SADNESS lands in an impasse. This is evoked through (4b-c): the image of an animal which is tied up and cannot reach the grass which is further away than the end of the tether or a rope. *A dog’s life* in (4d) implies an unhappy existence full of problems

or unfair treatment. The *dog* in this idiom refers to the English symbolic tradition: inferiority or worthlessness. The dog is seen as a pitiful, miserable and inferior animal on the lowest level of a scale of values (Dobrovolskij & Piirainen, [26]). Unlike HAPPINESS, which is characterized as being hopeful and promising, SADNESS appears to trigger a failure in normal coping functions along with feelings of hopelessness or worthlessness. The experiencer finds it hard to seek a way out for the current situation. SADNESS takes away desire for life and extinguishes all delights. That explains why appropriate interventions such as sharing, care, and counselling from friends are needed to avoid negative consequences for the experiencer. While experiencing SADNESS, experiencers seem to perceive the world through smoked glass or a dingy mirror (Izard, [28]). Individuals may claim *their dreams are coming crashing down, they are a crumpled rose leaf, or life is not a bed of roses*.

An intense bout of SADNESS hurts. Experiencers may feel some physical pain. This gives rise to the conceptual metaphor SADNESS IS PAIN (cf. Barcelona, [11]; Kövecses, [29]; Peña, [20]). In other words, the feeling of pain lies in the domain of SADNESS:

- (5) a. break somebody's heart
 b. cut somebody to the heart
 c. tear one's heart out
 d. out of heart
 e. a lump in one's throat
 f. beat one's breast
 g. with bated breath
 h. choked off
 i. cut to the quick

The feeling of pain appears in various locations within the body, both internal and external. SADNESS is associated with a pain in

the very sensitive flesh under the fingernails or toenails, as in (5i), and an injury to the heart, as in (5a-c), muffled heartbeats due to the disturbances in the circulation of blood to the heart and depletion of energy, as in (5d). SADNESS also triggers uncomfortable pressure in the chest, as shown in (5f-h) and tightness in a person's throat, as in (5e). The examples in (5a-h) relate to the universal metaphor THE BODY IS A CONTAINER FOR EMOTION (Palmer & Occhi, [30]). In this case, THE CHEST/THROAT/HEART IS A CONTAINER FOR EMOTION, in which SADNESS is conceptualized as an uncomfortable pressure in the chest cavity, the throat, and/or the heart of the experiencer.

Additional attention should be paid to the idiom in (5g). Many non-native and even some native speakers of English may mistake *bated breath* in for *baited breath* at first sight, since the *bated* and *baited* sound the same as in *The odour of the chocolate truffle you just ate may be irresistible bait to your beloved. Bated* in (5g), a contraction of *abated* through loss of the unstressed first vowel, means 'held, reduced, lessened, lowered in force or diminished', and collocates with *breath* to refer to a state in which individuals experience some subdued breathing as a result of strong bout of SADNESS.

4. Conceptual Metaphors for SADNESS in Vietnamese

As in English, the image schema DOWN is employed in Vietnamese to conceptualize SADNESS. This gives rise to the conceptual metaphor SAD IS DOWN:

- (6) a. rũ như tàu lá chuối
 droop like a leaf banana
 'become droopy because of sadness'

- b. rữ như gà cắt tiết
 droop like chicken cut blood
 ‘become droopy because of sadness’
- c. tiu nghiu như chó cụp đuôi
 saddened like dog droop tail
 ‘become droopy because of sadness’
- d. mặt như chó tiền rưỡi
 face like dog a penny and a half
 ‘show a sagging face due to sadness’
- e. ủ liễu phai đào
 droop willow fade peach
 ‘be crippled by sadness’
- f. hoa sầu liễu rũ
 flower sorrowful willow hang down
 ‘be crippled by sadness’
- g. mặt ủ mày chau
 face droop brow knit
 ‘face droops and brows knit because of sadness’
- h. mặt dài ngoẵng
 face long very
 ‘pull a long face’
- i. mặt chảy ra
 face fall
 ‘one’s face fall’

The idioms in (6a-c) evoke an image of the downward direction: the moping posture. A leaf hangs down as it becomes old or decays. A chicken’s head, legs, and wings hang down after it is slaughtered. It is widely agreed that dogs show SADNESS when their owners have died or gone away (Plutchik, [31]). Dogs’ drooping tails signify a sad moment. Unlike English, in Vietnamese, willow trees, peaches, and flowers in (6e-f) appear tinted grey. A willow with narrow-leaved slender branches

has long been symbolic of grief and mourning in Vietnamese folklore culture, due to its drooping posture. Its hanging branches are seen as shedding tears of SADNESS. (6d) is Vietnamese culture-specific. In Vietnam, dogs are raised for food, house-watching, pets and guards to protect owners. Baby dogs and adult dogs are traded in open markets. *Tiền rưỡi* ‘a penny and a half’ at any time is of small value. So a dog sold at *tiền rưỡi* has to be either stunted or infected with scabies and stooping in posture. The face *chó tiền rưỡi* is sagging and haggard. The droopiness of the face in (6g-i) grounds Vietnamese people’s metaphorical understanding of SADNESS. Of course, sad people’s faces cannot literally fall, as in (6i) or become longer, as in (6h). In short, the idioms in (6) support the metaphor SAD IS DOWN.

The structure of the idioms in (6a-f) merit further attention. The idioms are in the form of a comparison-like construction by virtue of the use of (*như* ‘like/as’). This can be misleading and misrepresents the nature of metaphor, since these are subsumed under the heading of conceptual metaphors of SADNESS. Nevertheless, the overall aim of this section is to uncover the conceptual metaphors (i.e., conceptual structures) that underlie the idioms rather than metaphors as a figure of speech (i.e., linguistic form). Additionally, it is arbitrary to distinguish too strictly between similes and metaphors (Moon, [32]), although important distinctions are suggested: a simile is an explicit comparison which is literally true to a certain extent, while a metaphor in the cognitive perspective is “a phenomenon at a high and abstract level of thought where whole experiential areas are conceptualized metaphorically and have coherent realizations at the level of words and idioms” (Moon, [32: 197]). In addition, many idioms can be viewed as containing both as metaphor and simile. Let

us consider *read someone like a book* in English. This idiom is a simile, but it involves the conceptual metaphor: UNDERSTANDING IS SEEING and UNDERSTANDING IS READING A NON-VERBAL ENTITY (Moon, [32]). Similarly, *look like one has the weight of the world on one's shoulders* is a simile, but it contains a conceptual metaphor SAD IS DOWN, as already discussed in section 3.

Intriguingly, the available evidence in Vietnamese suggests that SADNESS is conceptualized as food that goes stale or rotten:

- (7) a. buồn thiu buồn chầy
 sad stale sad deliquesce
 ‘feel extremely sad’
 b. buồn thiu buồn thối
 sad stale sad decayed
 ‘feel extremely sad’
 c. thối ruột thối gan
 decayed intestine decayed liver
 ‘feel extremely sad’

Additional evidence comes from findings that SADNESS is associated with the wilted vegetables and shrivelled body parts:

- (8) a. héo như bầu đứt dây
 wilted as gourd break vine
 ‘feel extremely sad’
 b. héo như dưa
 wilted as drying rape (canola) to make
 pickles
 ‘feel extremely sad’
 c. như hoa bí buổi chiều
 as flower of pumpkin in the afternoon
 ‘feel extremely sad’
 d. héo ruột héo gan
 wilted intestine wilted liver
 ‘be grief-stricken’

- e. gan héo ruột đầy
 liver wilted intestine full
 ‘be grief-stricken’
 f. nẫu gan nẫu ruột
 overripe liver overripe intestine
 ‘be grief-stricken’
 g. thối ruột thối gan
 withered intestine withered liver
 ‘be grief-stricken’

The idioms in (8a-c) portray the wiltedness of kinds of popular vegetables in Vietnam: gourds, pumpkins and canola. Gourds and pumpkins are grown in summer. Their fruits, leaves, young vines, and flowers are ingredients for cooking soup. The temperature in summer in Vietnam can be as high as 39 or 42 degrees Celcius. The heat can lessen the freshness of gourds or pumpkins, especially their leaves and flowers. This is much worse if their vines or stems are broken. The effect of SADNESS can even wither the internal body organs of a person such as intestines and liver, as in (7c) and (8d-g). The body organs are seen as kinds of vegetables that can go stale or decay. It is impossible in reality for liver to become overripe or intestines to become withered. The knowledge about the source domain (i.e., wilted nature) could come from observing phenomena in nature: gourds or pumpkins and other vegetables under the sun's heat. People in fact can yield embodied and metaphorical representations from their biological experiences and their sensori-motor interactions: i.e., the interactions through the senses, muscular movement, and the nerves activating, with the physical world (Gibbs, [33]). The examples in (7) and (8) give rise to the conceptual metaphor for SADNESS in Vietnamese SAD IS STALE, which is non-existent in English.

Intense SADNESS in Vietnamese is conceptualized as being able to cause physiological damage. Experiencers may feel as if they were being attacked and tortured by a sharp pain in their intestines and in their livers, as indicated in (9) and (10). This gives rise to the conceptual metaphor SADNESS IS PAIN:

- (9) a. đau như cắt
painful like cut
'experience intense sadness'
- b. đau như xát muối
painful like rub with salt
'experience intense sadness'
- c. tan nát cõi lòng
smashed heart
'be grief-stricken'
- d. xé ruột xé gan
rend intestine rend liver
'experience intense sadness'
- e. xót gan bào ruột
feel a sharp pain liver smooth with
plane intestine
'experience intense sadness'
- f. đứt ruột đứt gan
broken intestine broken liver
'experience intense sadness'
- g. ruột rát như cào
intestine feel a burning pain like scratch
'experience intense sadness'
- h. buốt ruột buốt gan
feel sharp pain intestine feel sharp pain liver
'experience intense sadness'
- i. nát ruột nát gan
crushed intestine crushed liver
'experience intense sadness'

- j. buồn như trấu cắn
sad like rice husk bite
'experience non-stop sadness'
- k. rát như lửa bỏng
feel a burning pain like fire burn
'experience intense sadness'

The examples show that the intestines, the liver, and the heart are 'damaged' by intense SADNESS. The nominal *ruột* in (9a-b) and (9k) is absent, but speakers of Vietnamese can recognize the connection to the intestines, where pain is involved. Sad individuals feel as if their intestines were cut, wrenched, or rubbed with salt; their livers were rended, or smoothed with a plane.

The conceptualization of PAIN is therefore grounded in an embodied experience. For example, as people touch a needle or are stung by a bee, they feel a sharp pain through their tactile sense. Such an acute pain is also felt when people are injected in some cases, or when they are burnt, or they cut themselves. The pain in (9) is acute and is expressed by senses of verbs: *rát* (feel a burning pain), *buốt* (feel a sharp pain), *cào* (scratch), *bào* (smooth with a plane), and adjectives: *tan nát* (smashed), *nát* (crushed), *đứt* (broken). In the meantime, the pain in (9j) appears less acute, but non-stop. Rice husks are inanimate, not endowed with animal life, however, they are personified as an "aggressive" animal that could perform the action of biting somebody. In the countryside in Vietnam, farmers use rice husks as fuel and usually store them in the kitchen. Rice husks are also used to keep cats and dogs warm in winter. Rice husks have two thorny ends, so they may "bite" when we sit on them. The bite is not so hard, but long lasting and continuous. This idiom implies that someone is

encountering continuous and prolonged SADNESS.

SADNESS in Vietnamese is also conceptualized as pain commonly observed among domesticated animals and insects:

- (10) a. *tâng hẳng như chó bị mất dái*
struck with grief like dogPASS lose testicle
'be struck with grief'
- b. *đau như hoạn*
painful like castrate
'experience intense sadness'
- c. *đứt ruột tằm tơ*
break intestine worm silk
'experience intense sadness'
- d. *tiu nghiu như mèo cụt tai*
struck with grief like cat cut ears
'be struck with grief'

The sad feeling is correlated with silk worm whose intestines are broken (10c). The idiom in (10d) refers to a cat whose ears are cut as a punishment when it steals food. Castration of domesticated animals, as in (10a-b), such as pigs, dogs, cocks, and cats is popular in Vietnam. And such removal of the testicles hurts a great deal.

As the literal translations in (9) and (10) indicate, the pain is felt to the self and in a bodily manner as if the self is broken or shattered and ripped apart. This is consistent with the metaphor THE STATE OF THE FEELINGS IS THE MATERIAL STATE OF A VITAL ORGAN (Charteris-Black, [34]). However, the pangs are felt in two main internal body organs: the intestines and the liver.

The conceptualization of SADNESS in Vietnamese includes not only bodily pain, but also "mental" suffering:

- (11) *buồn như đĩ về già*
sad like prostitute become old
'become so sad and unable to change the situation'

The idiom in (11) portrays SADNESS of a *đĩ*/prostitute who is getting old. Old age implies an end to a prostitute's life, since she is not able to make any income. A prostitute can in no way prevent the aging process. She is powerless, and has no other choice but to await her fate. SADNESS in this case seems to be quiet, but continuous and prolonged. The conceptualization is provided by a close relationship between SADNESS and the lack of hope. Confronting shattered hopes or disappointments (Greenberg & Paivio, [35]; Greenberg & Goldman, [36]) about the future life and a sense of helplessness cause a prostitute to feel sad.

Having provided a presentation of the conceptual metaphors for SADNESS in English and Vietnamese, we now discuss the commonalities and mismatches in conceptualizing SADNESS between the two languages. To roughly outline the results of the contrastive analysis, Table 1 is provided.

5. Cross-linguistic and Cross-cultural Comparison

5.1. Similarities

The commonality in the use of the conceptual metaphors to express SADNESS in English and Vietnamese can be seen clearly in Table 1. The dominant conceptualization SAD IS DOWN is transferable across the two languages. The source domain of the DOWN pole of the vertical axis is mapped on to the negative emotion of SADNESS. The downward

mappings seem to be equally conventionalized in expressions for SADNESS, including lack of drive, feeling subdued, and a drooping posture. This conceptual metaphor in both English and Vietnamese is related to basic human

experiences: we slump when we are sad; the contrast is for HAPPINESS: we stand straighter, are active, and move around (Knowles & Moon, [37]).

Table 1. Conceptual Metaphors for SADNESS in English and Vietnamese

Conceptual Metaphors	English	Vietnamese
SAD IS DOWN	+	+
SADNESS IS PAIN	+	+
SADNESS IS DARKNESS	+	-
SAD IS STALE	-	+
Note: + = existent; - = nonexistent	Total: 3	Total: 3

The alternative SADNESS metaphor that the two languages share is SADNESS IS PAIN. The effects that PAIN has on someone's body are projected on those of SADNESS. The experiencers of SADNESS are conceptualized as undergoing injuries from various kinds of weapons (Niemeier, [38]), as shown in (5) for English and in (9) and (10) for Vietnamese. Of course, these are merely imaginary experiences. It seems, however, that such metaphoric conceptualizations are grounded in their real-world referents: people experience a certain kind of physiological pain when they are hurt, and the pain may stem from diverse types of weapons. Such experiences are carried over into the domain of SADNESS.

5.2. Differences

5.2.1. Differences due to language-specific mappings/sub-mappings

The conceptual metaphor SADNESS IS DARKNESS in English is not applicable in Vietnamese. While HAPPINESS in English is referred to as a bright day and light, a bout of SADNESS is characterized as absence of light (Meier & Robinson, [39]; Wierzbicka, [40]). In contrast, SAD IS STALE is not applicable in English. This metaphorical conceptualization is

heavily loaded with Vietnamese cultural connotations: SADNESS in Vietnamese is conceptualized as kinds of vegetables and human body parts, especially internal ones that perish or decay. The source domain of DECAY/STALE shows a strong association with the intensity of SADNESS in Vietnamese culture.

Although the two languages share the conceptual metaphor SAD IS DOWN, the submapping of HEAVY on to the physical experience of DOWN is not applicable in Vietnamese. Neither is the submapping of SINKING. Kövecses ([41: 177]) observes that two languages may share a certain conceptual metaphor and "the conceptual metaphor may be expressed by largely overlapping metaphorical expressions, but the expressions can reveal subtle differences in the cultural-ideological background in which the conceptual metaphor functions". For instance, the image of *cò bợ gặp trời mưa* ('heron meet rain') expresses SADNESS in Vietnamese. The image is based on direct visual experience: a heron has a moping posture, a salient property of the bird that everyone can identify; while in English, an image of a duck with a dismal look and crooked stance is selected, as in *like a duck in a thunderstorm*. These metaphors are culturally

conventionalized (Kövecses, ([41: 171])). Thus, images of different kinds of vegetations as well as animal life in Vietnamese, as indicated in (6) participating in the metaphor SAD IS DOWN cannot be transferable to English.

The effect of SADNESS in Vietnamese is conceptualized as physical pain, which is felt not only in humans but also in various other animals which display responses to pain in some circumstances. The mental pain is also carried over SADNESS in Vietnamese, as shown in (11). This mapping is unavailable in English. Furthermore, on the data presented here, Vietnamese does not conceptualize pain in terms of the infliction of self-injury as English does (see 5).

5.2.2. Differences due to the degree of conceptual elaboration

An alternative contrast between English and Vietnamese is their degree of elaboration of shared mapping. In Vietnamese, pain as an effect of SADNESS is caused by different ‘weapons’:

- (a) knife: through the sense of the verbs: *cắt* ‘cut’, *hoạn* ‘castrate’,
- (b) rubbing with salt: *xát muối*
- (c) by hand: *xé* ‘rend’, *cào* ‘scratch’
- (d) needle: *buốt* ‘feel a sharp pain’
- (e) rice-husk: *chấu cắn* ‘the biting of rice husk’

(f) fire burn: *rát* ‘feel a burning pain’

(g) plane: *bào* ‘smooth with plane’

However, English does not elaborate on the PAIN metaphor so much. English only elaborates: knife (e.g. *cut somebody to the quick*) and by hand (e.g., *tear one’s heart out*).

5.2.3. Differences due to the degree of linguistic exploitation

This parameter of comparison involves the productivity of a mapping in the language (Barcelona & Soriano, [42]). Although the conceptual metaphor SADNESS IS PAIN is found in both languages, the mappings of PAIN in Vietnamese are supported by more conventionalized linguistic expressions, as indicated in (9) and (10); compared to English, as shown in (5).

It has to be stressed that SADNESS in Vietnamese is linked to more internal body parts, with preference given to the body part *ruột/lòng* ‘intestine’. This connection can be traced to its deep roots in the theory of the five elements (see Table 2). According to this theory, the *phủ* organ of *đại tràng/ruột già* ‘large intestine’ is afflicted when one experiences SADNESS. Again, this body part is always used as the more general term of *lòng/ruột* ‘intestine’ instead of the more specific *đại tràng/ruột già*, however, large intestine is originally meant.

Table 2. A System of Five-element Categorization

Elements	Wood	Fire	Earth	Metal	Water
Nature					
Location	east	south	centre	west	north
Season	spring	summer	long summer	autumn	winter
Climate	windy	hot	humid	dry	cold
Life cycle	birth	growth	ripeness	harvest	storage
Flavour	sour	bitter	sweet	spicy	salty

Colour	blue/green	red	yellow	white	black
Human					
Zang Organ	liver	heart	spleen	lung	kidney
Fu Organ	gall	small intestine	stomach	large intestine	bladder
Sense Organs	eyes	tongue	mouth	nose	ears
Tissue	tendons	vessels	flesh	skin/body hair	bones
Emotion	anger	joy	overthinking	grief	fright
Indicator	nails	complexion	lips	body hair	hair
Expression	shouting	laughing	singing	wailing	moaning

(adapted from Khừu & Khánh, [43: 47])

In contrast, SADNESS in English is only linked to the spleen, an internal body organ. The connection derives from the theory of the four humours in Western culture. The four humours theory, illustrated in Table 3, stemmed from ancient Greek medicine and philosophy

and was passed on in European folk beliefs from antiquity and medieval times up to the 18th century before it became outdated as a result of modern medical science (Dobrovolskij & Piirainen, [26]):

Table 3. A System of Humoural Correspondences

	Phlegm	Black bile	Yellow bile	Blood
Characteristics	cold and moist	cold and dry	warm and dry	warm and moist
Element	water	earth	fire	air
Temperament	phlegmatic	melancholic	choleric	sanguine
Organ	brain/bladder	spleen	liver/stomach	heart
Colour	white	black	yellow	red
Taste	salty	sour	bitter	sweet
Season	winter	autumn	summer	spring
Wind	north	west	south	east
Planet	moon	Saturn	Mars	Jupiter
Animal	turtle	sparrow	lion	goat

(Geeraerts & Grondelaer, [44: 158])

According to this theory, health and disease depend on the balance or imbalance between the four bodily fluids, or 'humours', and an excess of black bile – a humour often thought to be produced in the spleen – is responsible for the symptoms of SADNESS. Ancient physicians thought that black bile had a natural function in regulating moods and that melancholia represented a failure of this natural functioning (Horwitz & Wakefield, [45: 55]). Bile is black and bitter, and was held to be the cause of illness associated with the head or brain, and caused the veins in the heart to overflow,

causing SADNESS. This also explains why English links SADNESS to the colour black, which gives rise to the conceptual metaphor SADNESS IS DARKNESS, nonexistent in Vietnamese.

6. Conclusion

The discussion has made it clear that the conceptualizations of SADNESS in English and Vietnamese are differentially susceptible to cultural influences. This results in the absence

of the English metaphor SADNESS IS DARKNESS in Vietnamese, and of the Vietnamese conceptualization SAD IS STALE in English. The two languages do share the metaphors SAD IS DOWN and SADNESS IS PAIN. In addition, the discussion has unraveled some subtle contrasts, both on the conceptual and lexicogrammatical planes, in the way English and Vietnamese speakers conceptualize metaphorically the emotion of SADNESS. These differences suggest that “it is quite uncommon for a conceptual metaphor to have exactly the same conceptual structure and to be manifested by exactly the same type of linguistic structure.” (Barcelona & Soriano, [42: 306]).

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Nghiên cứu giao văn hóa ẩn dụ ý niệm Buồn/Sadness trong tiếng Anh và tiếng Việt

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Tóm tắt: Ẩn dụ hiện diện trong ngôn ngữ với biên độ sử dụng rất rộng (Paprotte and Dirven, 1985) và điều đặc biệt quan trọng là ẩn dụ chi phối quá trình diễn đạt của chúng ta về các khái niệm trừu tượng. Một quan niệm mang tính cách mạng về lý thuyết ẩn dụ ý niệm là: “chúng ta chỉ có thể hiểu được tư duy trừu tượng thông qua việc dùng ẩn dụ” (Goatly, 2007). Bởi vậy, ẩn dụ có vai trò rất

quan trọng và thường được dùng để biểu đạt tình cảm (Fainsilber & Ortony, 1987). Với tư cách là một thành tố quan trọng trong tâm lý con người, tình cảm bao hàm những trải nghiệm cá nhân phức tạp, là sự kết hợp giữa xúc cảm (feeling) và tư duy (thought). Bài viết này sẽ tập trung tìm hiểu cách thức ý niệm hóa tình cảm “Sadness” trong tiếng Anh và tình cảm “Buồn” trong tiếng Việt đồng thời sẽ thảo luận về những tương đồng và dị biệt trong quá trình ý niệm hóa tình cảm này giữa hai thứ tiếng.

Từ khóa: Ấn dụ ý niệm, buồn, giao văn hóa, ấn dụ trong tiếng Anh, ấn dụ trong tiếng Việt, mô hình văn hóa.