

CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS OF SPRING IN ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE SONG LYRICS

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Abstract: This paper summarily reports the results of a study which attempts to identify conceptual metaphors of spring through their representations called metaphorical expressions in English and Vietnamese song lyrics from cognitive perspective based on the theory of conceptual metaphors initiated by Lakoff and Johnson, with the work *Metaphors We Live by* (1980a). The data collected from 205 English and Vietnamese songs (98 and 107 songs respectively) from the 20th century to the present consist of 736 metaphorical expressions. By employing description as the main method with the assistance of comparative method, and utilizing the procedure of conceptual metaphor identification (Steen, 1999, p. 73), the study unveils the similarities and differences of conceptual metaphors of spring in English and Vietnamese songs. The results reveal that English and Vietnamese share 12 conceptual metaphors of spring (out of 20 ones in total). Moreover, the explanations are given to elaborate on these results in terms of culture, including people's living experiences and environment.

Key words: metaphorical expression, conceptual metaphor, target domain, source domain, mapping

1. Introduction

Cognitive linguistics in general, cognitive semantics in particular, have made great strides in the past decades, which sets the foundation for conceptual metaphors to flourish recently. Therefore, a great number of studies have been conducted to examine conceptual metaphors focusing on both abstract and concrete concepts around our human worldwide and in Vietnam in particular. Especially, significant attention has been paid to abstract concepts as target domains in investigating conceptual metaphors, which can be easily understood because metaphorical conceptualization is a process of conceptualizing a more abstract domain in terms of more concrete domains (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980a).

Up to now, the abstract concepts which have been examined vary, e.g. life, emotion, sadness and so forth. Likewise, time, an abstract concept, also is widely investigated by both foreign and Vietnamese authors (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980a; Kövecses, 2010; Shinohara & Pardeshi, 2011, to name just a few). Being a time concept, however, seasons, including spring, have been limitedly examined so far. As a consequence, to enrich the body of literature of conceptual metaphors, this research is

conducted to identify conceptual metaphors of spring in English and Vietnamese. In other words, the source domains which are mapped onto spring in English and Vietnamese metaphorical expressions are found out. Accordingly, this paper can give some suggestions for research options in the area of English teaching to Vietnamese learners.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. Definition of Conceptual Metaphors

In Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), metaphor in essence is the “understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980a, p. 5). The ‘thing’ that is to be understood is often an abstract concept which is referred to in CMT as the target domain (TD); the other concrete ‘thing’ which is used to understand the abstract concept is referred to as the source domain (SD); and according to Kövecses (2010) this phenomenon of conceptualizing one domain in terms of another is called conceptual metaphor.

For example, the metaphor TIME IS A MOVING OBJECT (Lakoff, 1994, pp. 56-58), illustrates that conceptual metaphor is defined “as understanding one conceptual domain in terms of another conceptual domain” (Kövecses, 2010, p. 21), as well as gives explanation for the fact that the metaphorical

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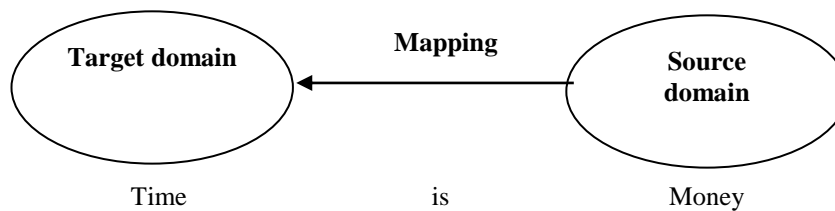
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process generally goes “from the more concrete to the more abstract but not the other way around” (ibid., p. 6). Here, the concept of time is conceptualized by concepts of space. More specifically, particular times are considered objects and the passing of time is considered the motion of these objects. This consideration becomes apparent in expressions like *the time has come*, *the time has arrived*, or *the coming week* (Lakoff, 1994, pp. 56-58). Actually, a *week* is not coming and a *time* does not arrive, at least not in a physical sense. But there are correspondences between the concepts of *space* and *time* that enable an understanding of the concepts of one domain by the concepts of the other domain. Here, the person experiencing time corresponds to the observer with a fixed location and time corresponds to the object that moves towards the observer. This similarity between a moving object and time is essential in allowing a conceptualization of time by the concept of space.

In short, the term *metaphor* is used in this study in the sense of the term **conceptual metaphor** (in which one conceptual domain is understood in terms of another conceptual domain). This understanding is achieved by seeing a set of systematic correspondences, or

Figure 1

Metaphorical Mapping



A mapping is a systematic set of correspondences which exist between constituent elements of the SD and TD (Charteris-Black, 2004). It means that the systematic identification of the SD and TD is termed as a metaphorical mapping. Discussing metaphorical mappings, Lakoff argues that they preserve the cognitive topology of the source domain in a way consistent with the inherent structure of the target domain (1993, p. 215). Additionally, Kövecses (2010, p. 371) shares that conceptual metaphors are characterized by a set of conceptual correspondences between elements of the source and target domains. Such correspondences can also be found within

mappings, between the two domains. Conceptual metaphors can be given by means of the formula A is B or A as B, i.e., A denotes the TD and B the SD as in the metaphor *time passing as a moving object* mentioned above, where the concept of moving object is mapped to the concept of time passing (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980a; Lakoff, 1993; Kövecses, 2010).

2.2. Components of Conceptual Metaphor

As mentioned above, metaphor is identified as a process of mapping between two different conceptual domains: the target domain (the concept to be described by the metaphor), and the source domain (the concept drawn upon, or used to create the metaphorical construction). The original definition of domain is given by Lakoff and Johnson (1980a, p. 266) as follows:

In a metaphor, there are two main domains: the target domain, which is constituted by the immediate subject matter, and the source domain, in which important metaphorical reasoning takes place and that provides the source concepts used in that reasoning. Metaphorical language has literal meaning in the source domain.

The cognitive mechanism of a conceptual metaphor is depicted via the relation between source and target domains as the following figure.

a domain between two mental spaces. These correspondences are technically called mappings. The mapping links the two domains in the sense that aspects of the source are made to correspond with the target (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980a; Lakoff & Turner, 1989; Lakoff, 1993). For brevity, to create a metaphor, we try to code the mapping between the source and the target domains under the mechanism of conceptualization.

2.3. Types of conceptual metaphors

In actuality, metaphors can be classified in many ways. The types of conceptual metaphors are mentioned much by Lakoff and Johnson in

a number of works (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980a, 1980b; Lakoff, 1992). Notably, the classification is viewed in detail, significantly profoundly and adequately by Kövecses basing mainly on his predecessor's theories (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980a). He focuses on four different ways that play an especially important role in the cognitive linguistic view. Specifically, they rely on the conventionality, function, nature, and level of generality of metaphors (2010, p. 33).

Firstly, based on their cognitive functions, conceptual metaphors can be classified into 3 types, namely (1) structural metaphor (that maps the structure of the source domain onto the structure of the target and in this way allows speakers to understand one domain in terms of another); (2) ontological metaphor (that provides extremely fundamental but very crude understanding for target concepts); and (3) orientational metaphor (that has primarily an evaluative function).

Secondly, according to their nature, conceptual metaphors can be called *image-schema metaphor*. That is, conceptual metaphors may use both propositional knowledge and images of various kinds (including not only visual images). Images having extremely general schematic structure are called "image-schemas" that may structure many abstract concepts metaphorically. Images that are not based on recurrent experience with a generic structure but capture a specific experience are called "one-shot images." These can also participate in metaphorical understanding.

Thirdly, relying upon their level of generality, they are categorized into two types: specific-level and generic-level metaphors. Most conceptual metaphors employ concepts that are at a specific level of generality. For example, the metaphors: LIFE IS A JOURNEY, AN ARGUMENT IS WAR, IDEAS ARE FOOD, etc., are specific-level ones when *life*, *journey*, *argument*, *war*, *ideas*, and *food* are specific-level concepts. On the contrary, some conceptual metaphors are generic-level, e.g., EVENTS ARE ACTION, GENERIC IS SPECIFIC. Generic-level metaphors have special jobs designed for them in the working of our metaphorical conceptual system.

Finally, based on their conventionality, conceptual metaphors are classified into two kinds: conventional and novel metaphors (or

unconventional metaphors). The classification considered in the degree of conventionality is deeply clarified with the assistance of the types briefly mentioned above. To be specific, the term "conventional" is used here in the sense of *well established* and *well entrenched*. Kövecses (2010, p. 34) concludes that "a metaphor is highly conventional or conventionalized (i.e., well established and deeply entrenched) in the usage of a linguistic community." According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980a), conventional metaphors are metaphors that make up the ordinary conceptual system manifested in our everyday language. In other words, the metaphors which are highly conventionalized are mostly used unconsciously, automatically, and effortlessly for the normal, daily purposes of the speaker. Similarly, each conventional conceptual metaphor involves in several conventional metaphorical expressions, the manifestation of conceptual correspondences across conceptual domains. In other words, the conventional metaphorical expressions are comprehended thanks to the knowledge of conventional conceptual metaphors based on our experiences (ibid., p. 151). Like the term "conventional", the term "novel" refers not just to conceptual metaphors but to metaphorical expressions. Novel metaphors (or called unconventional metaphors), which go beyond our conventional conceptual system, provide us with the new understanding of our experience (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980a). Hence, they are imaginative and creative.

3. Research methodology

3.1. Data Collection

The data collected comes from English and Vietnamese song lyrics from the 20th century to present. As an investigation of conceptual metaphors of spring, the samples selected come from song lyrics where spring conceptual metaphors are expected to be rich. There are several sources, namely, Internet-based records, CD/DVD-based records, and printed publications.

Actually, a great number of season song lyrics have been written in English from the 20th century to present. However, to make sure that the data is in native language, the song lyrics selected have to be composed by the authors who were born and grew up in the countries involved in the Inner Circle, including the USA,

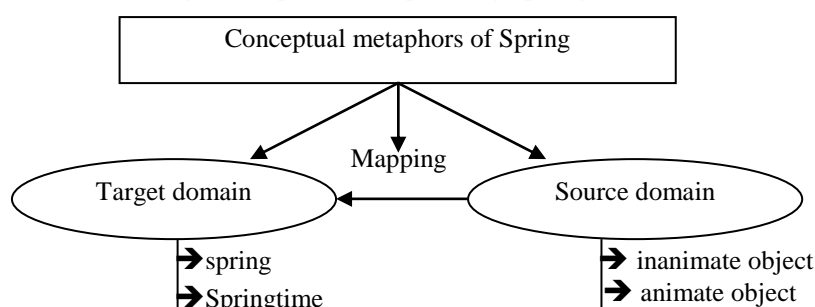
the UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand in terms of the three-circle model of world Englishes (Kachru, 1985). The Vietnamese corpus is built from the song lyrics by famous composers, namely, Trịnh Công Sơn, Văn Cao, Phú Quang, Ngô Thụy Miên, Nguyễn Văn Tý, and so forth. In short, as an English-Vietnamese comparative and contrastive study, the two corpora in the two languages are quite equal with 98 songs, and 107 songs collected, equivalent to 288 and 448 expressions in English and Vietnamese.

3.2. Analytical Method

Descriptive and comparative methods are deployed to analyze the data both qualitatively and quantitatively. In this study, the data collected is described to set up a foundation for analysis, interpretation, and explanation. Thus, after metaphorical expressions (linguistic metaphors), and conceptual metaphors related to season are identified, semantic and cognitive factors were described and the mechanism of using, interpreting, and explaining metaphorical expressions and conceptual metaphors of spring in English song lyrics were explained. In addition, the comparative method is primarily exploited in this study so as to compare the conceptual metaphors of spring to find out the similarities, and the differences between them in the two languages.

Figure 2

Analytical Framework of Conceptual Metaphors of Spring



4. Findings and discussion

4.1. Inanimate domain

4.1.1. Physical entities

That spring is conceptualized as a physical entity is found to be common in both languages with fairly high quantities; however, the number of metaphorical expressions in Vietnamese nearly doubles that in English, namely 165 and 95 metaphorical expressions

3.3. Analytical Framework

It has been assumed that the world where human beings live can be categorized into concrete and abstract entities. This study will find concrete domains which are used to map onto target domain *spring* in English and Vietnamese. Concrete domain here is understood as entities that human beings can perceive via five senses: *vision, hearing, touching, smelling* and *tasting* by their visual, auditory, tactile, olfactory and gustatory organs. Actually, these SDs are divided into two categories: animate and inanimate.

In terms of CMT, spring, one of four seasons in a year, is TD which is manifested by virtue of another (called source domain) through conceptual mapping. Here words *spring* and *springtime* in English, and *xuân, mùa xuân* in Vietnamese refer to this season. This study will find out the SDs used to map on spring entities in terms of concrete domains, namely, *inanimate objects* (for example, physical entities, natural substances, etc.), and *animate objects*, including *human beings* and *plants*. In other words, within the scope of study, *animate objects* are understood as *living entities*. In short, the analytical framework of this study can be visualized in the following figure.

respectively. In this case, *spring* is an abstract concept, and it is mapped through the image of a concrete object that human beings can easily perceive by virtue of physical experiences. Take the following expressions as typical examples:

(1) *Let me see what spring's like* (Bart, *Fly Me to the Moon*)

(2) *Mùa xuân trên vành môi tươi thắm*
(Nguyễn Ngọc Thiệp, *Ta đã thấy mùa xuân*)
'*Spring is on the ruddy lip rim*'

(3) *Em đứng lên mùa xuân vừa mở* (Trịnh Công Sơn, *Gọi tên bốn mùa*)

'By the time I stood up, spring had been open'

According to *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (2005), the verb *see* in (1) means "to be conscious of what is around you by using your eyes". It can be understood that the thing which is seen must be concrete. Similarly, in Vietnamese, the prepositional phrase *trên vành môi*, consisting of the preposition *trên* "on" combining with the noun phrase *vành môi* "lip", which create an adverb phrase of place, in (2) reveals that *mùa xuân* "spring" here can be seen via human's eyes (called visual organ). It is apparent that things people are able to perceive by at least one of their five sensory organs are concrete. Likewise, the expression *mùa xuân vừa mở* "spring had been open" in (3) leads to this manifestation of *spring*. According to the *Vietnamese Dictionary* (Vietnam Institute of Linguistics, 2003), the adjective *mở* "open" is used to describe bounded objects. Thus, with the analysis of these cases, it can be concluded that *spring* is considered a *concrete object*.

Noticeably, with regard to physical entities, *spring* is manifested as a container with a big number of metaphorical expressions in English. However, that is much smaller in Vietnamese. In other words, the number of metaphorical expressions of spring leading to metaphor SPRING IS A CONTAINER in English predominates that in Vietnamese. Precisely, the metaphorical expressions account for 29 in English and 8 in Vietnamese respectively. The preposition *in* (in English), *trong* (in Vietnamese), which are utilized with a big frequency in the corpus, indicates that *spring* is conceptualized as a bounded region. Actually, it has ever been claimed that the container image schema is a vital reflection in the conception of limited time as a container (Johnson, 1987; Lakoff & Kövecses, 1987; Lakoff & Johnson, 1999). Therefore, that metaphor SPRING IS A CONTAINER is ubiquitous in English, and also applicable in Vietnamese as in the examples below:

(4) *We gathered in spring* (Gibb, *We Gathered Here in Spring*)

(5) *And there's something about the Southland in the springtime* (Saliers, *Southland in the Springtime*)

(6) *Giấu em vào mùa xuân, vùi trong bao kẽ lá* (Quốc Nam, *Chơi vơi*)

'Hide me in spring, bury me in leaves'

(7) *Lạc về đâu tôi như lá thu trong mùa xuân* (Trần Minh Phi, *Gửi mùa xuân*)

'Lost in nowhere, I am like an autumn leaf in spring'

The prepositions *in* and *vào*, *trong* here indicates that *spring* is portrayed as a bounded region. The expressions (4, 6) show that *spring* contains *we* and *me* (contained things); or in (5, 7) *the Southland* and *autumn leaf* are portrayed as an object contained in the *spring* entity, leading to the metaphor SPRING IS A CONTAINER, which is a conventional metaphor.

Besides being viewed as a container, *spring* is considered a *thing contained*. However, this mapping occupies a smaller number with 12, compared to CONTAINER case with 29 expressions in English. Interestingly, the number of expressions for the two cases is the same, namely, 8 expressions. It can be clarified in some examples as follows:

(8) *It's spring in person that makes it bright* (Hart, *Yours Sincerely*)

(9) *For their hearts were full of spring* (Troup Jr., *Their Hearts Were Full of Spring*)

(10) *Xuân trong tôi đã khơi trong một đêm vui* (Phạm Duy, *Xuân ca*)

'Spring in me awoken on a happy night'

The entities *person* and *me* here are containers which contain the entity *spring*. With the sense of the adjective phrase *full of*, the expression (9) also points that *spring* is in the entity's heart. It means that *spring* in (8), (9) and (10) is portrayed as a *corporeal entity* contained in a container.

Especially, the MOTION metaphor occupies the biggest number in the two languages, with 39 expressions, equivalent to 55 frequencies in English, and 120 expressions, equivalent to 127 frequencies in Vietnamese. Like time, an abstract domain that is conceptualized as motion (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980a; Kövecses, 2010; Evans & Green, 2006), the mapping of spring is also taken from the domain of MOTION. As a matter of fact, according to Lakoff and Johnson (1999), there are two subtypes of the conceptualization, namely, moving time metaphor, and moving observer metaphor. Accordingly, metaphor

SPRING IS MOTION is classified into two cases above.

In terms of moving objects, spring is talked about as a passage in some forms. In this conceptualization, spring is viewed as something moving. Thus, this yields the metaphor SPRING IS A MOVING OBJECT with the following mapping:

Objects → spring

The motion of objects past the observer → the passage of spring

The motion here is expressed by senses of verbs: *arrive, come, go, return, pass, fall*, and adverbs: *over, through* in English or *sang, đến, tới, về, qua, đi qua, ra đi* in Vietnamese via the following expressions:

(11) *Spring arrived on time* (Landesman, *Spring Can Really Hang You Up The Most*)

(12) *How like the spring*

To return in a day (Kirkland, *Dienda*)

(13) *Spring has come, the good fountain flows* (Lewis, *Hebridean Sun*)

(14) *Ta hẹn mùa xuân sang mình sẽ cưới nhau* (Nhật Ngân, *Một lần dang dở*)

'We promise that when spring comes, we will get married'

(15) *Xuân về cho cây xanh lá* (Lữ Liên, *Lạc mất mùa xuân*)

Spring returns, plants become greener.

On the contrary, moving observer metaphor (or the Moving Ego Metaphor) means that the observer/ego moves to *spring*, meanwhile *spring* is stationary. This conceptual metaphor is only found in Vietnamese. It can be illustrated by the following example:

(16) *Cánh én bước tới chào xuân mới* (Nguyễn Nam, *Mùa xuân sang*)

'Swallow wings approached nearer, and greeted the new spring'

In this expression, basing on the verb *bước tới* "approach", spring here which does not move, is approached by the agent of moving action - swallow wings. However, the Vietnamese corpus shows that the number of expressions for moving observer metaphor is much smaller than the former. There are only 3 expressions compared with 120 ones of *moving spring*.

In terms of physical entity, the source domain mapping onto this season is also found as the manifestations of colored objects in both corpora. However, the conceptual metaphor SPRING IS A COLORED OBJECT in

Vietnamese has expressions nearly four times as many as those in English, with 11 and 3 cases respectively. This manifestation of spring can be clarified with the following expressions.

(17) *Waiting for the color of spring* (Baez, *April 5th*)

(18) *Xuân còn thắm tươi; Anh còn mong chờ* (Phạm Duy, *Xuân ca*)

'Spring is still ruddy, I still look forward to seeing you'

(19) *Xuân xanh lơ, hắt hiu trong trời nắng mưa* (Nguyễn Bá Khiêm, *Chiều hạ vàng*)

'Spring is blue, and gloomy in the sun and rain'

Obviously, the expression (17), with the phrase *the color of spring*, proves that spring is a concrete object having colors. In addition, the adjectives *thắm tươi* "ruddy", and *xanh lơ* "blue" in (18, 19) denote colors which are recognized via the sight (vision) of the living entity, namely human beings. It is obvious that *spring*, an abstract object from the perspective of physical season, however, here is depicted with numerous colors, which evokes the image of colored objects mapped onto *spring*.

Surprisingly, the data reveal that two metaphors: SPRING IS A SCENTED OBJECT, and SPRING IS TASTED OBJECT are applicable in Vietnamese, yet totally absent in English corpus. Consider the following Vietnamese expressions:

(20) *Trong hương xuân ta vẫy chào* (Nguyễn Ngọc Thiện, *Mùa xuân ơi*)

'We greet each other with spring scent'

(21) *Hương mùa xuân lan tỏa, gọi hồn ong bướm qua* (Quốc Nam, *Chơi voi*)

'The scent of spring spreads and calls for the soul of bees and butterflies'

The sense of the noun phrases *hương xuân* in (20) or *hương mùa xuân* in (21) "scent" gives rise to the metaphor SPRING IS A SCENTED OBJECT. It can be understandable because Vietnam belongs to the tropical weather pattern. It means that it becomes warmer with a great deal of drizzle, which makes every living creature grow and develop properly, and human life also becomes lively. For example, *hương mùa xuân lan tỏa* "the scent of spring spreads" in (21) implies that plants and trees flush, which appeals to insects, including bees and butterflies.

Spring is depicted as a tasted object with 2 expressions as follows:

- (22) *Em là cánh én mỏng*
 ‘You are a thin swallow’
Chao xuống giữa đời anh
 ‘Hover down in the middle of my life’
Cho lòng anh xao động
 ‘Making my heart flutter’
Thành mùa xuân ngọt ngào (Hoàng Hiệp & Diệp Minh Tuyền, *Mùa chim én bay*)
 ‘Making a sweet spring’
 (23) *Ghi từng phút mùa xuân đậm đà* (Hoài An, *Ngày xuân thăm nhau*)

‘Remember every moment of the **tasty spring**’

The above expressions describe spring as food with its tastes such as *ngọt ngào* “sweet” in (22), *đậm đà* “tasty” in (23). In other words, the food attributes are used for spring ones when people regard the sound quality of spring as sweet and flavor of food. In brief, *spring* is conceived as a *physical entity*, as the following table shows:

Table 1

Domains of Physical Entities Used for SPRING in English and Vietnamese

| No | Domains of physical entity | Number of expressions | |
|-------|----------------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| | | English | Vietnamese |
| 1 | CONCRETE OBJECT | 95 | 165 |
| 2 | CONTAINER | 29 | 8 |
| 3 | THINGS CONTAINED | 12 | 8 |
| 4 | MOTION | 39 | 120 |
| 5 | COLORED OBJECT | 3 | 11 |
| 6 | SCENTED OBJECT | 0 | 5 |
| 7 | TASTED OBJECT | 0 | 2 |
| Total | | 139 | 319 |

4.1.2. *Natural substance*

In view of natural substance, the statistical evidence from the corpora reveals that this study discovers 6 main source domains used to express spring in English and Vietnamese as in the table below:

Table 2

Domains of Natural Substance Used for SPRING in English and Vietnamese

| No | Domains of natural substance | Number of expressions | |
|-------|------------------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| | | English | Vietnamese |
| 1 | AIR | 1 | 0 |
| 2 | LIQUID | 3 | 3 |
| 3 | SUNLIGHT | 12 | 7 |
| 4 | HEAT | 9 | 4 |
| 5 | SOUND | 0 | 4 |
| 6 | FIRE | 3 | 0 |
| Total | | 28 | 18 |

Regarding NATURAL SUBSTANCE, as seen in Table 2, there are 8 subcases with 8 domains i.e., *heat, air, liquid, sunlight, sound, and fire* mapped onto *spring*. English and Vietnamese share the metaphors: SPRING IS LIQUID, SPRING IS SUNLIGHT, and SPRING IS HEAT. First of all, *spring* is manifested as *liquid*. However, the conceptual metaphor SPRING IS LIQUID is supported by

the same number of expressions in both languages. It can be seen in the expressions below:

- (24) *Spring has showered frae a drip*
Splash and trickle running (Leitch, *The Lullaby of Spring*)
 (25) *Someday in the flush of the spring*
 (Clark, *Some Day*)
 (26) *Xuân tuôn rơi, trên đôi vai, trên đôi tay, trên đôi chân*

Spring is falling on the shoulders, on the hands, on the feet

Cho trôi đi bao đa đoan, bao ưu phiền (Minh Châu, *Vũ điệu mùa xuân*)

Washing away much tangle, much sorrow

The expressions (24, 25, 26) give rise to the metaphor SPRING IS LIQUID when the description for liquid is employed to portray this season. It is apparent that in (24, 25), the concept of *spring* associated with *rain*, a kind of natural substance. The conceptualization is manifested by virtue of the senses of the verbs *shower* in (24), *tuôn rơi*, and *trôi đi* in the word-by-word translation, ‘wash’ for the equivalent in English in (26). According to *Vietnamese Dictionary* (Vietnam Institute of Linguistics, 2003), and *Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* (2005), the verbs *tuôn rơi, trôi, and shower* are used to describe

raining. Accordingly, spring here can be understood as rain, a subtype of liquid.

In addition, the corpora show that spring is understood as sunlight. The number of expressions for this spring conceptualization in English nearly doubles that in Vietnamese, with 13 in English, and 7 cases in Vietnamese. It can be illustrated by the examples as follows:

(27) *It's spring in person that makes it bright* (Hart, *Yours Sincerely*)

(28) *Xuân ơi hãy sáng trên đời tôi* (Minh Châu, *Vũ điệu mùa xuân*)

'Spring, be bright in my life!'

(29) *Ánh xuân đem vui với đời* (Phạm Đình Chương, *Đón xuân*)

'Spring light brings joy to life'

The senses of **bright** in English (27), **sáng** in (28) shows that spring is depicted as sunlight because it can make the light. In the expression (29), **ánh xuân** denotes spring is the object also having light, which gives rise to the metaphor SPRING IS SUNLIGHT. This conceptualization can be explained that there is more sunshine in spring than that in winter when every living entity, including people, experiences a duration of cold with little sun. That is the reason why people pay much attention to the sunlight creating warmth they look forward to. Accordingly, spring is conceived as sunlight, which is conventional mapping.

Likewise, if it is cold without much sunshine in winter, it seems to be sunny frequently in spring. As a result, it becomes warmer in this period of a year. Hence, it comes as no surprise that SPRING is associated with warmth, a degree of heat, which gives rise to the conceptual metaphor SPRING IS HEAT in both English and Vietnamese, with 9 and 4 expressions respectively.

(30) *Spring fever, it's Spring fever time* (Baum, *Spring Fever*)

(31) *The industrious beaver puts it down to Spring fever* (Paul, *Spring Spring Spring*)

(32) *Mùa xuân ấm áp mai nở muôn nơi* (Huy Phương, *Gửi Huế*)

'Spring is warm, apricot blossoms bloom everywhere'

From the data statistics, in English the noun **fever** is used densely with 7 frequencies out of 15 ones from all lexemes denoting the **heat** like in (30, 31). Perhaps, it is because Westerners are extroverts, and enjoy engaging in outdoor

activities, they reveal their strong emotion for the comfort of warmth that spring brings. Meanwhile, Vietnamese people conceive the warmth of this season by employing the adjective **ấm áp** for 4 cases like in (32). They share their feeling about it more softly since in nature, they are more introverted than Westerners are. In short, the metaphor SPRING IS HEAT is coherent with Kövecses's statement 'Given a certain kind of habitat, speakers living there will be attuned (mostly subconsciously) to things and phenomena that are characteristic of that habitat; and they will make use of these things and phenomena for the metaphorical comprehension and creation of their conceptual universe' (2010, p. 79).

In the same way, the metaphor SPRING IS FIRE is available; however, it is applicable only in English with only 3 expressions as follows:

(33) *And she's caught in the fires of spring* (Rea, *Fires of Spring*)

(34) *In the soft flames of spring*

Spring has swept the scarlet side streets (Schmid, *A Summer's End*)

It can be seen that the senses of **fire** and **flame** in (33, 34) evoke the image of **fire** which is used to transfer to the entity **spring**. As discussed above, Westerners feel and enjoy the warmth as if it were fire when they are thirsty for it, which entails that **spring** is viewed as **fire** in English like the prior finding: SPRING IS HEAT.

Similarly, from Table 2, the conceptual metaphor SPRING IS AIR is found in English with a minority, namely 1 expression, yet totally absent in the Vietnamese data. It can be seen in the expression: (35) *Let me breathe the color of spring* (Baez, *April 5th*).

In contrast to the two cases above, the metaphor SPRING IS SOUND is only existent in Vietnamese with 4 expressions. The corpus data reveal the way Vietnamese people cognize spring is similar to the way they perceive sound. It is obvious that spring is an abstract entity people are not able to recognize by one of their five senses, including hearing one; however, here it can be perceived via human hearing organ like in the expressions below:

(36) *Mùa xuân là tiếng hát em bên anh* (Hoài An, *Bên em mùa xuân*)

Spring is the singing when I am with you.

(37) *Phút giây lặng lẽ mong chờ, lắng nghe mùa xuân về* (Dương Thu, *Lắng nghe mùa xuân về*)

This is the expected moment, listening to spring arriving.

In (37), the verb *lắng nghe* “listen to” is used for the object spring, the predicate in this expression. It evokes that sound is employed to denote spring. Similarly, *mùa xuân là tiếng hát* ‘spring is singing’ in (36) clearly exposes that SPRING IS SOUND.

In brief, the available evidence in the corpora suggests that spring is conceptualized as natural substance or phenomenon, which is in tune with Kövecses’ viewpoint that the natural and physical environment shapes metaphors because it shapes a language, primarily its vocabulary, in an obvious way (2010, p. 79).

4.1.3. Other domains

First, *spring* is conceptualized as *a force* (sometimes called agent of action or changer), with the same number of expressions in the two languages, namely 15 ones when the image of spring is portrayed as an agent or changer of an action. It can be illustrated by virtue of the typical examples in both languages as follows:

(38) *How will I stand the summer when the spring just made me dumber?* (Gano, *4 Seasons*)

(39) *Spring has swept the scarlet side* (Nyro, *Upstairs by a Chinese Lamp*)

(40) *Spring can really hang you up the most* (Landesman, *Spring Can Really Hang You Up The Most*)

(41) *Ánh mắt mơ trông nơi xa vời*
‘Far-away eyes’

Chờ mùa xuân đến đem nguồn vui (Quốc Dũng, *Điệp khúc mùa xuân*)

Look forward to spring bringing excitements’

(42) *Và mùa xuân đã trao cho em ánh mắt anh* (Ngọc Châu, *Thì thầm mùa xuân*)

‘And spring has given me your eyes’

(43) *Mùa xuân đang đến*
‘Spring is coming’

Cho nhánh cây đâm chồi (Nguyễn Ngọc Thiện, *Lời chúc xuân*)

‘Making buds sprout’

It is apparent that the senses of the verbs *make*, *sweep*, *hang up*, *đem đến*, and *trao* in (38, 39, 40, 41, 42) indicate that *spring* is the agent of actions. Specifically, the author of the lyric in (38) became *dumber*, and the one in

(40) can be hung up due to the effect of spring. In addition, *sweep* in (39) implies that *spring* impacts physically on the object *scarlet side* by sweeping. In Vietnamese expressions, with the meaning of the verb *trao* ‘give’ in (42), *spring* is understood as the provider that *em* (I in English) received a glance from his/her eyes. Similarly, in (43) that spring comes makes buds sprout on the trees, which can draw on that spring is considered the changer creating physical change of things. Hence, the evidence gives rise to the conceptual metaphor SPRING IS A FORCE, which is coherent with TIME IS A CHANGER/FORCE (Kövecses, 2010), when considering it as a notion of time.

Next, *space* is also used to map onto *spring*. Among the conceptual metaphors in terms of inanimate objects, the SPRING IS SPACE conceptual metaphor predominates in English, making up 37 expressions, that is a lower number of expressions in Vietnamese, with 10 ones. They are depicted by virtue of typical examples as follows:

(44) *Spring ahead or fall behind* (Brennan, *You Can Never Hold Back Spring*)

(45) *Keep me alive through the spring* (Watkins, *Through the Spring*)

(46) *Vì mình xa nhau nên xuân vẫn mãi xa vời chốn nao* (Quốc Dũng, *Em đã thấy mùa xuân chưa*)

‘Because we are apart, spring is still far away’

(47) *Dặm đường xa ta đi giữa mùa xuân* (Tạ Minh Tâm, *Đường chúng ta đi*)

‘Miles away, we go in the middle of spring’

As a matter of fact, as mentioned above, spring is an abstract concept; nevertheless, the corpus data show that it can be recognized as a concrete entity which is ahead, behind, far or near observers in space. Moreover, some linguistic devices are employed to express the relation between entities and space via senses of the words *ahead*, *behind*, *through*, *near*, *far* in English; *trước*, *sau*, *đầu*, *cuối*, *giữa*, etc. in Vietnamese. Thus, these expressions above are linguistic manifestations of SPRING IS SPACE metaphor which evokes the image of spring in a certain space.

In addition, the source domain found from the two corpora to conceptualize the spring entity is *landscape* or *place*. The distribution of these expressions in both languages is similar, with nearly the same quantity, namely, 4 and 5

in English and Vietnamese respectively. It is elaborated by the following examples:

(48) *Khi trước thêm xuân chỉ mình tôi* (Trần Hữu Bích, *Thêm xuân*)

'There is only me in front of the perron of spring'

The (48) show that **spring** has a perron, which implies that this season is portrayed as a place, maybe like a house although there are not any perrons belonging to spring in reality. Likewise, **spring** is also described as a **river** as it has been scrutinized in detail in the discussion below:

(49) *And spring grows*

Out of winter it flows (Robbins, *Spring*)

(50) *Đã mấy lần xuân trôi chảy mãi*

'Spring has flowed several times'

Mấy lần cô lái mìn trông (Nguyễn Đình Phúc & Nguyễn Bình, *Cô lái đò*)

'The ferry/boatwoman has languished for news from her boyfriend'

As can be seen in *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (2005) as well as in the *Vietnamese Dictionary* (Vietnam Institute of Linguistics, 2003), **flow**, **trôi chảy** are employed to indicate one of the activities of a river. However, in (49, 50) it is deployed to depict a season which is spring. Namely, the passage of time (including spring) is compared to the flowing of a river.

Finally, some domains deployed to map onto **spring** are existent in English only, yet not applicable in the other language. In fact, the English linguistic material of this paper reveals that conceptualization **existence**, **money** can also be applied to SPRING metaphors like in following the expressions:

(51) *Spring is here* (Chaplin, *Spring Song*)

(52) *Get up, get out spring is everywhere* (Kaye, *Spring Fever*)

The metaphor SPRING IS EXISTENCE has a significant number of expressions: 11 cases. Adverb of place **here** like in (51) is used highly frequently, i.e., 15 times. It can be inferred that Western people believe that spring really is existent in a certain place as a concrete entity.

Another domain that **spring** is treated as is money, which is coherent with the metaphor TIME IS MONEY that has been popular in many studies so far (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980a; Kövecses, 2005; Kövecses, 2010; Evan, 2005, etc.).

Similarly, English corpus data reveals this conceptualization:

(53) *Then we spend all spring* (Olliges Jr., *Spring (Among the Living)*)

(54) *But in the spring she took off her disguise*

Well I'll never forget you looking my way

And the time that we spent in the absence of games (Watkins, *Through the Spring*)

In fact, the sense of verb **spend** is used to express valuable commodities including money. Nevertheless, in (53, 54) it is used to describe **spring** in English. On the contrary, the findings show that this metaphor is not available in Vietnamese. That is consistent with the explanations of Lakoff and Johnson when they share that people use their everyday experiences with money to conceptualize time when they explain their work in association with the time it takes. In particular, the payment is normally based on "serving time" (1980, p. 8). They also add:

These practices are relatively new in the history of the human race, and by no means do they exist in all cultures. They have arisen in modern industrialized societies and structure our basic everyday activities in a very profound way. Corresponding to the fact that we *act* as if time is a valuable commodity – a limited resource, even money – we *conceive of time* that way. Thus, we understand and experience time as the kind of thing that can be spent, wasted, budgeted, invested wisely or poorly, saved, or squandered. (ibid., p. 8)

In short, regarding inanimate objects, some other source domains are found from the two corpora as in the table below:

Table 3

Other Domains Used for SPRING in English and Vietnamese

| No | Other Domains | Number of expressions | |
|--------------|-----------------|-----------------------|------------|
| | | English | Vietnamese |
| 1 | FORCE | 15 | 15 |
| 2 | SPACE | 37 | 10 |
| 3 | PLACE/LANDSCAPE | 4 | 5 |
| 4 | EXISTENCE | 11 | 0 |
| 5 | MONEY | 4 | 0 |
| Total | | 71 | 30 |

4.2. Animate object and living entity

In terms of animate objects, that spring is conceptualized as a living entity is dominant in both English and Vietnamese corpora, 50, and 81 expressions respectively. This type is coherent with the type of ontological metaphor (Kövecses, 2010, p. 38) which are those where the physical object is further specified as being a person (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980a, p. 33), for example, (55) *Then spring can never die*. When it comes to being considered living entities, spring, in particular, is manifested by virtue of a person and plant.

4.2.1. Person

As mentioned above, cognitive mechanism of ontological metaphor allows people to comprehend a wide variety of experiences with nonhuman entities in terms of human motivation, characteristics, and activities (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980a, p. 33). Accordingly, *spring*, time domain, is viewed as human beings, which occupies the biggest number with 45 expressions in English, and 66 in Vietnamese. The statistics from the data expose that the verbs of saying such as *hát, nói, thì thầm, báo, ngỏ lời*, etc. in Vietnamese, and *tell, say, whisper* and so forth in English are used for the actor/agent *spring*. Besides, the subject complements for the entity spring (as a subject) are nouns related to persons like *girl, boy, singer, dancer, lover*, etc. It can be scrutinized via the examples below:

(56) *I never knew the charm of spring*
(Vernon, *April in Paris*)

(57) *Spring is the dancer the lover of men*
(Bartholdy, *Spring song*)

(58) *Spring whispered in her ear* (Nyro, *Upstairs by a Chinese Lamp*)

(59) *Mùa xuân nói với em điều gì?* (Trần Tiên, *Mùa xuân gọi*)

'What did spring tell you?'

(60) *Xuân đã về, xuân vẫn mơ màng* (Văn Phụng, *Xuân họp mặt*)

'Spring has come, spring is still dreaming'

(61) *Em về én lại xa*

'You are back, yet swallows are far away'

Mùa xuân không ở lại (Hoàng Hiệp & Diệp Minh Tuyền, *Mùa chim én bay*)

'Spring does not stay'

(62) *Lòng xuân lơ đãng, má xuân hồng* (Tữ Vũ & Nguyễn Bình, *Gái xuân*)

'Spring's heart is absent-minded, spring's cheek is rosy'

As a matter of fact, (56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61) prove that *spring* is mapped through characteristics of human beings. As can be seen, in (55), spring is considered a charming girl, and a dancer in (57). Moreover, it is clear that the verbs *whisper, nói, mơ, ở lại* are those whose actions are only done by human. Especially, *lòng 'intestine'* in the word-by-word translation or *'heart'* in English translation equivalent in (62) refers to one of the organs belonging to the human's viscera. Here *spring's heart* is understood as the girl's one whom the songwriter of this lyric falls in love with. Hence, *lòng xuân lơ đãng 'spring is absent-minded'* means the girl is absent-minded; *má xuân hồng 'spring's cheek is rosy'* means the girl's cheek is rosy. In other words, spring in (56, 61, 62) is personified into a lover in English and Vietnamese. It is understandable because Kövecses ever states that personification which is a metaphorical device used commonly in literature permits people to use knowledge about themselves to comprehend other aspects of the world, such as time, death, natural forces, inanimate objects, etc. (2010, p. 56).

4.2.2. Plant

Regarding living entity, another domain employed to conceptualize the target domain *spring* is *plant* that is manifested in terms of its parts: *mầm, nụ 'buds', hoa 'flower', lá 'leaf'* in Vietnamese. The verbs *live, die, or grow* are deployed to describe this season in English. Surprisingly, the number of Vietnamese metaphorical expressions triples that of English, namely, 15 and 5 cases respectively. It can be illustrated through the following expressions:

(63) *And spring grows* (Robbins, *Spring*)

(64) *Vừa tàn mùa xuân rồi tàn mùa hạ*
(Trịnh Công Sơn, *Một cõi đi về*)

'Spring withered, then summer did too'

The available evidence in Vietnamese shows that *spring* is conceptualized as a *flower* that becomes faded in the last period of its life cycle as in (64) when the verb *tàn 'wither'* is used to portray the end of this season. The sense of *grow* in (63) gives rise to the spring manifestation, as a plant.

(65) *Phải chăng mầm non mùa xuân đang hé nở* (Dương Thụ, *Lắng nghe mùa xuân về*)

'Are spring buds sprouting?'

Obviously, it is not so difficult to reason at this conceptualization for spring as a bud in (65). As discussed earlier, spring has ideal climate conditions for plants to grow in Vietnam. After a severe winter with coldness when most living entities, including plants, try their best to keep alive nearly without any development, even without their leaves, their buds sprout dramatically in spring, which gives rise to the metaphor *SPRING IS A BUD*. Hence, these metaphors from (64, 65), entailing metaphor *SPRING IS A PLANT*, is available in Vietnamese when the natural and physical

environment also takes part in shaping metaphor (Kövecses, 2010, p. 79).

5. Conclusion

From the CMT perspective, 736 expressions of metaphor of spring have been identified and collected from 205 English and Vietnamese songs. They are distributed into 20 conceptual metaphors in the two languages as in the following table.

Table 4

Conceptual Metaphors of SPRING in English and Vietnamese

| Conceptual Metaphors | English | Vietnamese |
|-------------------------------|---------|------------|
| SRPING IS A CONCRETE OBJECT | + | + |
| SRPING IS A CONTAINER | + | + |
| SRPING IS AN CONTAINED OBJECT | + | + |
| SRPING IS MOTION | + | + |
| SPRING IS A COLORED OBJECT | + | + |
| SPRING IS A SCENTED OBJECT | - | + |
| SPRING IS A TASTED OBJECT | - | + |
| SRPING IS HEAT | + | + |
| SRPING IS AIR | + | - |
| SRPING IS LIQUID | - | + |
| SRPING IS SUNLIGHT | + | + |
| SRPING IS SOUND | - | + |
| SRPING IS FIRE | + | - |
| SRPING IS FORCE/CHANGER | + | + |
| SRPING IS SPACE | + | + |
| SRPING IS A PLACE/LANDSCAPE | + | + |
| SRPING IS EXISTENCE | + | - |
| SRPING IS MONEY | + | - |
| SRPING IS A PERSON | + | + |
| SRPING IS A PLANT | + | + |

Table 4 shows the commonality in the use of conceptual metaphors to express *SPRING* in English and Vietnamese clearly in terms of concrete domains of both animate and inanimate entities. However, the domains related to inanimate entities are much more than those of animate ones in the two languages. Accordingly, the number of metaphorical expressions related to inanimate objects is much higher than that about animate ones, with 605 cases compared to 131 ones. Besides, it can be seen that both languages share 12 source domains used to map onto this season, namely, *CONCRETE OBJECT*, *CONTAINER*, *CONTAINED OBJECT*, *MOTION*, *COLORED OBJECT*, *HEAT*,

SUNLIGHT, *FORCE/CHANGER*, *SPACE*, *PLACE/LANDSCAPE*, *PERSON*, and *PLANT*. Yet, the metaphors: *SPRING IS AIR*, *SPRING IS FIRE*, *SPRING IS EXISTENCE*, *SPRING IS MONEY* are applicable in English, and totally absent in the Vietnamese data. Conversely, the source domains: *LIQUID*, *SOUND*, *SCENTED OBJECT* and *TASTED OBJECT* are found only in the Vietnamese corpus. Obviously, both Westerners and Vietnamese share the same way to conceptualize the spring entity with many common spring metaphors, which is maybe because their living environment and experiences they have for this season are

similar. On the other hand, they show certain differences between their feelings about the period of time in a year. While the Vietnamese conceive spring with its scent and sound, the Westerners expose their yearning for the warmth of spring when they become lively, and they consider it a commodity. In conclusion, the findings uncover the similarities as well as differences for the conceptual metaphors of spring between English and Vietnamese, based on the culture-bound nature of these metaphors, whose cross-cultural variations include different experiences, physical environments having enormous impact on the choice of metaphors.

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ẨN DỤ TRI NHẬN VỀ MÙA XUÂN TRONG CA TỪ BÀI HÁT TIẾNG ANH VÀ TIẾNG VIỆT

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Tóm tắt: Nghiên cứu này phát hiện ẩn dụ tri nhận về mùa xuân qua các ca từ bài hát tiếng Anh và tiếng Việt. Nghiên cứu dựa trên cơ sở lý thuyết về ẩn dụ tri nhận do Lakoff và Johnson khởi xướng vào năm 1980 với tác phẩm kinh điển *Ẩn dụ từ cuộc sống quanh ta (Metaphors We Live by)*. Nghiên cứu tiến hành dựa trên số liệu được thu thập từ 205 bài hát, trong đó 98 bài tiếng Anh và 107 bài tiếng Việt từ thế kỷ 20 đến nay, bao gồm 736 biểu đạt ẩn dụ và tuân thủ theo phương pháp nhận biết ẩn dụ của Steen (1999). Phương pháp mô tả và so sánh được sử dụng chính trong bài. Kết quả nghiên cứu cho thấy có 20 ẩn dụ tri nhận được tìm ra thông qua việc tìm các miền nguồn mang tính cụ thể đã ánh xạ lên miền đích - mùa xuân, trong đó có 12 ẩn dụ giống nhau trong hai ngôn ngữ. Nghiên cứu cũng đã chỉ ra được sự giống và khác nhau của ẩn dụ về mùa xuân giữa hai ngôn ngữ này, đồng thời đưa ra những giải thích cho sự tương đồng và khác biệt này dưới góc nhìn văn hóa, gồm kinh nghiệm và môi trường sống của con người.

Từ khóa: biểu đạt ẩn dụ, ẩn dụ tri nhận, miền đích, miền nguồn, ánh xạ