
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

An Investigation into Conceptual Metaphors of WATER in English and Vietnamese Poetry

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| ABSTRACT

This study is conducted with the aim of identifying conceptual metaphors of WATER in English and Vietnamese poetry. It seeks to find out the similarities and differences in the conceptualization of metaphors of WATER in the two languages; then suggest some implications for the teaching and learning process. In the study, descriptive, quantitative, qualitative approaches and a contrastive analysis are employed. 150 English and 150 Vietnamese samples are taken from a corpus of English and Vietnamese poems from the 19th and 20th centuries. The results show that ten conceptual metaphors of WATER in both English and Vietnamese are discovered within the scope of the study. Both English and Vietnamese poets make use of three types of poetic reworking of conventional metaphors, namely extending, elaboration, and combining. Since the meaning of a metaphor is influenced by culture and personal experiences, the concepts in the metaphors might differ significantly across Vietnamese and English cultures.

| KEYWORDS

Conceptual metaphor, water, English poetry, Vietnamese poetry

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

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1. Introduction

Metaphor is considered an inalienable stylistic device in literature. Among the metaphorical expressions used in the literary text, conceptual metaphors of WATER are one of the most commonly employed, especially in poetry. Being one of the basic elements of nature, water is deeply connected with human fate. Its value to human life goes beyond the role of maintaining well-being functions. Water is thus crucial in representing features such as purity, renewal and reconciliation, turmoil and devastation, and even rituals and cultural practices. As a result, water has long been an unlimited source of inspiration for English and Vietnamese poets. Take the following poems as examples:

In Vietnamese:

“Đất là nơi anh đến trường
Nước là nơi em tắm
Đất Nước là nơi ta hò hẹn”

(Điễm, 1974)

In English:

All day I hear the noise of *waters*
Making moan,
Sad as the sea-bird is when, going

Forth alone,
He hears the winds cry to the water's
Monotone.

(Joyce, 1907)

Given the fact that it is one of the most dominant poetic themes, the conceptual metaphor of WATER in poetry still remains incomprehensively addressed by linguistic researchers. This has motivated the researcher to conduct a study entitled "An investigation into conceptual metaphors of WATER in English and Vietnamese poetry". The study is hoped to provide a basis for understanding conceptual metaphors of WATER in English and Vietnamese poems, thus adding to a growing corpus of research investigating metaphors in English and Vietnamese from a cognitive approach. This study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What are the conceptual metaphors of WATER in English and Vietnamese poetry?
2. What are the similarities and differences in the representation of conceptual metaphors of WATER in English and Vietnamese poetry?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Conceptual Metaphor

Lakoff and Johnson's seminal publication "Metaphors We Live By" (1980) provided the groundwork for cognitive theories of metaphor. The authors found that "most of our ordinary conceptual system is metaphorical in nature" and that "the essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another" (p.104). This new view of metaphor has been approved by many scholars. According to Kövecses (2002, p.4), metaphor is defined as "understanding one conceptual domain in terms of another conceptual domain". Besides, Kövecses indicated that there are two domains that are closely connected: the source domain and the target domain. The former refers to the conceptual domain from which metaphorical expressions to comprehend another domain are drawn, whereas the latter refers to the conceptual domain that is understood. There is a set of systematic correspondences or cross-domain mappings of concepts between the source and the target; therefore, conceptual domain A can be understood by conceptual domain B (Kövecses, 2002; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). These conceptual correspondences are regarded as mappings.

2.2. Devices to Create Unconventional Language

According to Lakoff, Turner, Gibbs and Kövecses (2002), poets frequently apply numerous strategies to construct "novel unconventional language" from conventional sources of daily language and cognition. They include *extending*, *elaboration*, *questioning* and *combining*.

- In *extending*, a traditional conceptual metaphor related to certain traditionalized language terms is conveyed through new linguistic resources. Extending is employed based on the introduction of a new conceptual element in the source domain. For example:

"In the middle of life's road
I found myself in a dark wood."

(Dante, 1321)

The novel part in the above sentences is that life's road could lead through a dark wood. By integrating this unconventional element into the poem, Dante extends the metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY. In other words, the author adds this creative component of the source to form an unconventional representation of the metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY (Kövecses, 2002).

- In *elaboration*, elements in the source domain are developed in a novel way. Instead of introducing a new element, this device creatively captures a component that already exists in the source domain. An example of this device is shown as follows:

"Not enough. When I dream of meeting
the enemy, this is my dream:
white acetylene ripples from my body
effortlessly released
perfectly trained on the true enemy"

(Rich, 1979)

According to Kövecses (2002), when we comprehend this poem, one of the most prevalent metaphors for anger which is ANGER IS A HOT FLUID IN A CONTAINER, is brought to mind. There are several demonstrations of this very common metaphor in everyday language, namely "boiling with anger" or "making one's blood boil".

- In *questioning*, poets could inquire about the very appropriateness of our everyday metaphors by using a poetic method of inquiry. For instance:

“Suns can set and return again,
but when our brief light goes out,
there’s one perpetual night to be slept through.” (Catullus, 65 B.C.E.)

Here, Catullus makes the observation that some of our most popular metaphors for life and death, such as a LIFETIME IS A DAY and DEATH IS NIGHT, become inappropriate at the moment of death. They are not appropriate because, metaphorically, death is “one eternal night to be slept through”, which suggests that after we pass away, we are no longer able to exist. In other words, while the metaphors of a lifetime being like a day and death being like a night are kept, their applicability or validity is questioned. The analogies, according to Catullus, are only half appropriate. (Kövecses, 2002)

- In combining, a combination of two or more everyday conceptual metaphors is employed in a poetic expression. The following example illustrates this poetic device:

“In me thou seest the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west;
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death’s second self that seals up all in rest.” (Shakespeare, 1609)

At least five conventional conceptual metaphors are combined along these lines: LIFE IS LIGHT, EVENTS ARE ACTIONS, LIFE IS A PRICELESS TREASURE, and A LIFETIME IS A DAY. Combining can involve numerous common metaphors at once and is thus based on them. (Kövecses, 2002)

2.3. Water in Poetry

Water appears in poems in numerous forms, such as river, sea, and ocean, and it has been widely used as a symbol, a metaphor, or just an actual presence. Different forms of water have different implications. A fast-flowing river, for instance, usually represents power and dedication. Furthermore, literary scholars have long noted that water - particularly river water - often implies both rebirth and healing. Another example is the water of the ocean or sea. It can bring unpredictable and even dangerous risks. As illustrated in flood-themed poems, the ocean may be turbulent or deadly at times. (Mills, 2008)

3. Methodology

In this study, *descriptive, quantitative, and qualitative* approaches are employed to examine conceptual metaphors of WATER in English and Vietnamese poetry. In addition, a *contrastive analysis* is carried out to compare the use of conceptual metaphors and find out the similarities and differences in the representation of conceptual metaphors of WATER in English and Vietnamese poetry.

150 English and 150 Vietnamese samples are taken from a corpus of 100 English and 100 Vietnamese poems from the 19th and 20th centuries. The themes of the poems are mainly nature, love, human relationships, and human behaviours. Data sets are chosen from water-related expressions denoting water in English such as *water, river, waterfall, pond, stream, flow, wet*, etc and in Vietnamese such as *nước, con nước, dòng nước, nguồn, sông, thác, suối, thấm, cạn*, etc. Because not all of the words and phrases denoting water are used as metaphorical expressions, they are interpreted based on contexts and through a mechanism of metaphorical mappings.

The study comprises the following stages:

- Reviewing the literature and identifying the research scope;
- Selecting English and Vietnamese poems from the 19th and 20th centuries;
- Choosing 150 English and 150 Vietnamese samples that represent conceptual metaphors;
- Discussing the meanings and features of the conceptual metaphors;
- Analyzing, illustrating, and presenting data using tables, figures and diagrams;
- Comparing and finding out the similarities and differences between English and Vietnamese poetry;
- Presenting the findings and discussion, then suggesting some implications for teachers and learners.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Conceptual Metaphors of WATER in English and Vietnamese Poetry

Ten conceptual metaphors of WATER in both English and Vietnamese are discovered within the scope of the study, including WATER IS HUMAN, WATER IS LOVE, WATER IS A MIRROR, WATER IS A CONTAINER, WATER IS AN OBJECT, WATER IS SOUND, WATER IS A ROAD, WATER IS A DANGEROUS ANIMAL, WATER IS POWER, and WATER IS SILK. WATER IS HUMAN accounts for the largest proportion of the metaphors found in English and Vietnamese poems. WATER IS SILK makes up the smallest percentage of metaphors employed in English poetry, whereas WATER IS POWER is used the least in Vietnamese poetry. Some highlighted aspects of the target domain WATER are the vital role of water in human life, the strength of water currents, shapes of water bodies, depth of water bodies, conditions of water bodies in different weather patterns and so on. Take the following poems as examples:

(1) WATER IS HUMAN

Dòng sông đã *mang nặng đẽ đầu* chúng ta
chưa nói lời gặp biển (Thanh Thảo, 1988)

To-night I hear you crying on the beach,
Like a weary child on its mother's breast (Ryan, 1879)

WATER and MOTHER are different types of things by nature. One is a clear liquid, and another is a person. However, WATER is constructed, interpreted, presented, and discussed in terms of HUMAN and MOTHER. Water is believed to be the origin of life, as it is the prerequisite for any living being to begin and evolve on Earth. The image of water fostering living organisms is strongly associated with a mother giving birth to a baby (*mang nặng đẽ đầu*) and acting as the nurturer. In the phrase like a weary child on its mother's breast, many constituent elements of a mother are given: unconditional affection and love, gentleness, kindness, and emotional backbone. However, when the phrase is put in an appropriate context, the content is then understood to be about the beach, and the writer has in mind not a mother's breast but the sea.

(2) WATER IS LOVE

Many things humans do with water are shaped in some way by the notion of love. We fall in love, we drown in love, and we cannot live without love.

Mắt em buồn hơn một vạt trắng sông
Anh *chìm đắm* ở trong đôi mắt ấy (Lê Minh Quốc, 1990)

Love is not all: it is not meat nor drink...
...Nor yet a floating spar to men that sink
And *rise and sink and rise and sink* again (Millay, 1931)

The WATER IS LOVE metaphor structures the behaviours people perform when they are in a relationship. Constituent elements of LOVE correspond systematically to constituent elements of WATER. When people fall in love, they develop strong compassion for their lovers, and they *sink - chìm đắm* into the relationship. *Sinking into the water* is metaphorically employed to illustrate someone who is immersed in their love. On the other hand, it is natural for a couple to have good and bad times; thus, when lovers go through ups and downs, they are viewed as rising and sinking in their relationship.

In addition, when the weather is nice, the surface of a lake or a river is calm and quiet, which is utilized to suggest a relationship is in a peaceful state. By contrast, when there are storms, an extremely strong flow is caused on water bodies, which is often used to describe the relationship turmoil.

Return in peace to the ocean, my love,
I too am part of that ocean, my love,... (Whitman, 1865)

Dữ dội và dịu êm
Ồn ào và lặng lẽ
Sông không hiểu nổi mình
Sóng tìm ra tận bể (Xuân Quỳnh, 1968)

(3) WATER IS A MIRROR

Because there are similarities between the elements in the two domains, MIRROR and WATER, the concept of MIRROR is employed to establish the concept of WATER in many poems. The surface of the water has a reflective characteristic, and the still water in a lake or stream can reflect the surrounding landscape perfectly. Reflection is also the unique feature of a mirror. What is more, whether a crystal clear image can be seen through the water or not depends on the tranquility and purity of the water. Likewise, whether an object can be well reflected through a mirror or not relies on the clearness and smoothness of a mirror. In poetry, the reflection can be described via a variety of expressions such as *mirror - soi bóng*, *reflect - phản chiếu*, etc.

Bằng lăng soi bóng ven hồ Xuân đi thu đến bao giờ hờ hoa	(Tế Hanh, n.d.)
Ánh vàng reo trên mặt hồ sóng gợn <i>Phản chiếu</i> lên đôi má đào mơn-mởn	(Thế Lữ, 1941)
The moon hung clear, and the night was still: The waters <i>reflected</i> the glittering skies...	(Wilcox, 1905)
Under the October twilight, the water <i>Mirrors</i> a still sky	(Yeats, 1917)

(4) WATER IS SILK

WATER IS SILK is not a common metaphor in English poems; nevertheless, the conceptualization from the source domain SILK to the target domain WATER frequently takes place in Vietnamese poems. Vietnamese poets view water as delicate silk in different colors and decorating patterns. Like a piece of silken cloth, the water can be worn, embroidered on, and rolled. The classifier *dải*, which is often used for the noun *silk (dải lụa)* in Vietnamese, is also employed to indicate the water. For instance:

Dòng sông mới điệu làm sao Nắng lên mặc áo lụa đào thướt tha	(Nguyễn Trọng Tạo, 1972)
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In English poems, although water is not often conceptualized as silk or any type of cloth, this metaphor is vaguely employed when the writers intend to describe the soft flow of water from time to time:

With fields of yellow maize, and leagues away With rivers where their <i>sweeping waters</i> wend Past velvet banks to rocky shores, in canons bold to end.	(Johnson, 1917b)
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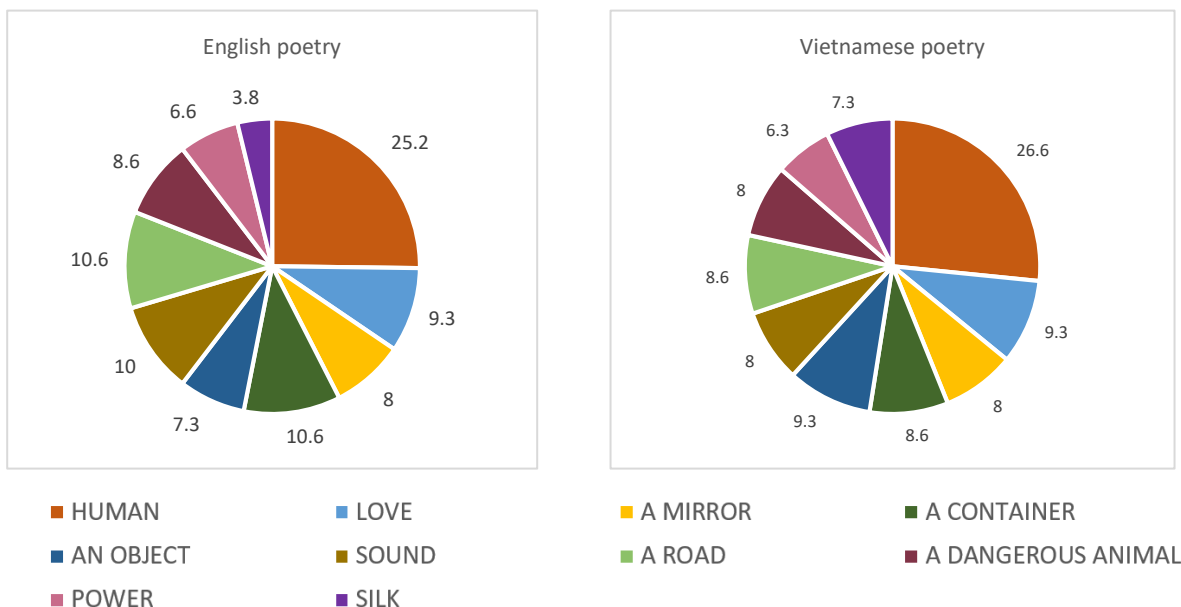


Figure 1: Frequency of Source Domains of Conceptual Metaphors of WATER in English and Vietnamese Poetry

As can be seen from the pie charts in Figure 1, HUMAN is the most popular source domain in both English and Vietnamese poems, accounting for about a quarter at 25.2% and 26.6% of the metaphorical samples, respectively. Meanwhile, the smallest share percentage belongs to the SILK domain (3.8%) in English poetry and the POWER domain (8.0%) in Vietnamese poetry. The number of poems in which WATER IS LOVE and WATER IS A MIRROR are employed in the poetry of the two languages is equal. There is a small variation in the rate at which the remaining conceptual metaphors are used. The proportion of the remaining source domains is between 8.0% and 10.6%.

4.2. Similarities in Conceptual Metaphors of WATER in English and Vietnamese Poetry

The findings indicate a list of ten source domains from which the target domain WATER is conceptualized in both English and Vietnamese poems, including HUMAN, LOVE, A MIRROR, A CONTAINER, AN OBJECT, SOUND, A ROAD, A DANGEROUS ANIMAL, POWER, and SILK.

In this research, apart from WATER IS HUMAN and WATER IS LOVE, the metaphors employed in English and Vietnamese poetry are *partial metaphors* because only some aspects of the concept in the source domain are mapped onto the target WATER domain, and vice versa, not every part of the target WATER domain is engaged in the mappings from the source domain.

Take the WATER IS A MIRROR as an example:

- Quanh mặt hồ *in* mây trắng bay (Tố Hữu, 1972)
- Bềnh lằng *soi bóng* ven hồ (Tế Hanh, n.d.)
- The waters *reflected* the glittering skies (Wilcox, 1905)
- Under the October twilight, the water *mirrors* a still sky (Yeats, 1917)

As illustrated in the examples, the main focus is on the flatness, clearness and reflective capacity of the water surface. In other words, only these aspects are highlighted in the metaphor WATER IS A MIRROR. The remaining aspects, such as water flow or water's role in culture, are hidden or out of focus (Kövecses, 2002). The concept of being highlighted and hidden is said to be unavoidable rather than undesirable in our everyday language. As illustrated in the findings, while conceptual metaphors highlight certain aspects of WATER, they hide other aspects of it since we only employ a part of the source domains in comprehending the target domain.

While the term "metaphorical highlighting" refers to the target domain, "metaphorical utilization" refers to the source domain. In situations when only a part of the source domain is utilized in understanding the target, the utilization is also called partial. An example can be demonstrated in the expressions of the metaphor WATER IS A DANGEROUS ANIMAL:

- Tiếng *sóng thét*, tiếng *sóng gầm*, bốn bề tiếng *sóng* (Tế Hanh, 1960)
- The sea...and mingled its *roar* with the dirges. (Longfellow, 1847)
- The rain... *heavily poured* on the *shuddering ground* (Heredia, 1918)

In the above sentences, the partial metaphorical utilization is seen in the way we employ only a few aspects of the source domain, A DANGEROUS ANIMAL, such as its angry roar and scream, its heavy footsteps and aggressiveness. However, other aspects of a deadly animal, like its body shape, its natural habitat and deaths resulting from the animal attack, are not brought into focus in the metaphor.

The partial nature of conceptual metaphors is a common phenomenon in both English and Vietnamese poetry. The notion of highlighting and hiding, as well as the metaphorical utilization, is expressed in a variety of ways depending on the experiences and purposes of the writers.

Besides, English and Vietnamese poets make use of poetic devices to produce innovative, unconventional language from the conventional language in daily life. The results show that conceptual metaphors of WATER are represented by means of *extending*, *collaboration* and *combining* (Kövecses (2002).

- In *extending*, conventional metaphors of WATER related to certain traditionalized language terms are represented in a novel way. Extending is employed based on the introduction of a new conceptual element in the source domain. Take the following stanzas as examples:

Dòng sông đã *mang nặng đẽ đầu* chúng ta
chưa nói lời gập biển (Thanh Thảo, 1988)

Thou *hast taught me*, Silent River!

Many a lesson, deep and long;

Thou hast been a *generous* giver;

I can give thee but a song. (Longfellow, 1866)

In the two examples, the conventional metaphor WATER IS HUMAN is extended in a new way by using unconventional elements from the source domain HUMAN. The new linguistic expression is the river giving birth to human beings (*mang nặng đẽ đầu*), the river teaching humans many lessons, and the river being generous. Extending the utilization of conceptual metaphors of WATER can be found in a majority of English and Vietnamese samples.

- In elaboration, components in the source domain are developed in a creative way to produce the conceptual metaphors of WATER.

Ánh vàng reo trên mặt hồ sóng gợn
Phản chiếu lên đôi má đào mơn-mởn (Thế Lữ, 1941)

The moon hung clear, and the night was still:

The waters *reflected* the glittering skies... (Wilcox, 1905)

Many conventional expressions of the metaphor WATER IS A MIRROR is activated in the comprehension of the above poems. In our everyday language, linguistic expressions such as "*water reflects the sky - mặt nước phản chiếu bầu trời*", "*the trees are mirrored on the water surface - hàng cây soi gương trên mặt nước*", etc. are already commonly employed. The writers conduct the act of elaborating on an ordinary metaphor. The metaphorical elements are primarily taken from our daily perception of water.

- In combining, two or more conceptual metaphors in everyday language and cognition are used in one poetic expression of WATER. For instance:

Cũng có khi vô cớ
Biển ào ạt xô thuyền
(Vì tình yêu muôn thuở
Có bao giờ đứng yên?) (Xuân Quỳnh, 1963)

What *roar* is that? 'tis the rain that breaks

In torrents away from the airy lakes,

Heavily poured on the *shuddering ground*,

And *shedding a nameless horror around*. (Heredia, 1918)

The Vietnamese example shows that in a single clause, "*Biển ào ạt xô thuyền*", three conceptual metaphors of WATER are combined:

+ *Biển* (sea) and *thuyền* (boat) are lovers: WATER IS LOVER

+ The sea waves strike the boat, in other words, have a physical impact on the boat: WATER IS POWER

+ The image of the boat being struck in the rough sea is conceptualized as lovers' quarrels: WATER IS LOVE

In the English example, a combination of three conceptual metaphors is used, including:

+ The roaring sound of the rain: WATER IS SOUND

+ The rain falling makes the ground shudder: WATER IS POWER

+ The rain threatens the creatures around: WATER IS A DANGEROUS ANIMAL

4.3. Differences in Conceptual Metaphors of WATER in English and Vietnamese Poetry

Although both English and Vietnamese poems employed the same conceptual metaphors of WATER, the percentage of poems containing the metaphors is different between the two languages. Noticeably, the rate of using metaphor WATER IS SILK in Vietnamese poetry doubles that of English one. This can be explained by the differences in the existence of the concept SILK in English and Vietnamese cultures. In Vietnam, silk is an elegant and premium fabric which has long existed in history. The silk weaving industry is not only the nation's pride, but it is also a tradition that is well preserved. Furthermore, growing mulberry trees and raising silkworms have a critical role to play in the development of the country. Therefore, the image of silk has been integrated

into the everyday Vietnamese language in literature, and it has become the source domain for many conceptual metaphors in poems. Meanwhile, although many Western countries experienced the success of the silk trade in the past, silk does not appear to have a profound impact on Western cultures as it does in Asian countries. As a result, rarely is silk utilized as an element in the conceptualization of English-speaking people; thus, it is hardly employed in English conceptual metaphors.

What is more, because the meaning of a metaphor is partly determined by culture and personal experiences, the concepts in the metaphor can vary greatly from Vietnamese culture to English culture. For example, in Vietnamese culture, the boat is often associated with the male lover of the husband, and the sea is closely connected with the female lover or the wife. Vietnamese people believe that the boat sailing away is similar to the man going far away to earn a living for the family, whereas the sea is like a woman waiting for her lover or husband to come back home. This traditional way of thinking forms the foundation for many expressions in the metaphor WATER IS LOVER in Vietnamese poems. On the other hand, in English poems, the sea and the wind, the sea and the river are more frequently employed to represent lovers. It is the differences in the way people culturally comprehend the entities that make the concepts different despite being used in the same conceptual metaphor.

In addition, the use of classifiers and measure words contribute to the differences in the expressions of the conceptual metaphors of WATER between English and Vietnamese poems. The differences caused by classifiers can be seen in the WATER IS A ROAD metaphor. Vietnamese poets map the road-related classifiers in the source domain like làn đường and con đường onto the target domain like làn nước and con nước. Similarly, in the metaphor WATER IS A CONTAINER, bodies of water such as sea and river are used as measure words in the structure [a + water body + of] to suggest the ability to hold a number of things inside of water, for example, a sea of dew or a river of blood.

Besides, the frequency of three types of poetic reworking of conventional metaphors varies between English and Vietnamese poems, as shown in the table below:

Table 1: Frequency of Three Types of Poetic Reworking of Ordinary Metaphors

Type of poetic reworking	English		Vietnamese	
	Occurrences	%	Occurrences	%
Extending	43	28.6%	25	16.6%
Elaboration	74	49.3%	77	51.3%
Combining	33	22.1%	48	32.1%
Total	150	100%	150	100%

Table 3 shows that conceptual metaphors in English and Vietnamese poems mostly act as means of capturing an already existing element in a novel way, at 49.3% and 51.3%, respectively. The percentage of extended conventional metaphors, namely 28.6%, is higher than that of combined metaphors in English poetry, namely 22.1%. Nevertheless, the pattern is the opposite for Vietnamese poetry. In Vietnamese poems, there are more combined traditional conceptual metaphors, at 32.1%, than extended traditional metaphors, at 16.6%. The differences in the occurrences of reworked metaphors result from various purposes and writing styles of writers in the two languages.

5. Conclusion

The study is carried out to investigate conceptual metaphors of WATER in English and Vietnamese poetry in the 19th and 20th centuries. The following conclusions can be drawn from the result analysis to answer the research questions:

Ten conceptual metaphors of WATER in both English and Vietnamese are discovered within the scope of the study, including WATER IS HUMAN, WATER IS LOVE, WATER IS A MIRROR, WATER IS A CONTAINER, WATER IS AN OBJECT, WATER IS SOUND, WATER IS A ROAD, WATER IS A DANGEROUS ANIMAL, WATER IS POWER, and WATER IS SILK. WATER IS HUMAN accounts for the largest proportion of the metaphors found in English and Vietnamese poems. WATER IS SILK makes up the smallest percentage of metaphors employed in English poetry, whereas WATER IS POWER is used the least in Vietnamese poetry. Some highlighted aspects of the target domain WATER are the vital role of water in human life, the strength of water currents, shapes of water bodies, depth of water bodies, conditions of water bodies in different weather patterns and so on.

Both English and Vietnamese poets make use of three types of poetic reworking of conventional metaphors, namely extending, elaboration, and combining. Although the occurrences are different among the three, they all act as means of conceptualizing the conventional metaphors in a variety of ways to refine the poems and enable readers to comprehend the poems in a novel way.

Regarding the differences in the conceptual metaphors of WATER between English and Vietnamese poems, since the meaning of a metaphor is influenced by culture and personal experiences, the concepts in the metaphors might differ significantly across Vietnamese and English cultures. The variation can be found in WATER IS SILK and WATER IS LOVER metaphors. Furthermore, the use of classifiers and measure words is another reason for the differences that occurred in the use of conceptual metaphors in poems written in the two languages.

Due to time and resources constraint, only the conceptual metaphors of WATER in poems of the 19th and 20th centuries are examined within the scope of the study. Besides, the discussions about the influences of cultures and positive and negative transfers on the comprehension of conceptual metaphors of WATER and cognitive metaphors in the literature remain limited. What is more, apart from ten source domains discovered in the samples, there exist more source domains from which the target domain WATER maps to create conceptual metaphors that need further examination.

Therefore, future research should be conducted to explore the following areas:

- The conceptual metaphors of other basic elements of the universe, such as earth, air, and ether, in English and Vietnamese poetry.
- The impacts of positive and negative transfer and cultural differences in the metaphorical conceptualization.
- Further source domains of conceptual metaphors of WATER which are employed in English and Vietnamese poetry and in other written discourses.

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