A CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS ON COGNITIVE METAPHORS DENOTING THE CONCEPT OF "WAR AND PEACE" IN ANTI-WAR SONGS IN ENGLISH VERSUS VIETNAMESE

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Abstract - In light of Cognitive Linguistics, metaphor is an important language tool that commonly used to reflect human cognition and thought; and in this sense, it plays a vital role in the conceptualization of abstract concepts. This article presents a cross-linguistic research on the conceptual metaphors (CMs) denoting *War* and *Peace* in English versus Vietnamese in music from the late decades of the 20th century until now. Basing on the theoretical background of many linguists, especially Lakoff and Johnson (1980), Johasen (2007), and together with the data collected from the questionnaire and interviews, the study investigates and discovers the similarities and differences in CMs of *War* and *Peace* between English and Vietnamese anti-war songs. The findings of the study can contribute a significant part in the areas of English language teaching and learning (ELT / ELL), Linguistics, Translation Studies and Cross-cultural Communication.

Key words - Cognitive metaphor(s); war; peace; anti-war songs; Cross-cultural communication

1. Rationale

Linguistics is an approach that includes a set of guiding principles, assumptions and perspectives which have led to a diverse range of theories. The most important way in which Cognitive Linguistics differs from other approaches of language studies is that it studies the relationship between language, the mind, experience and especially patterns of conceptualization.

Over years, poets, writers and music composers have made great use of the function of metaphor in the conceptualization of abstract things as it is a very popular device of artistic imagination. A variety of studies on metaphors in general, and CMs in particular, such as *life, love, death, time, ideas* and so on in both English and Vietnamese have been done. However, until now, researches on CMs of *War* and *Peace* in English and Vietnamese songs have been left unexploited.

Trinh Cong Son, a well-known anti-war composer, wrote:

> Hàng vạn tấn bom trút xuống đầu làng
>
> Hàng vạn tấn bom trút xuống ruộng đồng
>
> Cửa nhà Việt Nam **cháy đỏ** cuối thôn
>
> *Đại bác ru đêm* - Trịnh Công Sơn

(O! Tons of bombs fall on the gate

The bombs like rain fall on our fields

Houses burnt red at the end of the lane)

> *Cannon Fire Lulls the Night* – Trinh Cong Son

These lines in Trinh Cong Son's song not only have made millions of Vietnamese people but also people around the world moved and cry. Among them, we ourselves are no

exception, since we recognized that "fire" which comes from the metaphorical expression *War is fire,* has a devastating force as terrible as war that had destroyed our beloved country for years in the past. In this sense, listening to anti-war songs and comprehending their metaphorical expressions might help people decrease their negative feelings and bridge the gaps among people that caused by war. And this study was conducted to serve these purposes.

2. Aims and Objectives

2.1. Aims

The final aims of the study are (i) to identify the CMs denoting the concept of *War* and *Peace* in anti-war songs in English and Vietnamese, (ii) to examine how the CMs are used to express the concept of *War* and *Peace*, and (iii) to discover the similarities and differences in CMs of *War* and *Peace* in English and Vietnamese anti-war songs.

2.2. Objectives

The study is intended to fulfill the following objectives: (i) to investigate the CMs denoting the concept of ***War*** and ***Peace*** in anti-war songs in English and Vietnamese based on the theory of CMs, (ii) to categorize the CMs of ***War*** and ***Peace*** into groups; (iii) to analyze the CMs of ***War*** and ***Peace*** in terms of meaning, structure, mapping; (iv) to interpret the similarities and differences in CMs of ***War*** and ***Peace*** in English versus Vietnamese anti-war songs; and (v) to suggest some implications in areas such as English language teaching and learning, translations of CMs in songs and enhancement music sense for music fans.

3. Research questions

In order to achieve the above-mentioned aims, the researcher tried to seek answers for the research questions: (i) *How are the CMs of War and Peace conceptualized in anti-war songs in English and Vietnamese?*, (ii) *What are the similarities and differences in CMs denoting the concept of War and Peace in anti-war songs in English versus Vietnamese,* and (iii) *What are the implications for the use of CMs of War and Peace in English language teaching and learning (ELT/ELL), translation practice and cross-cultural communication?*

4. Theoretical background

4.1. Cognitive Metaphors (CMs)

In *Metaphors We Live By*, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) - the two masters of cognitive linguistics, claimed that (i) metaphor is a property of concepts; (ii) the function of

metaphor is to better understand certain concepts, and not just used for artistic or aesthetic purpose; (iii) metaphor is used effortlessly in everyday life by ordinary people, and (v) metaphor is an inevitable process of human thought and reasoning. In this sense, CMs shape not just our communication, but also shape the way we think and act.

Another linguist – Johansen, defined CM as "a metaphor that exists in the mind of a speaker, and may thus be unconscious" (Johansen, 2007). In order to generate a CM, the knowledge from one domain must be mapped onto another. To be more specific, the domain where the concept is mapped is the source domain (SD) and the one where the concept is mapped onto is the target domain (TD). A brief and convenient way to represent this mapping can be recognized through the pattern: *Target Domain Is Source Domain*, which is called a conceptual metaphor (Johansen, 2007).

4.2. Classification of CMs

CMs are classified into three common kinds which are structural, ontological, and orientation metaphors in terms of cognitive functions. Structural metaphor is the case where one concept is metaphorically structured in terms of another. In ontological metaphors, people conceive their experiences in terms of objects, substances, and containers without specifying exactly what kind of object, substance, or container is meant. And orientation metaphors make a set of target concepts coherent in people's conceptual system (Lakoff, 1992).

4.3. Mapping Principles

CMs consist of a (SD) and a (TD), and a set of mappings. SD is the conceptual domain from which we draw metaphorical expressions and TD is the conceptual domain that we try to understand. A mapping is the systematic set of correspondences that exist between constituent elements of the SD and TD (Lee, 2001). The set of mappings that applies to a given source-target pairing is illustrated below:
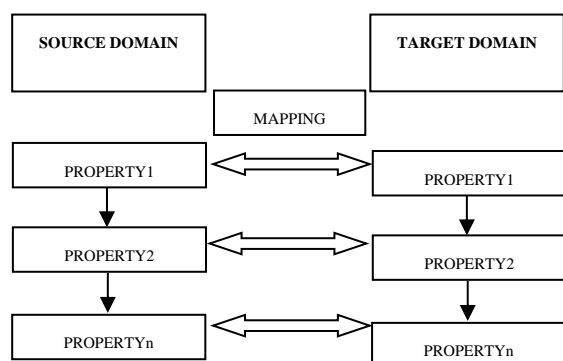

Figure 1. Metaphorical Mapping

5. Research design and Methodology

This paper is a combination of quantitative and qualitative approach in which its quantitative characteristics can be seen through the percentages taken from the questionnaires and interviews with post graduates at the research site, and the qualitative characteristics can be seen via the data collected from the questionnaire and the interviews. Qualitative method

aimed to describe CMs and then analyze data whereas quantitative method was used to present statistic results of the collected data. Besides, the researcher used the analytic and synthetic methods to measure the values of the data collected in the study. During the process of analyzing the collected data, the descriptive method was also employed to seek information about CMs in English and Vietnamese anti-war songs whereas the analytic method was used to examine matters in details and the synthetic method to generalize the investigated issues before coming to the conclusions.

5.1. Sampling

To conduct the study, the researcher carried out a questionnaire and 5 interviews. 780 metaphorical expressions of War and Peace were selected from English and Vietnamese anti-war songs. The questionnaire was designed with 27 question items and intended to be answered by 100 responders; however, the researcher received the valid feedback from only 67 responders. Apart from the questionnaire, the researcher also interviewed 5 MA candidates whose interviews lasted from 10 to 15 minutes and were recorded for introspective review.

5.2. Instruments

In this study, questionnaire and interviews are the two main channels through which the researcher conducted the investigation. Most of the anti-war songs used in the thesis are the famous ones, composed by many well-known composers such as Trinh Cong Son, Pham Duy in Vietnamese and Bob Dylan, John Lennon, Michael Jackson in English.

5.2.1. The Questionnaire

In this study, the questionnaire is the major instrument used to collect information. There are twenty-seven question items with three kinds of questions: (i) Yes-No Question, (ii) Scale-rating Question and (iii) Multiple choice Question. They were about (i) the responders' knowledge on CM theories, (ii) their understanding on CMs of War and Peace in anti-war songs, (iii) their attitude and opinions on CMs of War and Peace in their studies and in real communication. The questionnaire was designed in Vietnamese in order to avoid misunderstanding and the content of the question items are exactly the same as the ones in the interviews to ensure the internal validity of the study.

5.2.2. The Interview

The interviews were designed to shed light on the study. The interviewees were actually MA candidates at The University of Foreign Language Studies in Danang University. These candidates were chosen on purpose due to their English competence as well as their knowledge on CMs they have got from their post graduate courses. As mentioned above, the question items used in the interviews were exactly the same as the ones in the questionnaire. There are twenty-six question items in each interview with four kinds of questions (i) Yes-No Question, (ii) Scale-rating Question, (iii) Multiple choice Question and (iv) Free answer Question. The content of the question items used in the interviews was in

Vietnamese in order to avoid misunderstanding that might occur during the process of interviewing.

6. Findings and Discussions

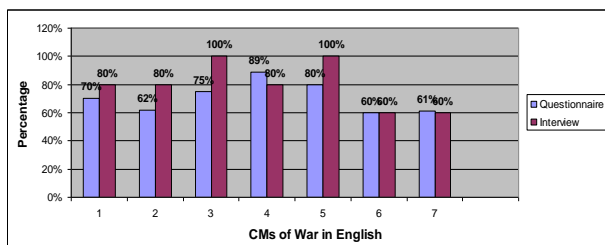### 6.1. Results from the Questionnaire and Interviews

Figure 2. Responders' levels of agreement on CMs of War in English anti-war songs
Notes:1: War is a substance in a container; 2: War is a part of a whole; 3: War is negative emotions; 4: War is evil; 5: War is death; 6: War is fire; 7: War is lie
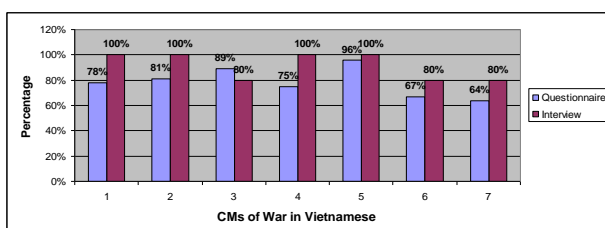

Figure 3: Responders' levels of agreement on CMs of War in Vietnamese anti-war songs
Notes: 1: War is a substance in a container; 2: War is a part of a whole; 3: War is negative emotions; 4: War is evil; 5: War is death; 6: War is fire; 7: War is hatred.
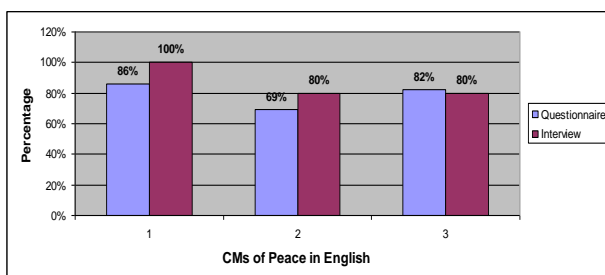

Figure 4. Responders' levels of agreement on CMs of Peace in English anti-war songs
Notes:1: Peace is harmony; 2: Peace is positive emotions; 3: Peace is light
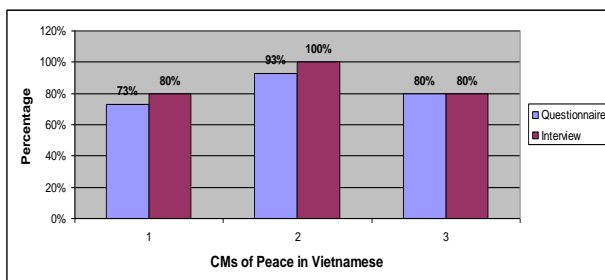

Figure 5. Responders' levels of agreement on CMs of Peace in Vietnamese anti-war songs
Notes:1: Peace is reunion; 2: Peace is positive emotions; 3: Peace is light.
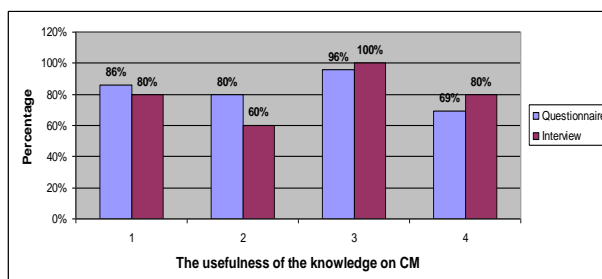

Figure 6. Responders' levels of agreement on the usefulness of the knowledge on CM
Notes: 1: Enhancing the ability to enjoy artistic works; 2: Improving translational skills; 3: Comprehending the content of music lyrics more deeply; 4: Bettering communicative skills

6.2. CMs Expressing War in anti-war songs in English versus Vietnamese

6.2.1. War is a substance in a container

When talking about war, people normally think about its negative aspects, one of which is destruction. War always accompanies with different kinds of weapons such as gun, bullet, cannon, bomb, etc. The consequence of war is that a series of things, people and their life are ruined during war-time.

(1)   You that build all **the guns**

      You that build **the death planes**

      You that build **the big bombs**

Masters of War - Bob Dylan

(2)   **Hàng vạn tấn bom trút xuống** đầu làng

      Hàng vạn tấn bom trút xuống ruộng đồng

Đại Bác Ru Đêm – Trịnh Công Sơn

   (O! **Tons of bombs** fall on the gate

   The bombs like rain fall on our fields)

Cannon Fire Lulls the Night– Trinh Cong Son

6.2.2. War is a part of a whole

The English composers usually mention body parts to imply the loss people have to bear in war-time.

(3)   I saw ten thousand talkers, whose **tongues** were all broken,

      I saw guns and sharp swords in the **hands** of young children

A Hard Rain's a Gonna' Fall - Bob Dylan

(4)   Chờ đàn con đã đi bao năm không về

      Đứa về cụt **bàn chân**

Dân Ta Vẫn Sống – Trịnh Công Sơn

   (For years waiting for children who neverreturn

   And who returns has **foot cut)**

We Are Still Alive – Trinh Cong Son

6.2.3. War is negative emotions

(5)   How many people have to **cry**

      The song of **pain and grief** across the land

History - Michael Jackson

(6)   Tay nâng nâng lên, **rưng rức nước mắt đầy**

Mẹ nhìn đầu con, tóc trắng phất phơ bay

Bà Mẹ Gio Linh - Phạm Duy

(With white hair flying and hands trembling

Looking at her child, **the mother's crying)**

Mother in Gio Linh - Pham Duy

6.2.4. War is evil

War causes loss, pain, death and many other bad things. It is usually considered as an evil.

(7)   I saw **a black branch with blood that kept drippin',**

I saw **a room full of men with their hammers a-bleedin'**

I saw **ten thousand talkers whose tongues were all broken**,

I saw **guns and sharp swords** in the hands of young children

A Hard Rain's a Gonna' Fall - Bob Dylan

(8)   **Một ngục tù trên quê hương**

Người từng ngày xây uất hận

Rồi từng ngày **nát dấu bom**

Một Ngày Dài Trên Quê Hương - Trịnh Công Sơn

(**Our homeland is a prison**

Each day, people build resentment

Each day, **motherland's full of bombing scars)**

A Long Day in the Motherland - Trinh Cong Son

6.2.5. War is death

One of the most negative aspects of war is death. In war-time, the boundary between life and death is fragile.

(9)   And how many **deaths** will it take till we know,

That **too many people have died**?

Blowing in the Wind - Bob Dylan

(10) Người con gái Việt Nam da vàng

Mang giấc mơ quê hương **lìa kiếp sống**

Người Con Gái Việt Nam Da Vàng - Trịnh Công Sơn

(A young Viet lady with yellow skin

Took with her a dream of her motherland **leaving this world)**

A Yellow Skin Vietnamese Lady - Trinh Cong Son

6.2.6. War is fire

English composers also used the image of fire to imply war since fire has a devastating force as terrible as war.

(11) Though they murdered six million

In the **ovens** they **fried**

With God on Our Side - Bob Dylan

(12) Lời đầu năm ba viết cho con

Chuyện quê hương **khói lửa** rã mòn...

Lời Đầu Năm Cho Con - Nguyên Thảo

(My first words in New Year for you

Our beloved country **is set on fire by war**)

Father's First Words for His Son in the New Year - Nguyen Thao

6.2.7. War is lie

When people want to carry out an invasion war, they are committing a crime. They might declare that they are executing an honorable mission to civilize that country, but in fact, they are launching a war and they force their citizens to join the army. As a result, these people become soldiers who directly participate in the invasion war, which they never want.

(13) You that **hide** behind walls

You that **hide** behind desks

I just want you to know

I can see through **your masks**

Masters of War - Bob Dylan

6.2.8. War is hatred

Once war breaks out, people's hatred also rises up due to crimes created by war. The more serious war crimes becomes, the broader and deeper hatred to war becomes.

(14) Mẹ ngồi trăm năm như thân tượng buồn để lại quê hương

Tuổi còn bơ vơ **thế giới hận thù** chiến tranh ngục tù

Ca dao mẹ - Trịnh Công Sơn

(A hundred years, she sits like stone, dead like her homeland

Her children roam **a world of hatred, a prison of war**)

Mother's Lament -Trinh Cong Son

Table 1. *A comparison of CMs of War in English versus Vietnamese anti-war songs*

Source domain	CMs of War	
	English	**Vietnamese**
1. a substance in a container	+	+
2. a part of a whole	+	+
3. negative emotions	+	+
4. evil	+	+
5. fire	+	+
6. death	+	+
7. lie	+	−
8. hatred	−	+

6.3. CMs Expressing Peace in anti-war songs in English versus Vietnamese

6.3.1. Peace is harmony

If the whole world lived in harmony, there would be no fight, no armed conflicts and possibly, no wars. In other words, living in harmony means living in peace.

(15) All nations sing

Let's **harmonize** all around the world

History - Michael Jackson

6.3.2. Peace is reunion

When peace returns, the most expectative thing is

certainly the reunion of the people who have been separated for so long during war-time.

(16) Một mai quê hương **không còn chinh chiến**

   Ba sẽ về bên con

   Lời Đầu Năm Cho Con – Nguyên Thảo

(Someday when our country is **no moreat war**

I'll be back home by your side)

   Father's First Words For You in the New Year – Nguyen Thao

6.3.3. Peace is positive emotions

Peace brings us a life without fear, pain, hurt, sorrow and hatred. This is a happy life that almost everyone always desires and longs for.

(17) **A very Merry Xmas**

   And a happy New Year

   Let's hope it's a **good** one

   Without any fear

   War is over, if you want it

   War is over now

   Happy Xmas - Yoko Ono & John Lennon

(18) Một ngày mà lòng **vui sướng** hơn muôn nghìn năm

   ... Ruộng lúa **reo cười**

   Cánh Đồng Hoà Bình - Trịnh Công Sơn

(One **happy** day's worth thousands of years

Rice fields are **laughing)**

   A Peaceful Field -Trinh Cong Son

6.3.4. Peace is light

Every creature can live a happy life thanks to light just as people can live happily thanks to peace. The sunlight brings us warmness like peace brings about great love to all people around the world.

(19) We are the world, we are the children

   We are the ones who make **a brighter day**

   We Are the World - Michael Jackson

(20) **Mặt trời** nào **rực sáng trong con tim**

   Hoà bình nào vừa bay về trong gió lớn

   Dân Ta Vẫn Sống - Trịnh Công Sơn

(The sun is so bright in my heart

Since **peace is coming** instrong wind)

   We Are Still Alive - Trinh Cong Son

Table 2. *A comparison of CMs of Peace in English and Vietnamese anti-war songs*

Source domain	CMs of peace	
	English	**Vietnamese**
1. harmony	+	−
2. reunion	−	+
3. positive emotions	+	+
4. light	+	+

7. Discussion and Implications

It can be realized from the analysis of the data collected from the corpus of anti-war songs, the questionnaire and the interviews that most of the mappings are identical both in English and Vietnamese anti-war songs. The similarities can be seen through the mappings *War is a substance in a container, War is a part of a whole, War is negative emotions, War is evil, War is fire* and *peace* is conceptualized as *positive emotions* and *light*. However, the CM *War is a lie* exists in English anti-war songs whereas in Vietnamese the CM *War is hatred* appears. Additionally, Vietnamese composers imply *peace* via "reunion" *(Peace is reunion)* whereas English composers use "harmony" to mean *peace (Peace is harmony).* The two ways differ in terms of lexical usage; however, the historical-cultural thinking process permits us to understand that *peace* is considered as great happiness in which there is no separation or conflict.

7.1. For Teachers and Learners of English and Vietnamese

Having knowledge on CM might help language learners establish a conceptual system of the target language. It makes them think; and in this sense, they can enhance their critical thinking skills in the process of learning the target language. In addition, metaphorical mappings are crucial cognitive movement that language users deploy to make the complex concepts meaningful. These mappings are cognitive, not linguistic. CMs allow us to communicate in complex and abstract ideas in terms of ordinary experiences. Moreover, cultural and historical awareness is extremely important in intercultural communication. Metaphorical mappings encourage language teachers and learners to discuss and exchange ideas from different perspectives on traditions, customs, institutions, history and social developments. This helps bridge the gap among people of different cultures and provides an extra dimension to the understanding of linguistic and cultural norms.

7.2. For Translators and Interpreters

The outcome of this study can contribute new insights into translation studies since traditional metaphors do not take culture and history into consideration. Cultural elements in metaphorical mappings might help translators and interpreters broaden their viewpoint, accept other cultures and improve their translational skill.

7.3. For Music Fans

CMs are widely used in songs; therefore, understanding CMs in songs might help music fans enhance their listening skills in enjoying and appreciating music works of art.

8. Conclusions

CMs are always implied in music not only through words and/or phrases in songs, but also through the images or beauties that are not presented on the surface of the language. According to Lakoff and Johnson (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), CMs are a means of understanding one domain of experience (TD) in terms of another (SD).In this sense, to enjoy a song means to comprehend the lyric,

the situation in which it was composed. What the musicians want to communicate with the audience through their songs could be their experience, their ideal and/or philosophy of life. In Anti-war songs have strong, powerful messages exposing war crimes through the CMs of *war* and *peace* as in the songs by Bob Dylan, Michael Jackson, John Lennon, Trinh Cong Son and other anti-war composers. Their lyrics are what make them famous. Consequently, their songs have been sung not only in the country at war but also anywhere worldwide to protest war and to express people's love towards peace.

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