THE SEMANTIC NETWORK OF THE ENGLISH PREPOSITION 'IN' AND ITS EQUIVALENT 'TRONG' IN VIETNAMESE

MẠNG NGỮ NGHĨA CỦA GIỚI TỪ 'IN' TRONG TIẾNG ANH VÀ 'TRONG' TRONG TIẾNG VIỆT

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Abstract - This article explores the lexico-semantic network through a brief examination of the English preposition *'in'* and its equivalent *'trong'* in Vietnamese. Working within a cognitive linguistic framework, the investigation presents the six clusters of senses of the preposition 'in' based on Tyler and Evans' research, thereby, via the contrastive analysis approach, indicating the similarities and differences in the way speakers of the two languages conceptualize the world via their spatial configuration. The differences result from the cultural features of Vietnamese in their early settlement custom which have shaped their distinctive cultural habits. The major reason lies in the formation of cognitive mappings of the Vietnamese. As a result, it is necessary for foreign learners of Vietnamese or Vietnamese learners of English to master cognitive mappings of both languages. Finally, the article puts forward some suggestions to provide an overview for translators/interpreters to avoid possible mistakes in translating spacial language, specifically the English preposition *'in'* and the Vietnamese *'trong'*.

Key words - Ngôn ngữ học tri nhận; giới từ; hiện tượng đa nghĩa; mạng ngữ nghĩa

Tóm tắt - Bài báo xem xét mạng ngữ nghĩa từ vựng thông qua việc khảo sát vắn tắt giới từ *'in'* trong tiếng Anh và từ tương đương *'trong'* trong tiếng Việt. Được phân tích trong hệ thống ngôn ngữ học tri nhận, bài nghiên cứu đã đưa ra 6 nhóm nghĩa của giới từ 'in' dựa theo nghiên cứu của Tyler và Evans, từ đó bằng phương pháp so sánh, đối chiếu, chỉ ra sự giống nhau và khác nhau về cách hình thành ý niệm thế giới quan thông qua nhận định không gian của người nói hai ngôn ngữ. Sự khác nhau này là xuất phát từ thói quen cư trú của người dân Việt từ ngàn xưa tạo nên những nét văn hóa đặc trưng. Lý do quan trọng hơn hết là do sự khác nhau trong việc hình thành bản đồ tri nhận. Do vậy, khi người nước ngoài học tiếng Việt hay người Việt học tiếng Anh cần phải nắm được bản đồ tri nhận này giữa hai ngôn ngữ. Phần cuối cùng của bài báo nêu lên một số kiến nghị giúp biên dịch/ biên phiên dịch có cái nhìn tổng quan để tránh một số lỗi có thể mắc phải trong quá trình chuyển dịch ngôn ngữ thuộc về không gian, cụ thể là giới từ *'in'* trong tiếng Anh và *'trong'* trong tiếng Việt.

Từ khóa - Cognitive linguistics; preposition; polysemy; semantic network

1. Introduction

Polysemy is a phenomenon when a single word (i.e. lexeme) has two or more distinct but related meanings. According to Zipf [1], the more frequent a word is, the more polysemous it tends to be. For example, Caramazza and Grober [2] identified 26 distinct senses for the word *line* and 40 senses for *run* in a dictionary. Thus, it seems that speakers and listeners must solve the problem of polysemous ambiguity in almost every sentence they utter and hear.

In addition, what we have learned is that people who speak different languages do indeed think differently. This hypothesis is supported by empirical evidence from various cognitive linguists, who 'reopen' the weak version of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, 'linguistics relativity' theory, the proposition that language influences thought and that different languages influence thought in different ways.

With regard to the complexity of prepositions, this article investigates the polysemy network of the preposition *'in'* in English and compare it to that of its Vietnamese equivalent *'trong'* from the cognitive perspective to clarify how differently speakers of the two languages think and afterwards presents some main reasons for these differences.

2. Literature Review

2.1. The basic framework of Principled Polysemy Network

2.1.1. Radial categories

Cognitive linguists explain polysemy in terms of radial categories (e.g. Lakoff [3]) and therefore consider that the

meaning of a polysemous word displays a number of radially related senses, among which each of them can itself be a complex prototype structure [4]. These senses can be judged as a more prototypical (central) category member or less prototypical (peripheral) ones. Different subcategories in a radial category can have different degrees of prototypicality, resulting in the fact that more prototypical senses are closer to the central prototype, while less prototypical senses are further from the prototype (peripheral senses). Thus, radial categories are illustrated via the following radiating lattice diagram:
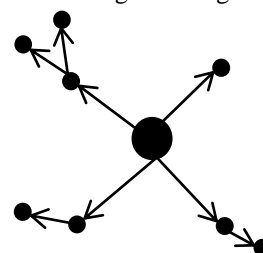

***Figure 1.** A radiating lattice digram ('semantic network') for modelling radial categories* [5]

2.1.2. Proto-scene

Although Lakoff's model for representing polysemy with radial categories has faced a bulk of criticism due to some reasons, it has been extremely important in laying the first foundation for linguists, especially cognitive linguists to treat polysemy as a conceptual phenomenon, in which lexical items are considered conceptual categories. In a recent study concerning English prepositions, Tyler and Evans [6] have put forward a more appropriate model for

describing polysemy, the principled polysemy network, which takes as its starting point a *proto-scene*. In their approach, a principled polysemy network is formed around a central sense, *the proto-scene*, which is made of a trajectory (TR) and a landmark (LM) in a 'specified spatial configuration and a functional element' (illustrated by the diagram below).

Figure 2. *Protoscene for over [6]*

Thus, we can understand that the proto-scene is the primary meaning representation associated with a particular preposition, from which other distinct meanings have been derived. Each preposition and the multiple uses associated with it are represented as an organized, connected network of related meanings, rather than arbitrary lists of distinct meanings that happen to share the same phonological form. Cognitive linguistics [7] supports this by indicating that mental lexicon is organized by a cluster of lexical items, including the polysemous words as natural categories representing related meanings, rather than the unrelated ones with the same phonological form.

2.1.3. Criteria for determining the primary sense of a preposition

However, how do we know that one meaning would be the central sense instead of the others? To give the answer to this question, Tyler and Evans [6, pp. 45-50] suggest four criteria for selecting the proto-scene for semantic network of a certain preposition, which are: (i) earliest attested meaning; (ii) predominance in the semantic network (the primary sense will be the one that is most frequently involved in or related to the other distinct senses); (iii) relations to other prepositions (the sense that participates in a contrast set, e.g. prepositions of verticality, is a likely candidate as a primary sense), and (iv) ease of predicting sense extensions (the primary sense should be the best predictor of other senses in the network).

2.1.4. Criteria for determining the distinct senses of a preposition

With regards to other distinct senses, Evans and Green [5] and Tyler and Evans [6, pp. 42-43] propose the following two criteria to determine: A sense is distinct if (i) it involves non-spatial meaning and/or a spatial configuration between the trajector (TR) and the landmark (LM) which is distinct from that found in the word's proto-scene (i.e. the primary sense of the word, represented in terms of an idealised spatio-functional configuration); and (ii) there are instances of the sense that are context-independent, that is, which cannot be inferred from another sense and the context in which it occurs.

2.2. Semantic extension in a highly motivated way

2.2.1. Motivation/ Principled

In contrast to the conventionalised approach in which the lexical structure is viewed as being arbitrary and 'indiosyncratic' [8]; the lexical items, at least prepositions, are considered by Tyler and Evans [7] to be systematically motivated in the process of meaning extension. What's more, it is the principled polysemy that constitutes the 'motivated account of word meaning and meaning extension' through the spatio-physical experience and language use.

2.2.2. Pragmatic strengthening

This notion was developed by Traugott [9] in her work of semantic change. Then it was applied and developed in the theory of Principled Polysemy by Tyler and Evans to term the process of extending meaning.

During the process of communication, new meanings of a certain word in a certain context emerge. At this stage, the new and strange senses can be easily understood based on the inference from the utterance in an on-going discourse. The additional meanings 'originally arose from the situated uses and the inferences that were derivable from context' [7]. Through the process of strengthening, 'new' (additional) meanings come to be stored as distinct senses or lexical concepts in semantic memory. This process is thus referred to as *pragmatic strengthening* [10].

2.2.3. Inferencing strategies

Besides, as mentioned above, the additional meanings inevitably involve inference in a certain context in which the hearer can easily deduce what the speaker is talking about. There are several inferencing strategies introduced by Tyler and Evans [6]. However, because of space constraints, three of the most important ones will be mentioned here:

(i) Best fit (To a particular context, in the process of communication, one preposition will be chosen to best fit the relation between spatial conceptualization and communicative needs between speakers and hearers).

(ii) Knowledge of real world force dynamics (When interpreting utterances, speakers and hearers often assume all elements in a conceptual spatial scene are subject to real-world force dynamics).

(iii) Topological extension (Conceptualized space and spatial relations are topological in nature, involving "relativistic relationships rather than absolutely fixed quantities").

2.2.4. Ways of viewing spatial scenes

Besides mentioning some inferencing strategies which are useful in interpretation of contextual utterance, Tyler and Evans [7] also refers to the ways of viewing the spatial scenes. In fact, the physical vantage point on a spatial scene will determine how we conceptualize that scene, but each vantage point offers each view [11]. Thus, as the vantage point changes, we will have different interpretation of the scene.

3. Findings and Discussion

3.1. Cognitive Polysemy Network for IN (English)

There is a complex semantic network of 'in'. However, due to the restriction of the topic, I just discuss some brief senses forming the polysemy network proposed by Tyler and Evans [6] based on the Principled Polysemy approach.

3.1.1. The proto-scene for 'in'

The proto-scene for 'in' constitutes a spatial relation in which a TR is located within a bounded LM which has three salient structural elements – an interior, a boundary and an exterior. Besides, it has the functions of

containment as protecting, surrounding and restricting the observation to the elements being contained. Thus, proto-scene for '*in*' can be illustrated as follows:
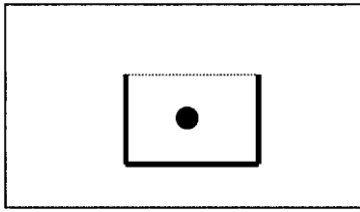

Figure 3. Proto-scene for 'in' [6]

Look at some examples:

1.   (a) The chicken is in the box.
    (b) The cow munched grass in the field.
    (c) The tiny oasis flourished in the desert.
    (d) China is in Asia.
    (e) The flag flapped in the wind.
    (f) The child shivered in the cold.
    (h) The child couldn't be seen in the crowd.
    (i) The old cottage was located in the wood.

'*in*' in 1(a) can mediate a relation in which the TR (*the chicken*) can be seen as completely or partially surrounded by the LM (*the box*). However, the property of containment is not only involved the spatio-configurational components but also the functional components. Imagine when we move the box, the chicken will move along with it. Thus, the LM not only encloses, but also constrains the movements of their TR. These are the properties of containment for '*in*'.

With regard to examples 1(b-c), as opposed to three-dimensional LM as in 1(a) (*the box*), the LMs here (*the field* and *the desert*) can be seen as the two-dimensional, planar surface, which contains the TRs *cow* and *the oasis.* And the *Asia* continent in the example 1(d) always designates the containment relation with the smaller entity *China.*

Flexibly enough, '*in*' also denotes spatial scenes in which a prevailing atmospheric condition is conceptualized as enveloping the TR as observed in examples 1(e-f). However, in examples 1(h-i), the LMs here *(the crowd and the wood)* can be perceived and conceptualized as bounded spaces, in which there are boundaries (the collective entities of people or the trees perceived as a single mass entity, *the crowd* or *the wood*), the interior (each individual or each tree in these two single mass entities) and the exterior (outside these two single mass entities). Thus, as termed multiplex-mass transformation by Lakoff [3], this notion of containment for the use of '*in*' in these two examples 1(h-i) are related to two distinct construals of the same entity. Certainly, the movement of the entities in these two containers must be constrained or surrounded by them, i.e. the two LMs *the crowd and the wood.*

3.1.2. Extended senses for 'in'

According to the findings of Tyler and Evans [6], there are at least twenty-seven senses of '*in*' identified in six clusters. They are all the senses derived from the proto-scene, relating to different configurational and functional components in the notion of containment.
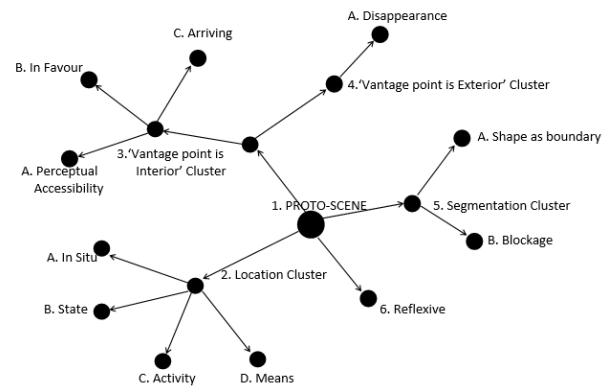
Hereby is polysemy semantic network for preposition '*in*':

Figure 4. Semantic network for 'in' [6]

3.1.3. The Location Cluster (2)

In the Location Cluster of senses, the bounded LM in the notion of containment serves to locate the contained TR. This gives rise to a number of closely related senses: In Situ, State Sense, Activity Sense and Means Sense.

a. The In Situ Sense (2A)

In this sense, the TR is located in a particular place for a period of time without moving to another place. In other words, TR mainly remains in a particular space for an extended period of time, surrounded by the LM for a particular purpose. This gives rise to an additional meaning which is not inherently included in the proto-scene for '*in*'.

For example:

2.   (a) What are you *in* for?
    (b) He stayed *in* for the evening.

With the interpretation above, it can be clearly seen that in the example 2(a), the TR (e.g. *you*) is physically located at the bounded LM (a building, e.g. *the hospital*) for an extended period of time and for a particular purpose. In example 2b, the TR (*he*) locates at home (the LM), instead of going to another place. Thus, the TR(s) in both examples remain located within a bounded LM for an extended period of time, which gives rise to the In Situ sense.

b. The State Sense

3.   (a) He's in love.
    (b) He's in trouble.

"These examples are licensed by the metaphorical projection of the CONTAINER image schema onto the abstract conceptual domain of STATES, to which concepts like *love*, *trouble* and *health* belong" [3]. Thus, this conceptual metaphor *States are Containers* help to transfer such concrete concepts as *Container* into more abstract conceptual domains like *States*. This results from the emotionally experienced state by the TR in a specific location LM.

c. The Activity Sense

Another sense involves the correlation between an activity and the bounded LM at which the activity takes place.

For example:

4.   (a) - What's his line of working?
      - He's in the governor's office.

(b) He works in stocks and shares.

Here "*in the governor's office*" metonymically means "works for the governor". This activity occurs in a bounded LM (governor's office). *Stocks and shares* here metonymically stands for the academic field that the TR (*he*) is working for. In this case, example 4b illustrates the tight correlation between the activity "working" and the bounded LM in which the activity occurs. As a result of these correlations between activities and bounded LMs in the two examples above, through pragmatic strengthening, the notion of *activity* can be seen as a distinct meaning associated with '*in*'.

Look at some examples below:

5. (a) She wrote in ink.

  (b) He spoke in Italian.

For an activity (*wrote, spoke*) to be done, they need to use a means. In these examples, *ink* or the language *Italian* is used to finish that task or activity. Thus, through pragmatic strengthening, the correlation between these activities and their means of accomplishment gives rise to the *Means* Sense.

The next senses will be discussed is the *Perceptual Accessibility, In Favour, Arriving, and Disappearance senses*. However, unlike all the senses belonging to Location Cluster that have the off-stage vantage point, four specific senses here can be identified via an on-line vantage point by which the spatial scenes are construed and the senses are derived. These senses are construed when the vantage point is interior or when the vantage point is exterior. Thus, we have the 'Vantage point is Interior' Cluster and the 'Vantage point is Exterior' Cluster of meanings.

3.1.4. The Vantage Point is Interior Cluster

The Perceptual Accessibility, In Favour Sense and the *Arriving Senses* are derived when the TR within the interior region is the vantage point from which the scene is viewed. Nevertheless, while in the Perceptual Accessibility, the vantage point from which the scene is viewed is distinct from the TR, in the In Favour and Arriving senses, the vantage point and TR coincide. In these cases, the vantage point is interior the bounded LM.

a. The Perceptual Accessibility Sense

Look at some following examples:

6. (a) I have it in view.

  (b) Susan always tries to stay in touch.

Here the experiencer (the vantage point) is located within a bounded LM so that the TR(s) and the interior environment contained by the LM can be seen by the experiencer. Thus, he or she can have sense of the scene in the bounded LM that he or she is within. At the same time, this is the bounded LM, which means the experiencer only accesses what is inside this LM and has no sense of the larger scene. Thus, the LM's boundary delimits the extent of perceptual accessibility. From this view, distinct Perceptual Accessibility Sense is derived.

b. The In Favour Sense

In this sense, the LM is considered favourable or "privileged", i.e. being valued or judged as positive in some

way so that the TR desires to take part in the activity or gain access to an event within that bounded LM. For examples:

7. (a) He managed to get *in* the stadium, even though places were limited.

  (b) - Do you want to join us?

  - I'm *in*.

In these examples, there is an implication that the bounded LM(s) (*the stadium* in 7(a), or the implied *activity* in 7(b) are considered in a favourable position. Through pragmatic strengthening, the notion of being *in* has come to be associated with being valued or considered privileged, i.e. the positive meaning element. It is a distinct sense from the previous ones.

c. The Arrival Sense

As in the example:

8. The train is finally in.

The TR (*the train*) from outside the bounded LM (e.g. *the gas station*) is moving towards the LM, which is viewed by the experiencer who is in the LM. The TR moves closer to the vantage point, which gives rise to the sense of *arrival*.

3.1.5. The Vantage Point is Exterior Cluster

Thus, as the title has given its meaning, the vantage point is now located exterior the bounded LM. We have the *Disappearance sense.*

The Disappearance Sense

According to Tyler and Evans [6], there are two reasons that the *Disappearance* Sense is determined to be a distinct sense. First, a meaning of disappearance is not evident in any of the other senses associated with *in*. Second, this meaning cannot be predicted based on other senses, so it is derived from the context.

9. (a) The wine quickly soaked in.

  (b) Millie rubbed in the lotion.

In the above examples, from the perspective of a vantage point exterior to the container, *the wine* and *the lotion* is being absorbed or leave, i.e. disappear. Then, the *Disappearance* sense comes to be used in contexts.

3.1.6. The Segmentation Cluster

We will survey two senses subsumed under this cluster: the Shape As Boundary Sense and the Blockage Sense.

a. The Shape As Boundary Sense

Consider the following example:

10. OK, class, put your chairs in a circle.

In the above example, the TR constitutes part of a delimited configuration forming a shape. Here the arranging the chairs to form a circle shape forms a boundary that delimits a circle. That is to say, the use of *in* here focuses on the salient aspect of a bounded LM, which is its boundary. Through pragmatic strengthening, the *Shape as Boundary* sense is derived.

b. The Blockage Sense

Being contained by the LM sometimes means the limitation or blockage of movement of the TR out of the LM. Consider the following examples:

11. (a) When I got back to my car, someone had boxed/blocked me in.
(b) In the northern territories you can get snowed in for months.

In example 11(a), the speaker's car (the TR) is blocked from moving by the placement of another vehicle. In example 11(b), people (the TR) are blocked from moving due to snow. The implicature of blockage constitutes the Blockage Sense associated with '*in*'.

3.1.7. Reflexive Sense

The Reflexive Sense is often associated with collapsing and destruction of the LM and the contents as observed in the following example:

12. (a) The walls of the sandcastle fell in.
(b) The house caved in.

This sense relates to the consequences of the boundary of the LM moving inward in such a way that the LM has a different shape compared to the original one. Here, the same entity is conceptualized as constituting the TR and the covert LM.

3.2. Cognitive Polysemy Network for preposition TRONG (Vietnamese)

Here, due to the constraint of the essay, I only investigate the spatial senses of the preposition '*trong*' in Vietnamese (equivalent to '*in*' in English) to show some different points between the two languages in conceptualizing the spatial scenes.

Like '*in*' in English, '*trong*' in Vietnamese designates the spatial relation between the TR and the LM, in which the TR is completely or partially surrounded by the LM. Thus, this shows the same properties of *containment* notion in the Vietnamese equivalent preposition. Let's look at some examples:

13. Các quyển sách của bạn tôi để trong ngăn kéo ấy.

(All my friends' books are put in the drawer).

14. Hoa trong bình kia là hồng Đà Lạt.

(The flowers in the vase are the Dalat roses).

In example 13, the books may lie deep inside the drawer or part of them appears outside the drawer. In the meantime, it can be certain that roses in example 14 are partly inside the vase, partly outside the vase. This conceptualization is, according to Hai [12] resulted from the intrinsic properties of the TR and LM.

For example:

15. Bạn hãy lấy cho tôi những viên bi đỏ trong cái hộp đó.
(Please take the red marbles in the box for me).

These red marbles, due to their properties, can only designate the notion of lying completely inside the box, rather than part of them inside, part of them outside.

Now we can see how Thang [13] describes the way Vietnamese people conceptualize the spatial preposition '*trong*' via the following situations:

3.2.1. Spatial configuration based on human body contour

16.   *Trong* người không còn gì. ('*There is nothing left on my body*').

There is the contour around the canonical human body form (Figure 5a). If we move out of this contour (Figure 5b), there will be a transfer into another status (from *trong* (in) into *ngoài* (out)). This follows the theory of Lakoff and Johnson [14] involving the notion of contour.
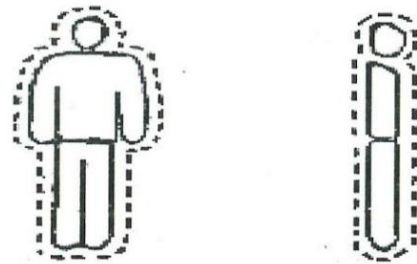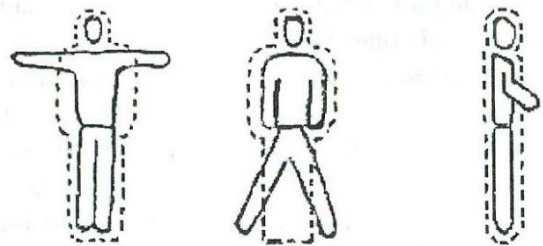

Figure 5a. *Contour and human spatial constraint in*

canonical form [13]

Figure 5b. *The movement out of the contour and human spatial constraint [13]*

Thus, in example 16, the phrase *trong người* (* *inside the body* – on the body) shows that the space around people's body is constrained by clothes, where some stuff of things might be hidden.

3.2.2. Spatial configuration based on house cognitive mapping

One interesting situation involves the position of the bed. It is located against the wall; A and B are lying on them. If A lies near the wall, we can say:

17. (a) A nằm *trong* (* *A lies inside*).
(b) B nằm *ngoài* (*B lies outside*).

While both of these sentences can be translated as '*lie in bed*" in English, Vietnamese has different ways of expressing the two situations based on TRs' (A and B) proximity to the wall (*nằm trong – nằm ngoài*). If the bed is put somewhere in the middle of the room, then the differentiation "*nằm trong – nằm ngoài*" does not occur. It is the wall that creates the closed or open space, forming the difference in thinking and speaking between the two languages.

Also, we have the following utterance:

18. Hầm đào trong giường.

It cannot be translated into English like "*the tunnel dug inside the bed*" but can only be translated as "The tunnel dug under the bed." This notion relates to another concepts "*giường trong – giường ngoài* (* *the bed inside, * the bed outside*), *phòng trong – phòng ngoài*" (**room inside, *room outside*). Definitely, these notions make no sense in English. Instead, these notions involves the culture of Vietnam, which is the custom of settlement in the old days, which will be discussed in depth in discussion part.

Another sentence in English "Nam is playing in the yard" can be interpreted in Vietnamese in two ways in which two opposing prepositions *trong-ngoài* can be used:

19. (a) Nam đang chơi ở *ngoài* sân.

   (b) Nam đang chơi ở *trong* sân.

In the first interpretation 19(a), the experiencer/observer might be in the same location with Nam, which is outside the house, in the yard or the experiencer/observer might be inside the house (The house here is considered the locating object, then the yard is construed outside the region of the house).

In the second interpretation 19(b), the experiencer/observer might stand in the yard with Nam or stand in the street and observe the yard and activity taking place in the yard. Here, the yard is considered a closed space containing Nam.

3.2.3. Spatial configuration based on treet/city cognitive mapping

Imagine two persons are running along the roads, among the ranges of houses. A is running near the houses while B is running in the middle of roads. If the police want to catch one of them, they can give such orders:

20 (a) Bắt tên A chạy trong ấy. (*Catch A who is running inside, i.e. near the houses).

   (b) Bắt tên B chạy ngoài ấy. (*Catch B who is running outside, i.e. in the middle of the roads).

Thus, in the first utterance, A's position is considered 'trong' because he is near the spatial constraint of the ranges of the house, which is viewed as a closed space. In the meantime, B's position is perceived to be 'ngoài' because he runs far from the houses, which means he is in a more open space. These opposing ways of conceptualization would become ineffective when these two burglars are running on a road surrounded by a harvested field.

3.2.4. Spatial configuration based on country cognitive mapping

We can see the similar configuration in spatial domains below (Here again I mention both prepositions 'trong' – 'ngoài' because they might replace each other's position in most of the situations depending on the context).

21. (a) Chị tôi sống ở *ngoài* Huế.

(b) Chị tôi sống ở *trong* Huế.

Both sentences above can be translated into English as "My sister lives in Hue." These interpretations depend on the country cognitive mapping of Vietnamese and the position of the experiencer/observer. If they stay in Ho Chi Minh City (in the south of Vietnam), the first sentence (i.e. 21(a) will be uttered (in the case that Hue is in the central of Vietnam). If they stay in Hanoi capital (the north of Vietnam), the second utterance, 21(b) will be produced.

3.3. Further discussion

Thus, although speakers of both languages might encounter the same spatial relations on configurations, in reality, they may conceptualize them in different ways because of the language they speak. An American film title "In bed with Madonna" can be translated into *Trên giường với Madonna* (On bed with Madonna). Thang [13]

explained that this may be due to the fact that the American conceptualize the bed in a closed container while Vietnamese perceive it as a surface at the first hand. This denotes the differences between the two languages in spatial conceptualization. And these differences result from the usage-based meaning [12].

There are many reasons that contribute to the differences between these two languages. If we investigate a group of many prepositions, we will have a more general and more exact picture of these differences. Thus, due to the constraint of the topic, based on the investigation into the semantics of the preposition *in* in English and *trong* in Vietnamese I would like to mention some main reasons:

- The first reason lies in the habit of settling of Vietnamese. Thang [13] explained that in order to understand the use of preposition *trong,* one needs to have the knowledge of spatial map of a conventional house in Vietnam, in which the biggest room, located in the middle of the house, serves as the living room and it connects with the gate. Thus, it is considered an open space, whereas the other rooms serve as bedrooms or discreet closed rooms which contain properties of the Vietnamese such as rice, labour instruments, etc. These rooms are considered the closed, discreet rooms where no strangers are allowed to enter. Thus, the utterance "hầm đào *trong* giường" (*The tunnel dug in/ inside the bed*) means that the tunnel is dug in the bedroom and under the bed [12]. So, we cannot translate '*trong*' here into *in* in English.

- The second reason is that Vietnamese has two strategies of spatial orientation, namely *reference object-oriented strategy* (Figure 5a) and *locating object-oriented strategy* (Figure 5b) [13] (illustrated below).
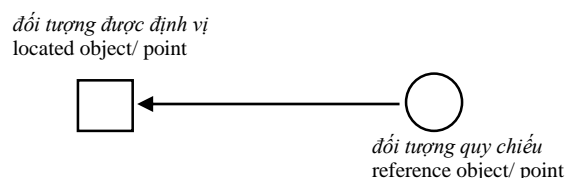
đối tượng được định vị
located object/ point

đối tượng quy chiếu
reference object/ point

***Figure 5a.** Reference object-oriented strategy [13]*

đối tượng được định vị
located object/ point

đối tượng định vị
locating object/ point

đối tượng quy chiếu
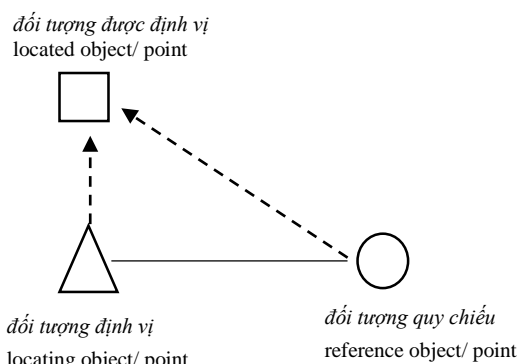reference object/ point

***Figure 5b.** Locating object-oriented strategy [13]*

Vietnamese people prefer the second strategy in their spatial configuration. This can be seen clearly in all examples that have been mentioned above.

Thus, this strategy leads to the fact that Vietnamese people often rely on the location of the experiencer/

observer to apply the reference frame. It means that there is one more implied locating object/point constituting to the orienting space besides the direct TR and the LM in the utterance. In the example 21(a), "Chị tôi sống *trong* Huế" implies that the spatial preposition *'trong'* here is construed by the experiencer/observer living in the north of Vietnam. This way of conceptualizing results from the country cognitive mapping of Vietnamese.

4. Conclusion

I have investigated the polysemy network of preposition *in* and consider some spatial meanings of its equivalent '*trong'* in Vietnamese. Through the investigation, we can see the similarities and differences between the two languages in conceptualizing the world through spatial configuration. These differences mainly lie in the cultural features of Vietnamese in their early settlement custom or depend on the two strategies of spatial orientation applied to configure the spatial scenes. Most importantly, these differences are also due to the different cognitive mappings of Vietnamese. As a result, this could help foreign learners of Vietnamese recognize the fact that they need to master Vietnamese's cognitive mappings before learning this language and vice versa. All in all, this article gives a relatively comprehensive and reasonable interpretation for polysemy from the cognitive perspective. It also evokes some inspiration for language learners and teachers as well as dictionary compilers.

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