

*A Study of Metaphorical Expressions Based on Up Sense of Happiness
in English and Vietnamese*

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Abstract

In daily life of human beings, it seems the knowledge and experience is transferred in the ways which may not be so familiar, and even in abstract concepts. In the concepts of Cognitive Linguistics (CL), this is viewed as part of general cognition and thinking, especially in the case of metaphors. On the theoretical framework of CL, we concentrated on the theory of conceptual metaphor (CM) by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980/2003), among the first to pinpoint this conceptual potential. In this study, we refer to the metaphorical expressions based on Up sense of Happiness through fundamental concepts in spatial metaphors. For example, in English we can see the CM "HAPPINESS IS UP" with the target domain is HAPPINESS and the source domain is UP, such as in the expression "*He is on cloud nine*", which expressed that the man can evoke joy. In Vietnamese, such a conceptualization is also pointed, for example: "*Anh ta lên chín tầng mây*" (he is on cloud nine, he is extremely happy). To clarify this study, the data from 8 best-seller novels and stories in English and Vietnamese were collected for analyzing linguistic perspectives. The paper used descriptive, analytic, synthetic, comparative and contrastive methods with 100 expressions to find out the findings of similarities and differences between English and Vietnamese metaphorical expressions of happiness to make the theory of CM practical and useful for teachers as well as learners.

Keywords: Cognitive, Cognitive Linguistics, Conceptual/Cognitive Metaphor, HAPPINESS, UP

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Introduction

In the cognitive approach, knowledge and experience of things and events are used by human beings in expressing concepts, especially in the case of metaphors. In a typical work by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (1980, revised in 2003), the theory was extensively explored and has recently become popular with linguistic works studied in many languages. According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980, p. 3), it is said that the human conceptual system is “fundamentally metaphorical in nature”. According to Kövecses (2010), in comparing to traditional concepts, metaphor is a linguistic phenomenon with artistic and rhetoric purpose, based the similarities between two objects, used by talented people or for special effects. In fact, it has been challenged deeply in the light of CL. “Metaphor is a property of concepts, and not of words; the function of metaphor is to better understand certain concepts, and not just some artistic or esthetic purpose” (cited in Kövecses, 2010, p. 10). Lakoff and Johnson (1980, p. 4) also defined that “metaphor is defined as understanding one conceptual domain in terms of another conceptual domain” and called “conceptual metaphor” and “the way we think, what we experience, and what we do everyday is very much a matter of metaphor.”

Nesset (2008) suggests that “CL is a family of broadly compatible theoretical approaches sharing the fundamental assumption that language is an integral part of cognition” (p. 9). The relationship between language and thought, of course, has been addressed by many scholars. CL, however, strongly emphasizes specific features of this relation. Evans (2007) identified a number of central aspects, such as “the role of meaning, conceptual processes and embodied experience in the study of language and the mind and the way in which they intersect” (p. 22). This point distinguishes CL different from other approaches to the study of language. According to Evans (2007) that “language is assumed to reflect certain fundamental properties and design features of the human mind” (p. 5). Geeraerts (1997) claimed that “the analysis of the conceptual and experiential basis of linguistic categories is of primary importance within cognitive linguistics” (p. 7). He places “all approaches in which natural language is studied as a mental phenomenon” (Geeraerts, 2006, p. 3) under the umbrella of CL theory. To make clear what is contained in CL, Evans and Green (2006) claimed: CL is “the study of language in a way that is compatible with what is known about the human mind, treating language as reflecting and revealing the mind” (p. 71).

Until now, many researches of CL on metaphors have been conducted, especially on conceptual metaphors (CMs) in languages in the world. This is understandable; because human beings’ thoughts are very specific and various. We take ourselves to imagine the world, reflect the development path of our awareness by expressing ideas from concrete to abstract.

By experiencing, we receive knowledge of lives. The partial things are ideal domains, we make use of all aspects of this domain in metaphorically understanding abstract targets. However, there are still not any works of conceptual metaphors based on Up sense of Happiness in English and Vietnamese in detail. For example, in English we can see the CM “HAPPINESS IS UP” with the target domain is HAPPY and the source domain is UP, such as in the expression “*He is on cloud nine*”, which expressed that the man can evoke joy. In Vietnamese, such a conceptualization is also pointed, for example: “*Anh ta lên chín tầng mây*” (he is on cloud nine, he is extremely happy). Consequently, we would like to conduct a study entitled “A Study of Metaphorical Expressions based on Up Sense of Happiness in English and Vietnamese” by doing a comparative and contrastive analysis with the aim of

being an essential study and significance in linguistics with aiming to explore the concepts of CM from concepts of CL and analysing the metaphorical expressions based on Up sense of Happiness in these two languages, this study will find out the findings between the concrete domain 'UP' and the abstract domain 'HAPPINESS' for more clarifying the tenets of CM. The study will also figure out the linguistic potential as well as the similarities and differences between English and Vietnamese through the data collected from the novels and short stories.

Aims of the Study

This study aims to extend the later concepts of CM drawing from CL concepts that are relevant and viable to the study. Specifically, the mapping "HAPPINESS IS UP" is clarified by analysing the metaphorical expressions based on this emotion 'happy' in English and Vietnamese. Besides, the article will also have a closer look on the universality of such models within the source domain of partial session and the target domain of human emotion.

Main concepts in Cognitive Linguistics

Johnson (1992) defines that "They are motivated and grounded more or less directly in experience, in our bodily, physical, social and cultural experiences, because after all, we are beings of the flesh" (p. 347).

In Barcelona's work (1997), he defines "the design features of languages and our ability to learn and use them are accounted for by general cognitive, kinaesthetic abilities, our visual and sensimotor skills and our human categorisation strategies, together with our cultural, contextual and functional parameters" (p. 8).

According to Gibbs and Steen (1999), "the most fundamental tenet in this model is embodiment" (p. 29). Gemma and Jiménez-López (2009) express that "mental and linguistic categories are not abstract, disembodied and human independent categories; we create them on the basis of our concrete experiences and under the constraints imposed by our bodies" (p. 6).

According to Johnson (1987); Lakoff and Johnson (2003); and Kövecses (2005), one of the main tenets of the CL approach is human cognition. In Pathak's (2013) work, he shows "human cognition is independent of language: linguistic expressions of cross-domain mappings are merely surface manifestations of deeper cognitive structures that have an important spatial or analogue component" (p. 66).

In short, CL mainly refers to mappings concerned with the most dramatic form called conceptual metaphor.

Basic views of conceptual metaphor

The idea of CM is indebted to a seminar article by Lakoff and Johnson (1980/2003), metaphor is not a product merely associated with literary language but a product of human cognition, it is found everywhere in language and is a background which helps people understand what is named novel metaphorical expressions in distinction from conventional metaphors. Another focus of this approach is that, in conceptual metaphor, different domains in human mind interact with each other through the mapping mechanism.

Littlemore and Low (2006): “They are not linguistic expressions, but rather relationships” (p. 12).

“The main assumption underlying the conceptual metaphor approach is that metaphor is not primarily a phenomenon of language, but rather a phenomenon of thought” Tendahl (2009, p. 4).

For Lakoff and Johnson (2003), CM is a “natural part of human thought” (p. 247).

Kövecses (2010) described it as having two conceptual domains and between those two domains, one (the target) is understood in terms of another (the source).

Although they are the two seemingly different ways, of giving definition, their ideas summit in the point that conceptual metaphor is distinguished from linguistic metaphor and we are indebted to them for multi-dimensional understanding of conceptual metaphor that we draw out from their definition.

The source of CM, according to Lakoff and Johnson (2003, p. 154 - 155), is “grounded in correlations within our experience. These experiential correlations may be of two types: experiential co-occurrence and experiential similarity”. Kövecses (2002) furthermore explains that this accounts for the unidirectionality of conceptual metaphors, that the metaphorical process generally goes “from the more concrete to the more abstract but not the other way around” (p. 6). According to Kövecses (2002), CMs are “written in small capital letters as per scholarly tradition, however the wordings do not literally materialize in language and only indicate the underlying concept” (p. 21). In other words, he defines a conceptual metaphor as “understanding one conceptual domain in terms of another conceptual domain” (Kövecses, 2002, p. 21).

Methodology

The data collected was retrieved from the novels and short stories in English and Vietnamese published officially. We found 100 expressions based on Up sense of Happiness. In English data, we examined three novels including *Reversible Errors* by Scott Turow (2003), *The Broker* by John Grisham (2005) and *Live by night* by Dennis Lehane (2012). In Vietnamese, the data consists of five novels and stories including *Truyện ngắn hay 2002 - 2003* by Hồ Thị Hải Âu, et al. (2003), *Chim én bay* by Nguyễn Trí Huân (2011), *Con ve sâu* by Nguyễn Tường Hùng (2005), *Truyện ngắn hay 2007* by Suong Nguyệt Minh (2007) and *Truyện ngắn hay 2010* by Nguyễn Văn Thọ (2010). We highlighted all the expressions based on Up sense of Happiness manually until we caught the related words or phrases. Their meanings were considered to be concrete or abstract in the view of CL.

Metaphor identification

We decided to choose the procedure which Pragglejaz Group (2007) gives and is used by Kövecses (2010). The procedure thus involves the following principles: (1) Focus on the context by reading the whole text surrounding the related linguistic expressions; (2) Determine which meanings are concrete and which are abstract; (3) Decide whether the contextual meaning contrasts with the basic meaning but can be understood in comparison with it.

Research methods

The following methods used in the study: descriptive method for describing the data collected, analytic and synthetic methods for considering conceptual metaphors based on Up senses of Happy from the expressions covered for the conceptual metaphors in each language; comparative and contrastive methods for comparing and contrasting between them.

Findings

With a basement basing on CL approaches many previous works of the cognitive linguists such as Lakoff and Johnson (1980/2003), Kövecses (2010), Charteris-Black (2004), Steen (2010), we have a great interest in literature, especially novels and short stories in the recent period. According to Kövecses (2010), “one of the startling discoveries of work on poetic language by cognitive linguists is the recognition that most poetic language is based on conventional, ordinary conceptual metaphors” (p. 50). We examined 50 expressions based on UP sense of Happiness in each language.

UP– as Source domain		HAPPINESS – as Target domain
moving upwards	→	achieving happy
upward motion	→	improving in mood
upward movement of eye	→	changing of emotion
upward motion	→	improving feeling status
high location	→	strong feelings

Table 1: Mappings for the HAPPINESS IS UP conceptual metaphor

Table 1 shows that there are five mappings which are set up for the CM ‘HAPPINESS IS UP’ in this study including moving upwards - achieving happy; upward motion - improving in mood; upward movement of eye - changing of emotion; upward motion – improving feeling status and high location - strong feelings. Based on the mappings, we found out metaphorical expressions with examining the relevant words and phrases. In English, we examined the ones including *rise, ascend, climb, upsurge, heighten, pull oneself up/out, move up, upward mobility, upwardly mobile, scale, on the top, superior, up, lift, sky, rocket, soar, mount, jump, leap, go up, upswing*. In Vietnamese, they are *tăng, vươn lên, đi lên, lên, đỉnh, cao, leo, nâng, nâng cao, lên trời, lên cao, nhảy, nhảy vọt, nhảy cẫng, sáng/sáng trưng lên, bùng lên, chạy lên, tung lên*.

Examples:

- (1) *She is on top of the successful situation*
- (2) *He's in a superior place to conduct the plan well*
- (3) *Their emotion rose*
- (4) *Her eye brights up when she knows that he will come back*
- (5) *I jump out to welcome the ship*

In these examples (1-5), moving upwards, upward motions, upward movement of eye and motion are related in a scalar opposition to happiness.

In Vietnamese, we also found the examples in these situations as in English, as follows,

Examples:

- (6) *Cô ấy đang ở đỉnh cao của sự thành công.*
- (7) *Chúng tôi được tạo mọi điều kiện cao nhất để thực hiện công việc tại nơi đâu chuyển tuyến ấy.*
- (8) *Cảm xúc của ông bà dần tăng lên khi con trai xuất hiện rõ dần trước mặt.*
- (9) *Mắt cô ấy sáng trưng khi nhận được những đồng lương đầu tiên mà nhiều đến vậy.*
- (10) *Cô bé nhảy cẫng lên vì sung sướng.*

With 50 metaphorical expressions found in each language in the mapping, they were summarized in Table 2 as follows:

	Mapping	English		Vietnamese	
1.	Moving upwards - Achieving happy	17	34%	11	22%
2.	Upward motion - Improving in mood	13	26%	12	24%
3.	Upward movement of eye - Changing of emotion	6	12%	8	16%
4.	Upward motion - Improving feeling status	14	28%	15	30%
5.	High location - Strong feelings	0	0%	4	8%

Table 2: Distribution of metaphorical expressions based on Up sense of Happiness in English and Vietnamese

Table 2 shows that in English respectively, ‘moving upwards’ predominates over metaphorical expressions 17/50 standing at 34% while in Vietnamese it only has 11/50 rating 22% in total with 50 metaphorical expressions to express ‘achieving happy’. The mapping ‘upward motion - improving in mood’ has a similar number at 13 and 12 ones respectively (26% and 24%) and 14 -15 for ‘upward motion - improving feeling status’ (about 28 - 30%), but ‘upward movement of eye - changing of emotion’ only has 6 and 8 metaphorical expressions, standing about 12 -16%. With the mapping ‘high location - strong feelings’, Vietnamese data has 4 metaphorical expressions (8%), but in English examined data we did not find put these examples. The mappings of UP are a remarkable fact that these two languages share a great deal in expressing metaphorical concepts based on up sense.

- (11) *He told a story which was related to his past with rising feelings the story.*
- (12) *In the dark, a light was flying in the air looks like her feeling now.*
- (13) *Thấy nhắc đến thành tích của mình, Như bỗng đỏ mặt lên vì sung sướng .*
- (14) *Tôi thấy mình như rời khỏi mặt đất khi nghe tin đậu đại học.*

These cases make the metaphorical expressions based on up senses of happiness in English and Vietnamese more various, attractive and complex for its users. We can see a strong connection between them and each expression can connect to the happy emotion.

We can see all mappings interact together. However, there is a mapping only found in Vietnamese, ‘High location - Strong feelings’. This did not imply that only in Vietnamese, the up sense impacts in high location. It can be due to the limitation of time and the data we examined at that time can not be all in two languages. Therefore, we need to conduct more and more studies in the future to clarify the more interesting features in these two languages.

Conclusions

In order to have a full experience, people should have a perfect body, especially in the senses. Consequently, they experience their lives and in language, they express the semantics features through experiencing their senses plentifully. In this study, we examine the linguistic potential through analyzing and discussing the principles of CL. At the same time, we draw out the explanations to clarify which respects the two languages share conceptual mapping of up sense of happiness, use metaphors which are related to one another, or which interact; at the same time, point out which ones exist in both English and Vietnamese, and which ones are unique to Vietnamese. The mappings showing up senses of happiness are all used for expressing an upward motions. In other words, the up sense produces 'happiness'. In this article, we have analysed, compared and contrasted the metaphorical expressions for setting up the mappings based on the up senses of happiness in both English and Vietnamese in a cognitive perspective. The metaphorical expressions have been built with the target domains and source domains helping readers understand concrete as well as abstract meanings of metaphors in English and Vietnamese. In fact, knowledge and beliefs which people have through sense concepts are considered highly valuable as extremely important in expressing language. In English, we discovered 50 metaphorical expressions including 17 for the mapping 'Moving upwards - Achieving happy', 13 for 'Upward motion - Improvement in mood', 6 for 'Upward movement of eye - Changing of emotion', 14 for 'Upward motion - Improving feeling status'. In Vietnamese, we found 11,12,8 and 15 for those mappings respectively. Especially, there are four metaphorical expressions of the mapping 'High location - Strong feelings' found in Vietnamese data. In other words, the numbers of the metaphorical expressions based on up sense of happiness are quite common, but the mapping of 'High location - Strong feelings' are only found in Vietnamese (with 4 expressions).

In short, the metaphorical expressions have been analysed, compared and contrasted for setting up the mapping based on the up sense of happiness in English and Vietnamese in a cognitive perspective. The variety of expressions of language has been clarified in the field of conceptual metaphor in both two languages. From then, the conceptual metaphors have been built with the target domains and source domains. This shows that this semantic field is highly polysemous.

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