

## Original Paper

# A Cultural Study on Linguistic Metaphors of Love in Poetry

Ho Trinh Quynh Thu<sup>1\*</sup> & Phan Van Hoa<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Foreign Languages, Quang Nam University, Quang Nam Province, Vietnam

<sup>2</sup> English Department, University of Foreign Language Studies, Da Nang City, Vietnam

\* Ho Trinh Quynh Thu, Department of Foreign Languages, Quang Nam University, Quang Nam Province, Vietnam

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### **Abstract**

*Language is one of the cultural factors. Love, an abstract concept is mainly interpreted by metaphors which are considered as part of culture. It is consequently inevitable that the linguistic metaphors of love are under the influence of culture. In this research, we centre on investigating cultural factors in linguistic metaphors of romantic love in Vietnamese modern poetry, and then compare them to those in English. It is shown in our findings that linguistic metaphors of romantic love are considerably influenced by lifestyles, habits and customs and geographical conditions. Therefore, there are many variations in the ways of expressing romantic love between Vietnamese and English although the conceptualization is chiefly similar.*

### **Keywords**

*metaphor, culture, romantic love, conceptual metaphor of love, metaphorical expressions of love*

## **1. Introduction**

As one of the most basic human emotions, love is considered the basis of everyday life. Among various kinds of love, romantic love (hereafter in the paper referred to as “love”), which will be culturally and metaphorically treated in this paper, is a complex of erotic, cognitive, emotional and behavioural components that are unable to be separated (Bartels & Zeki, 2004). People find it difficult to show or manifest the concept of love fully since it is abstract. However, this concept is rather diversified in words. Most of them are metaphoric, which, according to Kovecses (2000), results from lack of the adequate vocabulary to express the ideas of this abstract concept.

In terms of metaphor, cognitive linguistics supposes that metaphor is universal; that is, metaphor is similar between different languages and cultures all over the world. The question is that all the metaphors or just some kind of them is shared by various cultures globally, which used to be discussed

by Kovecses (2010). He demonstrated the pervasiveness of many conceptual metaphors in different languages and reached the conclusion that love, among popular concepts such as happiness, anger and time, is universally embodied and conceptualized. As a result, different languages and cultures share conceptual metaphors of love. However, it should be noticed that human embodied experiences are not homogeneous and monolithic across the world because our daily life activities are deeply impinged on by cultural manifestations (Inglis, 2005). Also, metaphorical conceptualization is stimulated not only by embodiment but also by context which is determined by culture (Kovecses, 2010). In addition, metaphor is a matter of cognition. It happens in mind and depends on the ways of our thinking in which culture is reflected. The metaphors of love are consequently thought to be under the influences of culture and comprise cultural characteristics. In order to partly consolidate this belief, the paper investigates the interference of cultural factors in love linguistic metaphors that are collected from Vietnamese modern poetry. A comparison between these linguistic metaphors and English ones will concurrently be made in order to learn more about cultural similarities and differences in love description between the two languages, which has not been paid much attention so far.

Our paper is carried out based on the conceptual metaphor theory raised by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), where the distinction between conceptual and linguistic metaphors is suggested. This matter is mentioned in the next part—theoretical background, where the concept of romantic love and the relationship between metaphor and culture are also shed light on clearly.

## **2. Method**

The paper is carried out based on qualitative and quantitative research methods that are responsible for analysing and processing the data collected from 250 Vietnamese love poems and the same number of English ones. As an investigation into metaphors, the identification of metaphorical expressions in a discourse is an important step; thereby we may know the existence of conceptual metaphors under them. Also, it helps ensure the reliability and validity of the study results. In this paper, we adopt the approaches to metaphor identification raised by Pragglejaz Group (2007) including four steps: (1) Read the entire text-discourse to establish a general understanding of the meaning. Next, (2) determine the lexical units in the text-discourse. Then (3) take into account what comes before and after the lexical unit, determine if it has a more basic contemporary meaning in other contexts than the one in the given context. If yes, decide whether the contextual meaning contrasts with the basic meaning but can be understood in comparison with it. If yes, (4) mark the lexical unit as metaphorical.

### 3. Results

Examining 250 Vietnamese love poems and the same number in English, we have discovered over 2000 metaphorical expressions of love. 199 out of 1098 Vietnamese expressions bear cultural features (accounting for 18.1%), which is compared to 124/1129 English ones. The numbers show a certain influence of culture on metaphorical expressions in language. Making a comparison, we find that most of these expressions are different between these two languages.

Firstly, the image of *tim*, *lòng* or *dạ* in Vietnamese is used to talk about love while it is only *heart* in English. Following is our statistical report.

**Table 1. The Quantity of the Metaphorical Expressions of Love Containing the Images of *Tim*, *Lòng*, *Dạ* in Vietnamese and *Heart* in English**

Images	Vietnamese	English
Tim—heart	63	111
Lòng—abdomen	62	0
Dạ—abdomen	2	0

Secondly, in the light of the differences of culture the terms of natural world and social events employed to express love are found to be different between Vietnamese and English, which is quantitatively presented in the following Table.

**Table 2. Cultural Differences in Vietnamese Terms of Natural World and Social Events Used to Express Love When They Are Compared to English**

Terms	Vietnamese	English
flavourlessness/saltiness	5	0
five tones	1	0
sonata	0	2
symphony	0	2
mountains/mountain passes	6	0
rivers	9	0
wharf-boat/ferryboat	24	0
flower-butterfly	3	0
(red) thread	18	1
Paradise/Garden of Eden	3	8
harvest season	2	0
betel-areca nut	1	0

Shortly from what have been manifested above, it can be seen that the cultural factors have a significant role in love description. They contribute not only to structuring love but also helping this concept become unique and typical in each certain language.

#### 4. Discussion

##### 4.1 Romantic Love

“What is love?” It is regarded as a seemingly unanswerable question that has been attractive to many researchers in biology, neuroscience, psychology, anthropology and linguistics. In each research area, love is defined in an own way. One of the definitions of our interest is developed by Gottschall and Nordlund (2006) and expressed as follows.

Romantic love is a “feeling expressed in a romantic context between two people” with partly sexual attraction. This feeling is “typically reserved for only one person” and expected to last forever. It also “involves intense attraction to the beloved’s whole person and is not just about attraction to the body”. Therefore, to love someone romantically is to “experience a strong desire for union with someone who is deemed entirely unique”. It is to “idealize this person”, to think constantly about him or her, and to “discover that one’s own life priorities have changed dramatically”. It is to “care deeply for that person’s well-being and to feel pain or emptiness when he or she is absent”.

##### 4.2 Conceptual Metaphor versus Linguistic Metaphor

In the light of the conceptual metaphor theory, metaphor is considered a “property of concepts” (Kovecses, 2010), and the “locus of metaphor is thought” (Lakoff, 1993). Metaphors operate thanks to cross-domain mappings that transfer the characteristics or properties of a more concrete domain (called source domain) to another more abstract domain (called target domain). These mappings are tightly structured, asymmetric, unidirectional, partial based on daily experience and have a definite structure: TARGET-DOMAIN IS/AS SOURCE-DOMAIN (Kovecses, 2010).

In the mapping, *linguistic metaphors* (or *metaphorical expressions*) are what expressed by language; and *conceptual metaphor* (or *metaphorical concept*) refers to a mental representation describing how two words or expressions from apparently different domains may be associated at an underlying cognitive level. In the metaphor LOVE IS/AS A JOURNEY, for example, “LOVE IS A JOURNEY” is the name of the mapping or conceptual metaphor; LOVE is the target domain, JOURNEY is the source domain; such sentences as *We can’t turn back now* (Lakoff, 1993) and *Đôi ta lên thác xuống ghềnh* (We are up hill and down dale; Phan Văn Hòa & Hồ Trịnh Quỳnh Thu, 2011) are individual linguistic metaphors.

The distinction between conceptual and linguistic metaphors is really significant, especially in our research, which focuses on investigating linguistic metaphors.

### 4.3 Metaphor—Culture Relationship

Culture is defined as “a fuzzy set of basic assumptions and values, orientations to life, beliefs, policies, procedures and behavioural conventions that are shared by a group of people, and that influence (but do not determine) each member’s behaviour and his/her interpretations of the ‘meaning’ of other people’s behaviour” (Spencer-Oatey, 2012, p. 2). Culture develops in the close relation to and the mutual impact of language that is considered the leading cultural factor to contain national nuances (Nguyễn Đức Tồn, 2008).

In respect of the relationship between metaphor and culture, the conceptual metaphor theory argues that metaphor is part of culture. A metaphor should be interpreted based on two basic factors, meaning and social context which are, in turn, understood as the conceptualization of personal experiences and the cultural nature of language. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) also confirm that metaphor is rooted in cultural and embodied experiences. Likewise, Kovecses (2010) mentions two simultaneous impacts on metaphorical production, i.e., embodiment and context that is determined by culture. Accordingly, it may be stated that metaphor should not be separated from culture. Culture creates the consistence and the diversity of metaphors in each language and different ones.

### 4.4 Cultural Impacts on Linguistic Metaphors of Love

Metaphor functionates via the understanding of one more abstract concept in terms of another more concrete. In this paper, the abstract concept that needs to be interpreted is love; and the linguistic expressions employed to describe love can be under three basic categories: human beings, natural world and social events. The expressions chosen must include cultural factors or bring cultural values that are typical in each language or each region.

#### 4.4.1 Human Beings

It was traditionally believed that the heart was the center of emotions in human body. Although science has proved it is brain that is responsible for feelings and emotions, the heart is still popularly considered as seat of emotions, especially love. As a result, human heart (equivalent to *tim* in Vietnamese) is defined as the emotional nature (distinguished from intellectual nature) such as love or affection (Mariam-webster dictionary). It is also regarded as the symbol of emotion and love in Vietnamese mind (Vietnamese dictionary, 2003); for instance,

(1) *Ta đã gửi cho anh/Một con tim dào dạt* (I sent him an overflowing heart) (Đoàn Thị Lam Luyến, *Gửi tình yêu*).

In this case, the heart can be treated to represent love which is interpreted by combining two metaphors: LOVE IS AN OBJECT and LOVE IS A FLUID IN A CONTAINER. As an object, love is described to be sent (*gửi*) to the beloved. On the other hand, it is conceptualized as a fluid that is contained in the heart, thus “*dào dạt*” (overflowing).

Besides “heart”, there are some other words referring to human organs employed to express love in Vietnamese. They are *lòng, dạ* (abdomen).

(2) *Mang em trong dạ như mầm, / Ngày đi suy nghĩ, đêm nằm mếu thương* (Carrying you like a seed in my abdomen, I always think of you and love you) (Xuân Diệu, *Quả trứng và lòng đỏ*).

(3) *Em trao lòng xuân nặng / Trên bốn mùa lang thang* (I gave you my heavy spring heart during four seasons) (Nguyễn Thị Khánh Minh, *Trách*).

In (2), love is understood in a combination of three metaphors via the linguistic metaphor “mang em trong dạ” (carry you in my abdomen). Firstly, the verb “mang” (carry) tells us about an entity that may be his beloved and also his love. The expression is the linguistic surface of the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS AN OBJECT. Secondly is the metaphor LOVE IS A UNITY under the expression “mang em trong dạ”, where the beloved is described to be inside the lover. Two are in one to become a unity that is not separated. Lastly, the expression “trong dạ” arouses the image of a container. “Dạ” (abdomen) here is interpreted to be capable of containing the lover’s beloved, his love. Besides, for the Vietnamese, “dạ” or “lòng” is symbolic of emotion in general and of love in particular (Trần Ngọc Thêm, 1996); thus, it refers to love, the love of a man in which his beloved is contained. Similarly, the image of “lòng” in (3) also indicates the love which is conceptualized as an object expressed by the terms “trao” (offer) and “nặng” (heavy).

In relation to the symbol of love, Trần Ngọc Thêm (1996) shows the Vietnamese image of “lòng” and that of “heart” for the Westerners. It may be the reason why the linguistic metaphors with “lòng” (abdomen) are rather popular in Vietnamese poetry but they cannot be found in English. Instead, the image of *heart* is applied in the English language with a similar conceptualization.

(4) *I give you my heart, [...] / so, give me your heart* (Bobette Bryan, *True love*).

(5) *I carry your heart with me (I carry it in/my heart)* (e.e.cummings, *I carry your heart with me*).

Heart and abdomen are among the most important organs in the human body. People cannot live without them. With such significance, love described in terms of heart and abdomen is understood to be necessary for life, or it is just human life. It can hence be interpreted from (1), (3) and (4) that the lovers have given/sent their love or their life to their beloved.

In brief, cultural factors in linguistic metaphors of love can be illustrated by terms of parts of human beings, namely *heart* in English and *tim, lòng, dạ* in Vietnamese. The word *lòng* in Vietnamese is defined as abdomen—a symbol of human psychology, mind, emotion and will (Vietnamese dictionary, 2003). In consequences, in many cases of translation from Vietnamese into English, the word *heart* is used for both *tim* and *lòng*.

In our world, human beings cannot exist independently but live in a harmonious relationship with natural world and social environment. As a result, the expressions of natural world and social events are also used to talk about love, which is discussed right in the following section.

#### 4.4.2 Natural World and Social Events

The *natural world*, according to Merriam-webster dictionary, is defined as all of the animals, plants, and other things existing in nature while *social event* refers to something that happens at a given place or time. Their appearance and existence are perceived by human senses. Because love is an interpersonal relationship occurring in society, it can also be perceived and described in the terms of sensory perceptions; for example, (6) *Tôi vẫn đi bên cạnh cuộc đời/Ái ân nhạt lẻo của chồng tôi* (I'm still beside my husband with his flavourless love) (TTKH, *Hai sắc hoa ti gôn*).

Love in this case is described in terms of a nutrient, hence “lạt lẻo” (flavourless), and identified thanks to human gustation. This taste is not found in English linguistic metaphors of love, which may be shed light on by the views of love relationship in Western and Eastern cultures.

Love, for Eastern people including the Vietnamese, is often interpreted in relationships between persons and their environment, so it tends not to depend on subjective feeling of the persons in this relationship (Valsiner, 2012). Furthermore, Eastern people do not like changes (Bagozzi et al., 1999). In an unsatisfactory relationship, they tend to resign themselves to live with it instead of changing it despite its “flavourlessness”. By contrast, love in Western culture is the result of a person’s private wishes and desires (Valsiner, 2012). It will be destroyed if it does not meet the personal benefits of the couple in the relationship. Thus, when they are in love, the Westerners usually find more satisfaction than disappointment, and “flavourlessness” seems to be out of their love taste.

Opposite of flavourlessness is saltiness, the taste that is known as one of the traditional basic tastes in Eastern culture but it is not in the Western one (Polansky, 2007). It may be the reason for the absence of saltiness in English love linguistic metaphors whilst this taste is often used to talk about love and faithfulness in Vietnamese.

(7) *Cuộc đời chồng thêm tuổi/Tình yêu càng mặn nồng* (When we are older, our love becomes hotter and saltier - more passionate) (Diệp Minh Tuyên, *Tình yêu thì thâm*).

Love in (7) is conceptualized as food that can be taste via the linguistic metaphor “tình yêu mặn nồng” (hot and salty love). In Vietnamese, when being depicted as “mặn nồng”, the love here is comprehended to be charming, passionate and hard to fade (Vietnamese dictionary, 2003).

In addition to gustation, audition also exposes some cultural differences between Vietnamese and English when it is used to express love. Let look at the following lines, (8) *Tình so chưa đủ ngũ âm* (Love hasn't had enough five tones yet) (Thanh Nguyên, *Lỗi hẹn cùng ca dao*).

(9) *Love's sonata/[...] Our love, tonight, feels like a symphony* (Chad Joseph Thieman, *Love's sonata*).

Love in these lines is structured in terms of music that people can perceive through ears. The cultural factors appear to be clearly displayed in the extract. In (8), the musical term is absolutely Vietnamese with the expression “ngũ âm” (five tones) because Vietnamese traditional music is pentatonic in scale, including Hò, Xự, Xang, Xê, Cống (McLeod & Nguyen, 2001). Meanwhile, love in (9) is defined as

“sonata” and “symphony”, genres of music that were generated in the Western culture.

Referring to culture, the Vietnamese cannot help dealing with the village culture in which there are banyan-tree, well and public court. These images closely attach to Vietnamese traditional village activities and reappear in poetry.

(10) *Lòng ta hỡi ôm trong như giếng tạnh/Nước vẫn sâu khơi mà bờ vắng lạnh;/Tình! Chính người đến soi mặt, ôm sao!/Thả gàu múc nước, rúng trắng sao* (My abdomen is like a well deserted but with fresh water; Love! you come with it to look your face, which makes me pleasant; but your scooping water makes a disturbance here) (Xuân Diệu, *Con sáo sang sông*).

Love here is personified via the actions of “đến soi mặt” (coming to look at one’s face in a well) and “thả gàu múc nước” (scooping water out of a well). As mentioned above, the well along with the banyan-tree and public court is very important and characteristic in Vietnamese traditional villages; it is also the beginning place of love (Nguyễn Oanh, 2012). As a result, the verse is a description of the man’s mood at the beginning of love, of a dramatic psycho-emotional change when his love comes.

Besides the well, wharves and rivers also have a strong attachment to the Vietnamese village life; therefore, it is not surprised when these images are used to describe love in Vietnamese. Following is an instance. (11) *Em đi theo đuổi mãi tơ duyên/Dò mãi lòng sông, sắm mãi thuyền* (I always run after the silk thread of love, fathom the depth of the river, buy boats) (Nguyễn Bính, *Khăn hồng*).

The stanza tells us about a hard journey to pursue and look for love on which the man is very patient of changing boats (the means of the journey) to fathom the depth of the river (or just learn about his beloved’s feelings). Such a description cannot be found in English. Similarly, the obstacles in the love journey manifested in the extracts below are also typical and unique to geographical and cultural features in Vietnam, where agriculture-based culture is dominant; where people’s lives are closely attached to rivers (sông), mountains (núi) and villages enclosed by trees and bamboos (thus, sharp thorns—gai nhọn).

(12) *Đường êm quá, ai đi mà nhớ gò!/Đến khi hay, gai nhọn đã vào xương* (The road is so smooth that nobody pays attention until sharp thorns stick their feet) (Xuân Diệu, *Dại khờ*).

(13) *Đã thương mấy núi cũng trèo/Mấy sông cũng lội, mấy đèo cũng qua* (When people are in love, they can climb over mountains, cross rivers and go over mountain passes to get to their beloved) (Xuân Quỳnh, *Tình ca trong lòng vịnh*).

The images of wandering up hill and down dale, wading across rivers and treading on thorns describe difficult journeys in Vietnamese rural life. They are mapped onto the difficulties on the love journey that the lovers have to overcome in order to get to their destination.

(14) *Bến ấy neo thuyền tình mong manh/* (The faint love boat may be anchored in the wharf) (Tù Nguyễn, *Chuyện ngày qua*).



The journey is finally finished when the boat is brought to anchor in the wharf. However, the result is not always as good as what is expected. There are the journeys on which the travellers don't know when and where they reach their goals (as in 15). There is even the journey that has even not carried out yet; it is just a plan with a bright future (see 16).

(15) *Bao giờ bến mới gặp đò?/ Hoa khuê các bướm giang hồ gặp nhau?* (When will the ferry-boat go into the wharf, gentle flowers and errant butterflies meet each other?) (Nguyễn Bính, *Tương tư*)

(16) *Anh có đi cùng em/ [...] Đến những mùa hái quả* (Are you going with me to the harvest seasons?) (Xuân Quỳnh, *Mùa hoa doi*)

The pairs of images such as *bến-thuyền* (wharf-boat) in (15), *bến-đò* (wharf-ferry-boat), *hoa-bướm* (flower-butterfly) in (16) are metaphorically used to talk about the persons in the loving relationship. *Mùa hái quả* (harvest seasons) in (17) describes a perfect destination for the couple at the end of their love journey. All these images are the embodiment of agricultural lives. They are consequently rather popular in Vietnamese while the ideal destination of love journey is Paradise or the Garden of Eden in English.

(17) *Nor would we sail for paradise/Would it its shoals conceal* (Nicholas Gordon, *Dreams do come true*).

(18) *I finally found my/Garden of Eden/when I met you* (Bobette Bryan, *Eden in you*).

Returning to “*tơ duyên*” (red thread of love) in (11), love is conceptualized as a unity of two persons in the loving relationship who are tied together by a red thread. The image comes from a legend telling of love and marriage that is believed to be destined by God. According to this legend, matchmaker Gods called Ông Tơ Bà Nguyệt bind a man and a woman together with a red thread so that they will become a couple of wife and husband.

(19) *Chắc đây là kiếp nợ duyên/Ông Tơ Bà Nguyệt gấn nguyên tơ hồng/Cho ta thành đôi vợ chồng* (Perhaps for predestined love, matchmaker Gods tie the red thread for us to become wife and husband) (Huỳnh Lâm Phong, *Kiếp nợ duyên*).

Unlike the red thread of love in (11) which is being sought, the red thread in (19) has fastened the couple together. It is noteworthy that the image of the red thread can only be found in Vietnamese but not in English although it is not without the term of thread employed to express love in English as illustrated in the example below.

(20) *Time found our seaming,/Rotted away the silly thread,/Laid bare two essences, unjoined* (Alan Harris, *Bidentity*).

It would be really regrettable if the image of *trầu-cau* (betel-areca) was not mentioned when the custom of Vietnamese love and marriage is discussed. *Trầu-cau* is a unique feature in Vietnamese culture, referring to the faithfulness in love. A quid of betel and areca-nut (paan) is a start-up of a conversation, an emotional uncover. The give and take of paan means the give and take of feelings or love; therefore,

the girl in the following lines is attempting to seek for such a tray of paan.

(21) *Lỡ làng mười tám đôi mươi./Tôi đi chợ muộn kiếm coi trầu già* (I go to the market at its closing to look for a tray of old paan in my early twenties, the age of being tardy for marriage) (Nguyễn Thị Đạo Tịnh, *Bùa lá*).

Obviously, the image of “coi trầu” (the tray of paan) is used to imply a partner, a love and a possible marital relationship. Love in (21), which is attached to marriage, is conceptualized as a unity of betel and areca nut. The image may show the desire of not only a marriage but a steadfast and lasting loving relationship.

As trầu-cau (betel—areca nut) is a typical image of a close relationship in Vietnamese culture, it cannot be caught in English. So far, it can be said that culture has a big impact on linguistic expressions in general and on linguistic metaphors in particular. All the evidence presented above once again shows the fact that linguistic metaphors of love are divergent in different languages and cultures, particularly between Vietnamese and English. In addition, according to Kovecses (2010), cultural factors influence metaphorical expressions, and these metaphors may help to define culture. Let us look at the following example, (22) *Tình già/như là thịt trâu sậy/Tình trẻ/như là thịt bò non/Vừa ngon, vừa lạ* (Old love is like carabeef; young love is like veal, delicious and strange) (Lò Ngân Sùn, *Tình già, tình trẻ*).

Love in this verse is conceptualized as a nutrient that is tasty and strange via the expressions “tình...là thịt trâu sậy/là thịt bò non” (love...is carabeef/veal). These images may immediately lead people to Northwest Vietnam, where carabeef is one of the best-known specialities. It is made from meat of buffalo raised in this region combined with some kinds of spices made by the ethnic people here. It is not just moreish and delicious but contains in it the cultural feature of the Northwest mountainous region of Vietnam—homeland of the poet. As a result, carabeef and veal go into his poem naturally, originally and imaginatively. The linguistic expressions describing love as in (22) cannot be found in English and anywhere else in Vietnamese although the concept of nutrient used to metaphorize love is rather popular in both languages. It can consequently be said that metaphor is localized. Linguistic metaphors are distinguished not just between different cultures but also between various areas within a culture.

In short, there are many images of natural world and social events with cultural features used to metaphorize love. They can be manifestations of regional or national culture. Though they belong to any of above-mentioned cultural features, the metaphoric expressions of love such as *well, red thread, boat-wharf, ferryboat-wharf, flower-butterfly, betel-areca nut, carabeef, veal, wandering up hill and down dale, wading across rivers, trading on thorns, and harvest seasons* are rather popular in Vietnamese but hardly found in English- a language under the influences of Western cultures.

## 5. Conclusion

We have just presented the results of our investigation of metaphorical expressions of love under the influences of culture. The research has been carried out in light of the conceptual metaphor theory with the data collected from modern poetry in order to find out cultural differences resulting in the varieties of love linguistic metaphors between Vietnamese and English. These expressions are examined and analyzed under three main categories: human beings, natural world and social events. For the former category, the images including tim, lòng, dạ (heart and abdomen) are employed to talk about love in Vietnamese while only heart is used in English. This phenomenon is explained clearly by Trần Ngọc Thêm (1996), who concluded that lòng, for the Vietnamese, is considered as pivot and becomes symbolic of emotion in general and of love in particular while it is heart for the Westerner.

The terms of natural world and social events applied to express love are also under the influences of culture. Because Vietnam is a nation of agriculture-based culture, the images of love and everything related to this relationship are pervaded with Vietnamese rural villages such as the well, rivers, mountains, thorns, boat-wharf, flower-butterfly, betel-areca, carabeef, veal, and harvest seasons. In addition, the Vietnamese believe in God and fate, everything in their life (love included) is controlled by Gods. As a result, the red thread (the means that matchmaker Gods use to bind two strange persons into a couple) appears much in Vietnamese love poems while it is just a very vague thread in English. Besides, the perception of love is described in different ways between Vietnamese and English. Vietnamese love sometimes tastes salty while this taste is not found in English. Furthermore, it can be differently audible in Vietnamese and Western forms of traditional music.

In conclusion, love becomes diversified in terms of human beings, natural world and social events. However, it is described in own ways in different languages, namely Vietnamese and English in this investigation, under the impacts of culture. As Vietnam is a country of cultural diversity, the linguistic metaphors of love are even regionalized and vary within Vietnamese, which reflects the subcultural dimension of metaphor in language.

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