

Investigation of Season Metaphors from the Perspective of Cognition: Season as Space

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ABSTRACT

The study aims to identify metaphors of SEASON in English and Vietnamese song lyrics in the light of cognitive linguistics. To be specific, the study follows the theory of conceptual metaphors which was initiated by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). Within the scope of the paper, the entity SEASON is treated as a target domain which is conceptualized through the source domain SPACE, which is examined via the corpora built from English and Vietnamese song lyrics composed the duration of the 20th century onward. By employing descriptive and comparative methods, and adopting the procedure of conceptual metaphor identification (Steen, 2011), the results show that English and Vietnamese share 2 conceptual metaphors of SEASON, namely, location and path. Accordingly, this study functions as an attempt to contribute to the area of metaphor research in cognitive perspective in Vietnam.

Keywords: cognitive linguistics, metaphorical expression, conceptual metaphor, season, space

1 Introduction

Metaphor has been interesting to scholars in terms of cognitive approach. Specifically, a great number of studies have been carried out to examine conceptual metaphors of both concrete and abstract concepts. As a matter of fact, the abstract concepts that have been investigated including life, emotion, sadness, and so forth. Similarly, TIME is an abstract term that has been extensively researched by both foreign and Vietnamese authors (Lakoff & Johnson 1980; Kövecses, 2010; Shinohara & Pardeshi, 2011; H. Nguyễn, 2007; T. Nguyễn, 2007). It is discovered that TIME is conceptualized as a variety of source domains such as OBJECT, MONEY, MOTION, DESTROYER, EVALUATOR, PURSUER, CONTAINER, SPACE, and so forth. Noticeably, being a concept denoting time, however, season has been limitedly examined worldwide and in Vietnam so far. Therefore, the research has been conducted so as to examine the season metaphors in terms of space, which are deployed to portray this entity of time. Accordingly, the similarities and differences of these conceptual metaphors in English and Vietnamese are also found. Hopefully, this paper can give some suggestions for research options in the area of English and Vietnamese teaching.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Definition of the Conceptual Metaphor

The Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), which claims that metaphor is essentially a systematic cognitive model of concepts rather than a form of aesthetic use of language, has ushered in a major shift in the study of metaphor. Consequently, CMT has been widely applied to metaphor analysis by a great number of cognitive linguists (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980a; Lakoff, 1993; Kövecses, 2010; Gibbs, 2011). CMT not only highlights the pervasive nature of metaphor in everyday life but also suggests that metaphor influences how people think, speak and act (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003; Deignan, 2005; Littlemore 2009; Kövecses, 2010).



CMT might be regarded a conceptual explanation for the metaphorical component of language use, which is particularly essential for linguists.

As a matter of fact, an early definition of the concept of metaphor is raised by Richards (1963, p.93) defining a metaphor as two interacting thoughts. Namely, the tenor is the initial notion, and the vehicle is the second. Hereby, the tenor represents the original meaning of the word or phrase while the vehicle represents the intended meaning. However, the meaning is not explained, but rather generated during the metaphor interpretation, as Reinhart (1976, p.385) frequently criticizes the lack of clarity and precision in the definition of tenor and vehicle, as well as their relationship.

In the light of CL, metaphor is primarily an issue of conceptualization. According to Orwell (1946), metaphor is defined as “mappings across conceptual domains” in which “the image-schemata structure of the source domain is projected onto the target domain in a way that is consistent with inherent target domain structure”. In this view, the image-schemata structure of domains is focused via conceptual mapping. Similarly, Simpson (1981) defines metaphor as follows:

A metaphor is a process of mapping between two different conceptual domains. The different domains are known as the target domain and the source domain. The target domain is the topic or concept that you want to describe through the metaphor while the source domain refers to the concept that you draw upon in order to create the metaphorical construction. (p.41)

In short, in the light of CMT, metaphor in essence is “understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another” (Lakoff & Johnson 2003, p.5). The ‘thing’ that is to be understood is often an abstract concept which is referred to in CMT as the target domain; the other concrete ‘thing’ which is used to understand the abstract concept is referred to as the source domain; this phenomena of conceptualizing one domain in terms of another, according to Kövecses (2010), is known as conceptual metaphor.

2.2 Conceptual Structures

Developing the theory of conceptual metaphor, Kövecses (2020) is especially interested in building an appropriate conceptual structure involved in conceptual metaphors, mentioned in his work *Extended Conceptual Metaphor Theory*. Specifically, he proposes the conceptual structure with four levels in schematicity hierarchies via four terms, including image schema, domain, frame and mental space. The figure below shows that the four level go from the most schematic to the least schematic as follows:

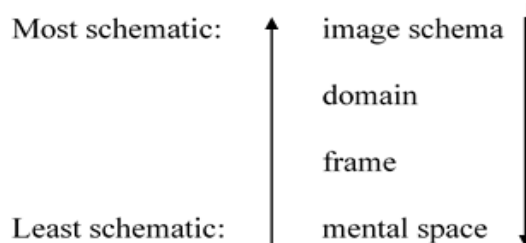
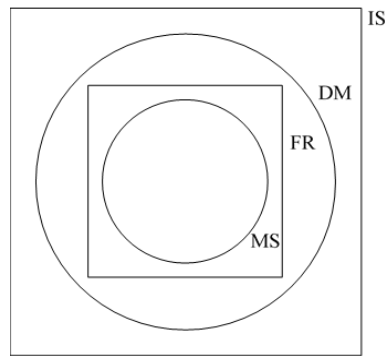


Figure 1. *Schematicity hierarchy for four conceptual structures*

(Kövecses, 2020, p.52)

In the figure, the upward arrow indicates increasing schematicity, meanwhile the downward arrow indicates increasing specificity. As a matter of fact, these four terms are mentioned earlier, specifically, image schemas (Lakoff,1987); Hampe, 2005); domain (Langacker, 1987); frame (Fillmore, 1982); mental space (Fauconnier, 1994). Then, Kövecses combines them in a certain relationship to create the schematicity-based hierarchy which can be represented as a series of inclusions, as in the figure below:



In the figure, IS stands for image schema. According to Lakoff (1987), Image schemas are essential conceptual structures which imbue experience with meaning. Additionally, Hampe (2005) reveals several features of image schemas: (1) directly meaningful preconceptual structures; (2) highly schematic gestalts; (3) continuous analogue patterns; (4) internally structured, consisting of only a few parts. As regards the characteristic, Kövecses remarks as follows:

Because of their highly schematic nature, image schemas range over the entire conceptual system making a wide variety of concepts and experiences meaningful. (2020, p.53)

DM refers to domain matrix which is defined as “Domain A coherent area of conceptualization relative to which semantic units may be characterized.” (Langacker, 1987, p.488). In a highly schematic fashion, domains are propositional in nature. In other words, they're right below the image schemas that create domains. In the concept of a domain matrix, the various image schemas relate to distinct aspects or dimensions of a domain. Thus, domains have more parts, and are more information-rich than image schemas.

Frames (FR), according to Fillmore (1982), are less schematic conceptual structures than domains. The difference between a domain and a frame is the very difference in schematicity between them. In detail, frames elaborate particular aspects of a domain matrix. It means that domains include frame which seems to involve more conceptually specific information than domains. The BODY domain, for example, can be understood as being elaborated by multiple distinct frames, including PERCEPTION, INGESTION, and EXERCISING (Sullivan, 2013).

Finally, as regards mental space, Fauconnier defines “Mental space are very partial assemblies constructed as we think and talk, for purposes of local understanding and action.” (2007, p.351). Mental spaces do, in fact, take their structure from frames; nevertheless, the basic structures are further extended by contextual information. Obviously, mental spaces are more specific than frames although, in fact, they can be structured by one or several different frames. Accordingly, mental spaces can be the realizations of a single frame, and rely on a combination of roles and relations from a number of distinct frames. In brief, image schemas, domains, frames, and mental spaces are all used by conceptualizers or speakers to organize and cohere our experiences. (Kövecses, 2020, p.54)

3 Research methods

3.1 Data Collection

The data of metaphors of season came from English and Vietnamese song lyrics from the 20th century onward from several sources, namely, Internet-based records, CD/DVD-based records, and printed publications. Therefore, prior to the data collection process, the two corpora of songs with lexical items about seasons in English and in Vietnamese were compiled. A great number of song lyrics containing the

words related to the concept of season have been written in English from the 20th century to present. However, to make sure that the songs in the English corpus were written in the composers' native language, the bio data of the authors was searched and scanned to make sure the song composers were born and grew up in the English - speaking countries in the Inner Circle of the three-circle model of world Englishes (Kachru, 1985), including the USA, the UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The Vietnamese corpus was created from song lyrics written by well-known composers who were also born and raised in Vietnam. As an English-Vietnamese comparative and contrastive study, the number of songs in English and Vietnamese are 189 and 200 respectively. From these two corpora, the metaphorical expressions related to seasons in the song lyrics were then taken as data for this study.

3.2 Research Design

With the assistance of general methods: qualitative and quantitative ones, descriptive and comparative methods are deployed to analyze the data. In this study, the data collected is described to set up a foundation for analysis, interpretation, and explanation. Namely, The mechanism of using, interpreting, and explaining metaphorical expressions and conceptual metaphors of season in English and Vietnamese song lyrics was explained after metaphorical expressions (linguistic metaphors) and conceptual metaphors related to season were identified, semantic and cognitive factors were described. Furthermore, in this study, the comparative approach is mostly used to examine the conceptual metaphors of season in order to determine their similarities and differences between the two languages.

4 Results and Discussion

It is reported that space is one of the most important basic conceptual domains of human thinking, and our linguistic - spatial systems are complementary (Haspelmath, 1997; Landau, 2010). Similarly, Lakoff (1993) ever states that “time is conceptualized in terms of space” (p.216). In the same way, it is discovered from the two sets of data that the dominant conceptualization SEASON IS SPACE is transferable across the two languages. However, the metaphor in English predominates that in Vietnamese. Precisely, the number of English expressions is 172, over doubling that in Vietnamese, with 72 expressions. Followed Hernández's (2001) classification for the metaphor TIME IS SPACE, with the two subdomains, i.e., location and path, SEASON here is conceptualized as these two domains.

4.1 Location

According to MWD, location is “a position or site occupied or available for occupancy or marked by some distinguishing feature”. The data reveal that a great number of the properties relating to location are applied comprehensively in both languages when they are employed to express SEASON. Some linguistic instantiations are analysed in English as follows:

- (1) *How I'd **leave in** autumn I never will know. (Lerner, If Ever I Would Leave You)*
- (2) *We **began at** the very first spring. (Jones, Face to Face)*
- (3) *72The wild goose **flies from** winter. (Vliet, Steal Softly Through Snow)*
- (4) ***Keep an eye on** summer. (Norman, Keep an Eye on Summer)*
- (5) *I thought the cold would **leave by** summer. (Wonder, Never Dreamed You'd Leave in Summer)*

The above sentences containing the preposition such as in, at, from, and on evoke the image of SEASON as a location, a point in space. Specifically, in the (1), the preposition in which is used to “indicate location or position within limits” (MWD), refers to the leaving action which happens in autumn. It means that here

TIME in general, SEASON, in particular, is structured as space. By the same token, the preposition at in (2), which is defined “used to show an exact position or particular place” by CALD, or “used as a function word to indicate presence or occurrence in, on, or near” by MWD proves SPRING here can be understood as a certain position compared to other entities within certain space. Additionally, the expression (3) with the word from, whose function “to indicate a starting point of a physical movement” in literal meaning, gives rise to WINTER conceptualization as a location as well. In fact, normally, the wild goose does fly from a place to another place. Nonetheless, the lexeme denoting time (WINTER) here is used in lieu of the one related to place. Likewise, the preposition on, according to MWD, “used as a function word to indicate position in contact with and supported by the top surface of” is borrowed to combine with the word of time, i.e., SUMMER in (4). It can be inferred that SUMMER is interpreted as a location, similar to the season in (5).

Like in English, SEASON conceptualization through a location in space is applicable in Vietnamese. Surprisingly, there are a number of prepositions used in English corpus, i.e., at, in, on, by while only one preposition - trong ‘in’- is deployed in Vietnamese. Even in terms of frequency, trong is exploited much less in Vietnamese, compared to in in English, with 8 and 102 times of appearance respectively. Take the expression: (6) Dòng nước mắt trong mùa đông (Lam Phương, Chờ) ‘tears in winter’ as an illustrated example. It is apparent that mùa đông ‘winter’ is an abstract entity which cannot actually contain anything and cannot be a landmark for another thing as well. However, in (6) mùa đông ‘winter’ becomes a ground for dòng nước mắt ‘tears’. Accordingly, it can be identified the position of dòng nước mắt in space thanks to mùa đông, considered as a landmark, even a container.

Beside single prepositions as noted earlier, complex prepositions are also deployed to depict the entity SEASON in English, which is not found in Vietnamese, as in some examples:

(7) *In the **middle** of summer When the moon found the sun. (Urie, When the day met the night)*

(8) *The summer's out of **reach**. (Henley, The boys of summer)*

It is apparent that the nouns middle and reach are used to describe someplace in space. Middle is defined as “the central point, position, or part” (MWD), or “the point or position at an equal distance from the sides, edges, or ends of something” (CALD). In (7) it combines with other prepositions creating the complex preposition ‘in the middle of’ used for entity SUMMER. Consequently, SUMMER in this expression has a central point, which is associated with a location. Similarly, with the meaning of reach “an act of reaching out with one's arm” based on the sense of its verb “stretch out an arm in a specified direction in order to touch or grasp something” (MWD) in the complex preposition ‘out of reach’, it can be concluded that SUMMER is not reached like in (8) when conceptualized as a concrete thing in a specific space.

It is noticeable that SEASON is metaphorically understood as a location through the senses of some directional nouns such as end in English, đầu, cuối in Vietnamese, as follows:

(9) *Since you've been gone, **end of the season**. (Davies, End of the season)*

(10) ***End of the spring** and here she comes back. (Stewart, hot fun in the summertime)*

(11) *Cái rét đầu đông khăn em bay hiu hiu gió lạnh. (Trương Quý Hải, Hà Nội mùa vắng những cơn mưa)*
In the coldness of first end (early) of winter, my scarf is flying with cold wind’

(12) *Tình nào ngờ vội phai như mây hồng cuối hạ. (Nguyễn Thanh Cảnh, Mây hồng cuối hạ)*
Love fades like a pink cloud at the end of summer’

End, đầu ‘initiating end’ and cuối ‘finishing end’ indicate position of something in space with two points. Accordingly, the phrases end of the season, end of the spring, đầu đông, and cuối hạ imply that SEASON

has two points. In other words, a concrete object as a landmark in space is used to map onto the entity SEASON, resulting in the metaphor SEASON IS LOCATION. Moreover, to show the central point of SEASON, in addition to the complex preposition in the middle of exploited as noted earlier, adjectives are applicable in the metaphorical expressions of season as location in English, too. Whereas, Vietnamese mainly use nouns for this figuration, as shown in these examples:

- (13) *Cùng hành quân giữa mùa xuân. (Cẩm La, Cùng hành quân giữa mùa xuân)*
'March **in the middle** of spring'
- (14) *Lá mùa thu rơi rụng giữa mùa đông. (Trịnh Công Sơn, Tôi ơi đừng tuyệt vọng)*
'Autumn leaves fall **in the middle** of winter'
- (15) *All week long a **mid-summer** dream. (Duke, Laid Back Sunday)*

As can be seen in (13) and (14), the phrases giữa mùa xuân, giữa mùa đông, could bring hearers ideas about the positions where the marchers and the autumn leaves are located. Similarly, a mid-summer in (15) evokes someplace in which the agent of action is present.

Moreover, to show the position correlation between concrete objects and the entity SEASON, the adverbs of place ahead and behind are discovered in the English data, with the frequencies of 2 and 7 times respectively. According to MWD, ahead means "further forward in space; in the line of one's forward motion". And behind is defined as "at or to the far side or the back side of something". The deployment of ahead and behind in SEASON AS LOCATION metaphors can be elaborated via some illustrated instances below:

- (16) *But the spring is close **behind**. (Jones, Seasons of My Heart)*
- (17) *Spring **ahead** or fall **behind**. (Brennan, You Can Never Hold Back Spring)*

The expressions prove that spring in (16) and fall in (17) are located at the back side of others. In other words, there is another corporeal entity in front of these seasons. In contrast, spring in (17) is in front of something concrete by virtue of the sense of the adverb ahead.

In addition, people also utilize several adjectives or adverbs denoting distance such as far, close, and nigh in English, xa, xa xôi, xa vời in Vietnamese, like in the following examples:

- (18) *Till summer is **nigh**. (Fischer, If spring never comes)*
- (19) *Summer's not too **far away**. (Huff, Spring again)*
- (20) *Như mùa đông **xa xôi**. (Phan Huyền Diệu, Em như áng mây)*
'Like winter is far away'
- (21) *Vì mình xa nhau nên xuân vẫn mãi **xa vời** chốn nao. (Quốc Dũng, Em đã thấy mùa xuân chưa)*
'Because we are far apart, spring is still so far away'

It is obvious that the senses of nigh and far away, xa xôi and xa vời in the above expressions evoke the image of the location of a concrete object which is used to portray summer in (18) and (19), mùa đông 'winter' in (20), and mùa xuân 'spring' in (21), which are the concepts of SEASON.

4.2 Path

In fact, the metaphor TIME IS A PATH has been found by a number of linguists (Langacker, 2008a; Talmy, 2000b; Moore, 2006; etc.). In the data of this study, SEASON is conceptualized as a PATH (one-dimensional space) in both languages. This conceptualization is manifested via the senses of adjectives and prepositions, i.e., long, through in English, dài 'long' in Vietnamese as in the sentences below:

- (22) *It will last **through** the summer and winter too. (Tanner, Evergreen)*
- (23) *Keep me alive **through** the spring. (Watkins, Through the Spring)*
- (24) ***Long** winter's grey and cold. (Edwards, Sweet Summer Blue and Gold)*

- (25) *Mùa hạ dài như thở*
'Summer is as long as breathing
Cùng khói trời mênh mông. (Nguyễn Ngọc Thiện, Tình khúc tháng ba)
with immense smoke in the sky.'
- (26) *Để thu vàng dài mãi chẳng mùa đông. (Bùi Quang Ân, Thu đời người)*
'The golden autumn is long forever without winter.'

Noticeably, the preposition through, whose meaning is 'from one end or side of something to the other' (CALD), is popularly used in English, with 15 times of appearance in the English data set to depict the SEASON entity as a PATH. For example, in (22) and (23) the actors, metaphorically understood, are moving from one end of summer, winter and spring to the other end. In other words, the seasons are treated as a road on which the moving objects are traveling. The investigation into the two data set reveals that this conceptualization is existent in English, yet it is not applicable in Vietnamese. Furthermore, long in English and dài in Vietnamese are exploited a lot as in the expressions from (24) to (25). Specifically, long winter, mùa hạ dài, thu vàng dài mãi evoke the image of concrete objects which can be measured in space. Specifically, winter, mùa hạ, thu here are considered as long paths.

Intriguingly, as noticed above, TIME IS A PATH (one-dimensional space) has been found as a conventional metaphor. However, the data uncover SEASON, which is relevant to TIME, is portrayed as two-dimensional space in English, and three-dimensional space in Vietnamese. It can be illustrated in the expressions below:

- (27) *It's gonna be a long, hot summer, we should be together. (Marx, Long Hot Summer)*
- (28) *Summer turns to high. (Buck, Summer Turns to High)*

As can be seen in (27), the adjective long is the attribute for summer, which gives rise to the length of summer. In addition, the sense of high in (28) implies that summer here is perceived as something whose height can be physically measured. As consequence, summer in two sentences is considered as an object with two dimensions: length and height. Especially, it is clear in the Vietnamese data set that Vietnamese people conceive season with its three dimensions:

- (29) *Vườn Xuân là Xuân có hoa ngày mai hát Xuân thật dài. (Phạm Duy, Xuân ca)*
'Spring garden is spring with flowers, tomorrow sing the long spring'
- (30) *Chiều lạc loài đã xuống với thu mênh mông. (Thanh Trang, Tiếc Thu)*
'The afternoon is down with immense autumn'
- (31) *Mùa thu xưa ấy quá bao la yêu thương vời vợi. (Anh Bằng, Lời tình băng giá)*
'That old autumn was too immense, love was far-fetched.'
- (32) *Mùa Đông vời vợi (Trịnh Công Sơn, Gọi tên bốn mùa)*
'Winter is faraway.'
- (33) *Xuân lên cao, chót xuân buông nhìn xuống sâu (Phạm Duy, Xuân ca)*
'Spring climbs high, spring looks down deeply.'

Like expression (29) points that spring is a corporeal object people can physically investigate via its length by the meaning of dài 'long'. Moreover, mênh mông, bao la in (30, 31) mean "immense, or vast" used to depict AUTUMN. In other words, autumn here is viewed as a very large space like field, sea, etc. Similarly, the phrases đông vời vợi, xuân lên cao also point the height of xuân 'spring' in (32), and the height or depth

of đông ‘winter’ in (33). In short, SEASON is also conceptualized as concrete entity in a three-dimensional space as summarized in the following synthesized table below:

Three-dimensional space	season
Length	dài ‘long’
Width	bao la, mênh mông, mênh mang ‘immense, vast’
Height	cao, vời vợi

5 Conclusions

In the light of the CMT, 244 expressions of metaphor season, 317 times of appearance have been identified and collected from 854 English and Vietnamese lyrics of songs. The data analysis is based on the frameworks suggested by Steen (2011). The qualitative method of CMA is used to code the data manually to identify the metaphors of season. Subsequently, they are quantified to assist the process of comparing and contrasting between the two languages. Accordingly, the findings show that the SEASON metaphor from space domain is widely applied in both English and Vietnamese like above discussion, which is in line with Fauconnier and Turner’s remark (2002):

Time as space is a deep metaphor for all human beings. It is common across cultures, psychologically real, productive, and profoundly entrenched in thought and language (as cited in Gibbs, JR, 2008, p.55).

Obviously, it can be concluded that in terms of SEASON treated as SPACE, the conceptual metaphors of season are conventional. Similarly, regarding schematicity hierarchy (Kövecses, 2020), the subtypes of metaphor SEASON AS SPACE: SEASON IS LOCATION and SEASON IS A PATH belong to the high schematic level, namely image schema, and domain.

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