A CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR MEN ARE OBJECTS IN VIETNAMESE AND AMERICAN LITERATURE OF THE 20th CENTURY

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Abstract:
This Article Compares The Conceptual Metaphor MEN ARE OBJECTS In Vietnamese And American Literary Works Of The 20th Century In Order To Find Out The Similarities And Differences Of This Metaphor In The Two Languages. This Conceptual Metaphor Is Divided Into Five Categories, Including MEN ARE TYPES OF OBJECTS; MEN'S APPEARANCE IS SHAPE OF OBJECTS, MEN'S CHARACTERISTICS ARE CHARACTERISTICS OF OBJECTS, MEN'S ACTIVITIES ARE STATES OF OBJECTS, And ACTIVITIES WITH MEN ARE ACTIVITIES WITH OBJECTS. The Results Show That OBJECTS Is A Common Source Domain In Both Research Data. In Terms Of Mapping, There Is A Remarkable Similarity In The Mapping Mechanism Shown In The Corresponding Categories Of Conceptual Metaphors In The Two Languages. However, In Terms Of Quantity, The Number Of Conceptual Expressions And Their Equivalent Occurrences Is Much Higher In The English Data Compared To Vietnamese One.
Key Words: *Conceptual Metaphor; Target Domain; Source Domain; Men; Object*

I. Introduction

In the domain of language, OBJECTS are one of the fundamental conceptual domains which was formed early and provides humans with a lot of embodied experiences. In fact, objects are produced and used by humans in their daily life, so they provide rich knowledge for human perception of the world. Within the scope of this study, the author examines the conceptual metaphor MEN ARE OBJECTS in Vietnamese and American literature of the 20th century to find out the similarities and differences in the use of this conceptual metaphor in the two languages which result from different cultures and national thinking of the two nations.

II. Materials and Methods

Research Methods:

Quantitative and qualitative research methods are used in combination with the following specific techniques and methods: statistical methods, descriptive methods, comparative and contrastive methods, and discourse analysis methods. In addition, this is an interdisciplinary research which utilizes knowledge from various scientific disciplines combined with knowledge of language to identify the characteristics of conceptual metaphors about men in the two research data.

Research Materials:

The research examines Vietnamese and American literary works written in the 20th century. As literature is a broad research field, this article is limited to investigating genre of prose, including short stories and novels. To ensure representativeness, works by various authors composed in the early, middle, and late 20th century are selected. The total numbers of pages of all literary works in the two research data are nearly equal (Vietnamese: 3698 pages; English: 3688 pages). Vietnamese literary works are encoded from V01 to V06, and English works are encoded from A01 to A06. Specifically, the following literary works are used in the research: *Tuyển tập truyện ngắn Nam Cao*, Nam Cao (V01); *Cửa biển,* Nguyen Hong (V02); *Nắng đồng bằng*, Chu Lai (V03); *Thời xa vắng*, Le Luu (V04); *Nỗi buồn chiến tranh*, Bao Ninh (V05), *100 truyện ngắn hay Việt Nam thế kỷ XX*, Volume 1 (V06); *Light in August*, William Faulkner (A01); *Gone with the Wind*, Margaret Mitchell (A02); *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Harper Lee (A03); *Rage of Angels*, Sidney Sheldon (A04); *100 Years of the Best*

American Short Stories, Lorrie Moore, Heidi Pitlor & Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (A05); *The Best American Short Stories of the Century*, John Updike & Katrina Kenison (A06).

III. Theoretical Background

Definition of Conceptual Metaphor

In 1980, Lakoff and Johnson defined conceptual metaphor as "*the understanding of one conceptual domain in terms of another conceptual domain, or the systematical mapping from one domain to another to establish a cognitive model that facilitates the effective acquisition of knowledge in the target domain*" (6, p.5). Typically, we rely on our experience of specific people, objects, and phenomena in the source domain to conceptualize more abstract notions in the target domain. Thus, in the most general sense, conceptual metaphor involves understanding a particular conceptual or mental domain (the target domain) through another one (the source domain) based on cross-domain mappings.

Characteristics of Conceptual Metaphor

Conceptual metaphor exhibits the following six fundamental characteristics:

1) Systematicity

According to Lakoff and Johnson, conceptual metaphors interact with each other to form relatively complex systems (6, p.8). Because the metaphorical concept is systematic, the language we use to talk about that aspect of the concept is systematic. For example, in the conceptual metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR, expressions from the vocabulary of war such as *strategy, victory, defense, attack*, etc. form a systematic way of talking about the battling aspects of arguing.

2) Stratification

Concepts do not exist in isolation but are hierarchical. This hierarchy can be imagined as a structure from superior ideas to subordinate ones. Hierarchy organizes conceptual metaphors according to a hierarchical structure, where conceptual metaphors at a lower level inherit the structure of higher-level ones. For example, the conceptual metaphor ACTION IS DIRECTED MOTION has three levels of stratification: level 1 is this metaphor, level 2 is the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY, and level 3 is the metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY.

3) Unidirectionality

Conceptual metaphors are inherently unidirectional, meaning they map the structure from the source domain onto the target domain and there is no reverse direction. For example, LOVE is conceived as JOURNEY, but JOURNEY cannot be conceptualized in terms of LOVE.

4) Highlighting and hiding

Hawkins argues that metaphor "*directs our attention to specific aspects of an experience while diverting us from other aspects of the same experience*" (3, p.149). The act of focusing on describing certain aspects is called highlighting, while obscuring other aspects is called hiding. For example, the conceptual metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR highlights the confrontational aspect and obscures the aspect of process and organization of the argument (*He won the argument, I couldn't defeat that viewpoint*). Conversely, with the conceptual metaphor ARGUMENT IS A JOURNEY, the process and organization aspects are highlighted while the confrontational aspect is hidden, as in the example *We will move forward step by step*.

5) Universality

Lakoff and Johnson argue that conceptual metaphors are universal because they reflect the cognitive process based on embodied experiences, so although there are cultural differences among languages, conceptual metaphors do not seem to be different (6). Kövecses also asserts that "*universal experiences give rise to universal metaphors*" (5, p.3).

A good example of this is the emotional conceptual metaphor. In 2002, Kövecses investigated the concept of HAPPINESS in English, Hungarian, and Chinese (4, p.195). He concluded that these languages are completely different in terms of morphology and represent different cultures, yet they have the same perception of the concept of HAPPINESS. Specifically, all three languages perceive HAPPY IS UP, HAPPINESS IS LIGHT, and HAPPINESS IS LIQUID IN A CONTAINER. These universal basic metaphors are based on universal physical experiences related to happiness, that is, when people are happy, they tend to jump up, have a positive mood, glittering eyes, and the blood pressure in their body increases.

6) Cultural variability

Deignan et al. argue that some conceptual metaphors may be universal, but there is no completely similar system of conceptual metaphors in two languages or cultures (2). Conceptual metaphors are culturally specific mainly due to the differences in ways of perceiving and experiencing the surrounding world from different perspectives such as context (including physical environment, social environment, communication situation, physical condition), history (social history, personal history), interests and benefits (individual and group).

IV. Results

The conceptual metaphor MEN ARE OBJECTS is formed when the source domain OBJECTS is projected onto the target domain MEN, so men have the attributes of objects. The numbers of metaphorical linguistic expressions and their occurrences of the five subcategories of the conceptual metaphor MEN ARE OBJECTS are shown in the following table:

Table 4.1. Statistical data on five subcategories of the conceptual metaphor MEN ARE OBJECTS

Attributes	Vietnamese data		American data	
	Number of metaphorical linguistic expressions	Number of occurrences	Number of metaphorical linguistic expressions	Number of occurrences
Types of objects	20	22	25	30
Shape of objects	12	17	35	44
Characteristics of objects	29	35	35	56
States of objects	9	9	21	25
Activities with objects	38	48	50	66
Total	**108**	**131**	**166**	**221**

The prominent attributes of the source domain OBJECT are utilized to project onto the target domain MEN, as demonstrated in the mapping diagram below:

Table 4.2. The mapping mechanism of the conceptual metaphor MEN ARE OBJECTS

Source domain: THINGS		Target domain: MEN
Types of objects	→	Men
Shape of objects	→	Men's appearance
Characteristics of objects	→	Men's characteristics
States of objects	→	Men's activities
Activities with objects	→	Activities with men

The conceptual metaphor MEN ARE OBJECTS in Vietnamese literature

Vietnamese people have incorporated personal experiences of familiar objects from daily lives into their language, partially reflecting their way of thinking and culture. The results show that there are 108 linguistic expressions containing the concept of MEN ARE OBJECTS with 131 uses in Vietnamese data. Based on men's distinct aspects such as appearance, characteristics, activities, and states being projected onto, the conceptual metaphor MEN ARE OBJECTS is further divided into 5 subordinate metaphors, which are discussed below:

1) The subordinate conceptual metaphor MEN ARE TYPES OF OBJECTS

Among the 108 metaphorical linguistic expressions found in Vietnamese data, there are 20 cases of men being comprehended as specific objects which are divided into the following subcategories:

(1) General objects with metaphorical words like *cái tăm* (toothpick), *con rối* (puppet), *cái gương* (mirror), *đinh* (nail), *con thuyền* (boat), *cung* (bow), *vật* (object), *bình phong* (screen);

(2) Worthless objects: *đồ phế thải* (waste), *đồ bỏ đi* (discarded item), *giẻ rách* (rags), *rác rưởi* (rubbish);

(3) Valuable objects: *báu vật* (treasure);

(4) Goods: *gói quà* (gift package), *món hàng* (goods), *bán thành phẩm* (semi-finished product);

(5) Building constructions: *tượng đá* (stone statue).

When men are considered as objects, everything related to him has object attributes. For example:

(1) *Mình <u>hết xài</u>, mình là <u>đồ bỏ</u> rồi sao? Không! Không thể như vậy! Hãy trả tôi về với tiểu đoàn! Tôi còn... Tôi sẽ... Linh đứng bật dậy, nhưng ngay lúc đó, như có một thanh sắt phang vào gáy, anh mất đà giụi vào vách hầm.* [V03]

(*I'm <u>out of use</u>, am I just a <u>discarded item</u>? No! I can't stand this! Let me come back to my battalion! I am still... I will... Linh stood up, but at that moment, feeling as if an iron bar had hit the back of his neck, he lost his balance and leaned against the wall of the bunker.*)

(2) *Thật vậy, trong lúc Đờvanhxy ngắm nhìn ông ký Thái mà suy nghĩ và tưởng rằng ông ký Thái vừa là một đối tượng bằng xương bằng thịt thụ động trước mặt y, một <u>con rối</u> cho y <u>tung giật</u>.* [V02]
(*Indeed, while Devanhxy was looking at Mr. Thai, he imagined him being a passive man of flesh and blood, a <u>puppet controlled</u> by him.*)

(3) *Giữa sống chết thì sống bao giờ cũng khó khăn hơn và gây phiền cho mọi người xung quanh hơn. Đằng này Tự lại sống dở. Là cái thứ <u>bán thành phẩm</u>, khi trở về, cũng vẫn là <u>cái của</u> dở dở ương ương như thế.* [V06]
(*Between living and death, living is always more difficult and causes more trouble. Tự is just half alive. Being a <u>semi-finished product</u>, when returning home, he is still an incomplete <u>thing</u>.*)

In the above examples, men are regarded as worthless objects (*out of use, discarded item*), objects in general (*puppet, being controlled*) and goods (*semi-finished product, incomplete thing*) and are conceptualized through the functional property of each item. For example, the metaphorical expression *discarded item* refers to a person who is no longer valuable to the group and at work like a *discarded item* due to its lack of utility (1). In example (2), a man who has no personal opinions and is easily controlled by others is depicted as a *puppet* - an inanimate object being controlled by humans in puppetry art. In the final example, a *semi-finished product* is a product that has only been processed in some steps of the manufacturing procedure but is not yet ready for consumption. When envisioned as an unfinished product, a man is regarded to be imperfect, just like an unfinished product of the Creator. These metaphoric expressions express the speaker's negative attitudes and perceptions towards the addressed man.

2) The subordinate conceptual metaphor MEN'S APPEARANCE IS SHAPE OF OBJECTS

In Vietnamese data, 12 metaphorical linguistic expressions belonging to this subordinate group were found. The metaphor reflects Vietnamese's perception of men's physical appearance through familiar objects in their daily lives. Some parts of a man's body such as *face, eye, chin, shoulder, and hand* are perceived through typical attributes of objects' structure and shape. The following example clearly illustrates this:

(4) *Thanh sin sít hàm răng, hất cái <u>cằm lưỡi cày</u>....* [V02]
(*Thanh closed his teeth, pushed out his <u>plowshare-shaped chin</u>...*)

The image of a plowshare, a tool often used in farming to increase productivity is a common one. From the shape of a plowshare, we can imagine a man with a chin whose lower jaw protrudes more than usual, causing the face to deviate from the normal standard. This is a projection from the shape of the object onto the face of the man. This conceptual metaphor belongs to the category of image metaphors.

The concept of men is also metaphorically structured by components of a construction such as *pillar, lift pole, or supporting framework*, as seen in examples (5) and (6) below. Hoang Phe defines a *pillar* or *lift pole* as "*a large, sturdy column used to support heavy objects*" (1, p.295). A pillar or lift pole plays a crucial role in keeping a construction stable preventing it from collapsing during strong shocks. From this, we can infer the important role of men in society as well as in the family, where they shoulder the financial responsibility and ensure emotional security for all family members.

(5) *Bắt đầu từ ngày Dương trở nên một cầu thủ <u>cột trụ</u> của lớp tôi này, tất cả những cái gì hờn ghen của tôi, trước kia biến mất đổi mau thành mến chuộng, gắn bó và ca tụng.* [V06]
(*Since the day Dương became a <u>pillar</u> player in our class, all my previous envy has quickly turned into admiration, attachment, and praise.*)

(6) *Người đàn ông trong nhà dù đần độn ngu si đến đâu cũng vẫn là <u>cái cột cái</u> định đoạt mọi việc.* [V04]
(*Regardless of how foolish and stupid the man is at home, he is still the <u>lift pole</u> who decides everything.*)

In examples (5) and (6), there is a mapping from the function of the object to the role of the man to his team and family. There exists a correspondence between the supporting role of a pillar and a man. This demonstrates that correspondence is a prevailing way of thinking of Vietnamese people.

3) The subordinate conceptual metaphor MEN'S CHARACTERISTICS ARE CHARACTERISTICS OF OBJECTS

29 metaphorical expressions used 35 times were found in the Vietnamese data. Distinctive features of the source domain OBJECTS are utilized to structure concepts related to men's characteristics. In this conceptual metaphor, men and their life are metaphorically described as objects using metaphorical words such as *cứng* (hard*)*, *sắc* (sharp*)*, *cùn (*blunt*)*, *mòn (*worn*)*, *nặng* (heavy*)*, *nhẹ* (light*)*, *ràn rạn* (cracked*)*, *rỗng* (empty*)*, *dễ vỡ* (fragile*)*, *gỉ (*rusty*)*, *mục (*rotten*)*, *mốc (*mouldy*)*; as an item: *ế ẩm (*unsold*)*, *out of use* (hết xài) or as a machine: *hư hỏng (*broken*)*, *hư hại (*damaged*)*. Expressions with negative connotations dominate this metaphor subcategory (21 instances), for example:

(7) *Đời y sẽ <u>mốc lên</u>, sẽ <u>gỉ đi</u>, sẽ <u>mòn</u>, sẽ <u>mục</u> ra ở một xó nhà quê.* [V01]
(*His life will become <u>mouldy</u>, <u>rusty</u>, <u>worn</u> and <u>rotten</u> in a remote countryside*.)
(8) *Thực tình hắn chỉ lo mình bị <u>ế ẩm</u> trong thời gian tới. Đã từ lâu rồi chẳng ma nào <u>thuê</u> hay để mắt đến hắn.* [V06]
(*In fact, he only worries about himself becoming <u>unsold</u> in the near future. Nobody has <u>rented</u> or paid attention to him for a long time.*)
(9) *Ở những người như hắn, chịu đựng biết bao nhiêu là chất độc, đầy đọa cực nhọc mà chưa bao giờ ốm, một trận ốm có thể gọi là dấu hiệu báo rằng cơ thể đã <u>hư hỏng</u> nhiều.* [V01]
(*For people like him, after enduring countless toxins and arduous sufferings without ever getting sick, a single illness can be seen as a sign of his body being severely <u>broken</u>.*)

Men are negatively perceived in all three above examples. In the first instance, *mouldy, rusty, worn* and *rotten* express states of deterioration and wear-and-tear of objects, which helps readers understand that this man is leading a meaningless, boring life in a remote area. In example (8), the man is considered to be a commodity that can be *rented*, and become *unsold* and unnoticed when there is no demand for him. In this case, the value of the man is measured by the value of an item. In the final example, the man's body is conceptualized as a machine, so the machine's *broken* state corresponds to his health collapse and the inability to perform normal physiological functions. All these metaphors are structured based on the similarity of functions between objects and men. Similar attributes are used to perceive men, making the concept of man more explicit.

4) The subordinate conceptual metaphor MEN'S ACTIVITIES ARE STATES OF OBJECTS

Each object serves a specific function and within the cognitive linguistic domain, states of objects are used to describe corresponding activities of men, creating interesting metaphorical expressions. This is the least common subcategory with nine metaphorical expressions describing the following states:

(1) States of general objects: *tròng trành* (tossed), *bong tuột* (flaky), *vỡ* (broken);
(2) States of machines: *nguội điện* (powered off);
(3) States of building constructions: *nổ tung* (exploded), *rung chuyển* (shattering), *sụp đổ* (collapsed).

For example:
(10) *Sợ thằng Tây cậu đóng kịch, mấy người lực lưỡng trong bọn liền lôi xền xệch nó đi. Ra đến cây duối ngoài cuối đầm, gí đèn soi, thì thấy nó trợn ngược mắt lên và <u>nguội điện</u> thật.* [V02]
(*For fear of being tricked by the Western guy, a few muscular guys immediately dragged him away. When they arrived at the streblus at the end of the pond and shone a flashlight, they saw his eyes roll up. He was really <u>powered off</u>.*)
(11) *Hắn <u>sụp đổ</u>, không gì có thể chữa lành trái tim hắn nữa, một trái tim bị tấm giấy nhám <u>chà xát</u> lên đầu quả tim, không đau đớn nhưng rất khó chịu.* [V05]
(*He <u>collapsed</u>, and nothing could heal his heart anymore, a heart <u>rubbed</u> with sandpaper, painless but very uncomfortable*).

In example (10), the state of a machine being inactive is projected onto the death. A machine or electronic device cannot operate if it is disconnected from a power source and this attribute of non-operation, when mapped onto the target domain, helps us understand that the mentioned male character died. Similarly, the man's mental breakdown and disappointment is metaphorically conveyed through the image of a *collapsed* construction work and a *rubbed* heart (example 11).

5) The subordinate conceptual metaphor ACTIVITIES WITH MEN ARE ACTIVITIES WITH OBJECTS

This is the most common subgroup in the Vietnamese data, with 38 conceptual metaphors being structured from metaphorical lexical units indicating human impacts on objects, such as *gột (*wash*)*, *tẩy rửa*

(clean), xoá (erase), nhổ (pull out), quét (sweep), xé (tear), nghiền nát (grind), lái (drive), vứt bỏ (discard), tiện (lathe), gọt (peel), rèn đúc (cast), hút (suck), bán (sell), trao đổi (exchange), buôn (trade), chuộc (redeem), mất (lose), nắm (grasp), chiếm (occupy), đánh sập (demolish), tháo rời (dismantle), and *hao phí (waste).* The mentioned interactive activities, when being attributed to the male character, do not occur exactly in accordance with the physical nature of objects, but indirectly reveal information about the circumstance, identity of the man, and the attitude of the agent performing the action. Let's consider the following examples:

(12) *Vẫn tưởng một người vai về như Năm Thọ mà thất cơ lỡ vận đến nỗi tội tù làm gì còn dám vác cái mặt mo về làng? Lý Kiến mừng thầm rằng đã* nhổ *được* cây đinh *trước mắt. Nào ngờ một buổi tối Lý Kiến đang ngồi một mình soạn giấy má thì Năm Thọ vác dao xộc vào.* [V01]
(*Năm Thọ - a powerful but unfortunate person - was thought to lack the courage to return to his hometown. Lý Kiến secretly rejoiced that he had* pulled out *this* nail. *Unexpectedly, one evening while Lý Kiến was sitting alone filing papers, Năm Thọ barged in with a knife.*)
(13) *Hương đã đến với anh như từ trên trời, Hương đến ban cho anh sự linh thiêng của tình yêu rồi lại Hương, tự Hương* vứt bỏ *anh không thương tiếc.* [V04]
(*Hương came to him as if having fallen from the sky and gave him a sacred love. But then it was Hương who* discarded *him mercilessly.*)

In metaphorical expression (12), when perceived through the image of a *nail*, a man can be *pulled out* and this deed corresponds to the action of killing him. In the following example, the act of *discarding* the man implies that this male character is no longer valuable to the woman, just like a *discarded* item having no value to the user. This perception is based on the presumption that an object will be discarded when it is no longer needed.

The conceptual metaphor MEN ARE OBJECTS in American literature
In the data of American literature, the conceptual metaphor MEN ARE OBJECTS is clearly and prominently depicted, showing distinct characteristics of American culture. Numerous expressions related to this metaphor were found, with a total of 166 metaphorical linguistic expressions and 221 uses. These expressions can be categorized into 5 subordinate groups, which are discussed as follows:

1) The subordinate conceptual metaphor MEN ARE TYPES OF OBJECTS
In language, objects are an extremely familiar concept closely associated with human daily life, making it a prominent domain in the surveyed literary works. 25 cases in American English where men are metaphorically conceptualized as various types of objects were identified. Based on the value and function of these objects, the metaphorical expressions can be grouped as follows:

(1) General objects, with examples like *appendage, fixture, bag, scarecrow, mask, card, pawn, bottle, magnet, thing, basket;*
(2) Valueless objects: *trash, scum, dreg;*
(3) Valuable objects: *gemstone;*
(4) Goods: *product, canned goods, package;*
(5) Machines: *machinery;*
(6) Building constructions: *wall, rampart.*

In this subgroup, the representation of MEN ARE OBJECTS is more diverse compared to other subgroups. When men are conceived as objects, characteristics of men such as physical appearance, personality, virtues, and abilities are conceptualized through this domain. The following examples illustrate this point:

(14) *Thomas Colfax was becoming an increasingly bothersome* appendage. [A04]
(15) *That* magnet attracts *women of all types. They are* drawn *to him like moths to the flame.* [A06]

In example (14), the typical attributes of the source domain are projected onto the man, allowing us to infer that the man is someone who depends on others as an *appendage*. Similarly, based on the physical ability of a *magnet* to attract iron or mild steel, we can infer that the man mentioned in example (15) holds a strong attraction towards the opposite gender. The mapping mechanism is based on function properties of objects.

2) The subordinate conceptual metaphor MEN'S APPEARANCE IS SHAPE OF OBJECTS
With 35 examples and 44 times of usage, this conceptual metaphor has the second highest frequency in the group of conceptual metaphors MEN ARE OBJECTS. As a specific, tangible experiential domain, the

properties of object composition and shape are selected to map onto a man (either a man as a whole or his body parts). Regarding the body structure, the following parts of a man are projected and mapped from the source domain: *head, face, eye, nose, eyelash, jaw, mustache, hair, hand, shoulder,* and *skin*. The expressions related to the facial parts take up the highest proportion (20 cases). Below is a typical example:

(16) *Afterward, I was blessed by the* <u>*brick-faced*</u> *minister.* [A04]

When the shape of a *brick* in the source domain is activated, it is conceivable that the minister character has a square, angular face which resembles the shape of a brick. The mapping is based on the similarity of the shape of a brick and the man's face. This is a type of image metaphor.

In the subordinate conceptual metaphor MEN'S APPEARANCE IS SHAPE OF OBJECTS, there is also a correspondence among a number of elements in the source domain and the target one. Specifically, parts of objects are projected onto the corresponding parts of men. The following object parts are selected for the mapping process: *veneer, edge, piece, frame, background, pillar, mainspring, electrical current, circuitry, wireend, chip*, and *CPU*. The metaphorical expressions related to circuitry and the central processing unit (CPU) make up the majority (5 cases). For example:

(17) *He felt invaded - as if he had been infected by a self-replicating bug. Something that was iterating and iterating, growing and growing, crowding out everything else in the* <u>*CPU*</u>. [A06]

CPU stands for Central Processing Unit. CPU acts as the brain of a computer where all information and data are stored and commands are given to control all computer activities. In example (17), the *CPU* is a metaphorical image of the brain - a major organ of the nervous system that manages most of the activities of the human body. This conceptual metaphor is formed based on the projection of similarities in function and structure between machines and men's body.

3) The subordinate conceptual metaphor MEN'S CHARACTERISTICS ARE CHARACTERISTICS OF OBJECTS

The number of metaphorical expressions and occurrences of this subordinate conceptual metaphor is 35 and 56, respectively. Based on specific knowledge about the characteristics of objects, Americans have made vivid associations and connections between the domains of objects and men to construct unique and interesting conceptual metaphors. The attributes of objects are projected onto men to form the following subgroups:

(1) General objects with metaphorical words like *cracked, broken, shrink, heavy, frail, brittle = hard = solid, soft, silky, sharply, blunt, rusty*;
(2) Goods: *valuable, scarcity, cheap, expendable, impervious*;
(3) Building constructions: *sagging, impregnable, towering*;
(4) Machines: *wear out.*

When conceived as objects, men have their characteristics. Let's consider the following examples:

(18) *Mr. Tate's was unschooled and* <u>*blunt*</u>. [A03]
(19) *He is a little* <u>*cracked*</u>. [A05]

In examples (18) and (19), the man is depicted through the metaphorical words *blunt*, which literally means "*worn down, not sharp*" (1, p.306), and *cracked*, which literally means "*split into lines, cracks, but not completely separated*" (1, p.981). The negative connotations projected onto the target domain help the readers imagine the characters being referred to as dull or unwise (*blunt*) (18) or cranky (*cracked*) (19).

4) The subordinate conceptual metaphor MEN'S ACTIVITIES ARE STATES OF OBJECTS

To construct this subordinate conceptual metaphor, American writers use 21 metaphorical linguistic expressions 25 times. The man is comprehended in terms of object states. The used expressions can be divided into 3 subgroups:

(1) States of general objects: *float*
(2) States of machines: *run, operate, get into motion, work, send signals, screw around, fizz, leak energy, down, stop working, shut down*;
(3) States of building constructions: *fall apart, shake, close, shut-in.*

Among the 3 subgroups, the one related to the states of machinery outnumbers the others. The two instances listed below demonstrate that both the physical body and the mind of the man are perceived as a machine, hence there are times when they *work rapidly* but also times when they *do not run well*.

(20) *Now it was his head that was clear and his body that would <u>not run well</u>*. [A01]
(21) *His usually slow brain was <u>working rapidly</u>, with an unnatural clarity*. [A04]

The mapping mechanism is based on machine functions, which means that a well-functioning machine is projected onto the man's fast thinking, while a malfunctioning machine implies deteriorating and alarming state of the man's body.

5) The subordinate conceptual metaphor ACTIVITIES WITH MEN ARE ACTIVITIES WITH OBJECTS

With 50 metaphorical linguistic expressions and 66 occurrences, this is the most common subcategory in English. When men are metaphorically characterized as a machine, a range of vocabulary from this field is activated, such as *handle, grease, knit, fix, unmake*. When men are perceived as a commodity, vocabulary related to buying, selling, and production such as *produce, can, wrap, seal, merchandise, sell, pay* is utilized. Similarly, in the case of men being treated as an object, vocabulary associated with the domain of tools and materials is activated, such as *hammer, cut, break, rub, mold, hurl, carry*. For example:

(22) *She longed viciously for sharp words with which to <u>cut</u> him*. [A02]

In this example, *cut* is understood as the action of hurting the man with sharp words, similar to using a sharp knife to cut an object. The metaphorical projection is based on the similarity between a consequence caused by using an object and a negative psychological state of the man. Just as a knife or scissors would cut and cause separation or pain, this reality is reflected in the character's action of *cut him* which means causing emotional pain to him.

5. Discussion

The results of the comparison between the conceptual metaphor MEN ARE OBJECTS in Vietnamese and American literary works are as follows:

In terms of quantity, the source domain OBJECTS provides a rich source of knowledge for understanding and perceiving the target domain MEN. The large number of conceptual metaphors belonging to this category found in both Vietnamese and English data indicates that this is a common source domain in the two languages. However, the results show a significant difference in the number of metaphorical linguistic expressions and their occurrences in the two sets of data. Specifically, the total number of metaphors found in American literary works is 166, which is 1.5 times higher than the figure for Vietnamese literary works. Many metaphors can only be found in English. The number of occurrences also outperforms in the English data (221 cases compared to 131 cases in the Vietnamese data).

In terms of mapping, there is a high similarity in the mapping mechanism, the subtypes of the conceptual metaphor MEN ARE OBJECTS in the two languages. Specifically, at the second level of this metaphor, the concept transfer from the source domain OBJECTS to the target domain MEN is realized through five mappings: types of objects - men; shape of objects - appearance of men; characteristics of objects - characteristics of men; states of objects - activities of men; activities with objects - activities with men.

In terms of culture, the near absolute similarity in the mapping mechanism in the two languages demonstrates the universality of the metaphorical concept. The only difference is that in English, the number of machine metaphors is significantly higher than that of Vietnamese. This can be explained by the fact that the United States is a leading industrialized country in the world, so machinery is a familiar domain for Americans. In contrast, Vietnam is an agricultural country which escaped from war only a few decades ago, leading to a less common use of this source domain in Vietnamese.

VI. Conclusion

The conceptual metaphor MEN ARE OBJECTS has a mapping mechanism from the source domain OBJECTS to the target domain MEN, thereby endowing the man with object characteristics, properties, and states. This mechanism is divided into five subcategories, including MEN ARE TYPES OF OBJECTS; MEN'S APPEARANCE IS SHAPE OF OBJECTS, MEN'S CHARACTERISTICS ARE CHARACTERISTICS OF OBJECTS, MEN'S ACTIVITIES ARE STATES OF OBJECTS, and ACTIVITIES WITH MEN ARE ACTIVITIES WITH OBJECTS. The similarities and differences in the perception of men through the object

domain in the two languages reflect the universality and cultural variations of conceptual metaphors. They also demonstrate the linguistic, cultural, and cognitive characteristics of the perception of men by Vietnamese and American communities.

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