

Conceptual Metaphor Of Life Is A Journey In Nguyen Trong Tao's Poetry

Tran Van Sang, Ph.D

*Corresponding author, Associate Professor,
The University of Danang, University of Science and Education, Danang, Vietnam. No.459 Ton Duc Thang
Street, Lien Chieu District, Danang, Vietnam*

Vo Thi Ha An

Faculty of Philology, The University of Danang, University of Science and Education, Danang, Vietnam

ABSTRACT

From the cognitive linguistic theory, the article studies the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY in Nguyen Trong Tao's poetry. On the basis of the interactions and knowledge of the two conceptual domains, especially the mechanism, the characteristics of the source domain as irradiating to the destination domain, we refer to the similarities in people, starting points, spaces, means, activities, psychological states, obstacles, time, destination associated with the irradiation journey to the destination domain of LIFE are expressed through linguistic expressions. Through studying the organizational process about the mapping schemes of this concept, the article brings readers to new experiences and clarifies the language of Nguyen Trong Tao's poetry. The backgrounds and experiences in the life of the author greatly influenced the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY in his poetry.

Keywords: Conceptual metaphor; life; journey; irradiation; source domain; target domain

Date of Submission: 06-10-2022

Date of Acceptance: 19-10-2022

I. Make a problem

Lakoff and Johnson view and study metaphors through the field of experience and suggesting that metaphor is a cognitive phenomenon rather than a linguistic phenomenon. The metaphorical expressions we encounter in language are what reflect the metaphors that exist at the conceptual level. Metaphor is no longer limited to the use of the word image, comparison but beyond that, metaphor reflects people's mode of creative thinking through a system of concepts, so Lakoff and Johnson call it by another term, "conceptual metaphor."

Conceptual metaphor (also known as cognitive/conceptual metaphor) is "one of the forms of conceptualization, a cognitive process that has the function of expressing and forming new and non-existent concepts. it cannot receive new knowledge... Metaphor is seen as a way of looking at one object through another, and in that sense, metaphor is one of the methods in symbolizing knowledge under linguistic form" [1, 293-294]. Through metaphor, humans know the world including the physical world, the spiritual world and the emotional world. Metaphors are associated with the cultural and spiritual characteristics of native speakers.

The cognitive mechanism of the metaphor includes two source and target domains that exist presupposingly in human's consciousness, in which the attributes of the source domain are mapped and projected onto the target domain. Both source and target domains are concepts, structured according to the field-function model: center-periphery, in which the core kernel is the central concept, universal to all humanity and peripherals are linguistic and national cultural factors, located within a certain cultural "frame" or "background" with specific characteristics.

Conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY established according to the cognitive model that the concept of LIFE is understood through the concept of JOURNEY. It can be seen that the properties of the source domain are irradiated to the target domain LIFE, that is the process by which we understand this concept through another concept - called irradiation. The mapping diagram in the conceptual metaphor structure is a system of correspondences between the elements of the source domain and the target domain. Recognizing and understanding a conceptual metaphor is knowing the mapper applied to a given source- target pair, it can be said that this is a general principle and it is applied a lot in poetry in particular and literature in general. The general structural model of conceptual metaphor is shown in the following diagram:

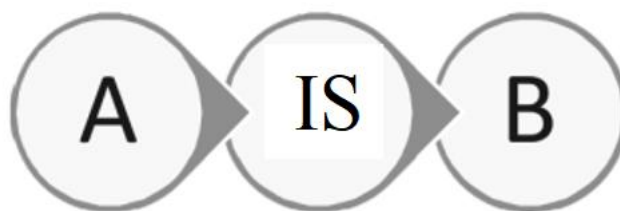


Figure 1: Diagram of conceptual metaphor

According to the diagram above, A is the destination concept, B is the source concept. Thus, a conceptual metaphor consisting of the destination concept is understood through the source concept.

Applying cognitive linguistics theory to Vietnamese practice, cognitive linguists are especially interested in clarifying the structure of conceptual metaphors with different source domains. In particular, the conceptual metaphor with the JOURNEY source domain is considered an effective means for people to aware of the world around and discover themselves. Knowledge of the JOURNEY helps us to perceive, decipher specifically, become the basis for the perception of complex concepts in the spiritual life of Vietnamese people. Strong evidence can be found that the journey is used as a source domain to discover the characteristics and properties of an abstract target domain, in order to express and form new concepts, open up the understanding of Vietnamese people about life and the world.

LIFE is an abstract, general, and broad concept. Life can be understood as the process of living a person's life from birth to death, in that process there are many events that take place in succession, interwoven with joys, sorrows, happiness, difficulties. Those events occur together with people in different time periods, creating a life full of experiences and emotions, which is completely different from animals when they cannot have such things. Therefore, only human is the most special entity when associated with JOURNEY to create special target concepts like LIFE.

Besides the conceptual metaphors LIFE IS COLORS, LIFE IS A RIVER, LIFE IS SHORT TIME... are elaborately studied in many languages and in Vietnamese. The conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY in Nguyen Trong Tao's poetry in our article is the basis for further completing the cognitive picture of the Vietnamese people's "life" through irradiation schemes and similarities between source and target domains.

II. Conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY in Nguyen Trong Tao's poetry

2.1. The empirical basis of the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY in Nguyen Trong Tao's poetry

The empirical basis of the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY expressed in terms of experience and social life experience.

Each person's life is a journey of life, his own experience with the unique features of each individual. In which the events that followed along with the difficulties, happiness, and separation in that journey all left a certain mark, affecting what happens in each person's life. On the other hand, recognizing and evaluating the life journey of each individual is also affected by cultural factors of different regions and communities. With such experiences, the formation of cognitive characteristics in each person is also different.

The characteristic of life is symbolized by a journey with milestones and highlights during the journey. This is the basis for the perception of "life" associated with the source domain of the journey. Social life and experiences and background are the factors that most clearly affect the destination domain of LIFE, with the richness of activities and events that people perform and experience through the self-continuing process that humans perceive. That correspondence is also the basis for forming the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY.

2.2. Irradiation scheme of conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY in poetry Nguyen Trong Tao

The concept of life is defined as in the Vietnamese dictionary as: "the life process of a person, an individual organism, viewed as a whole from birth to death" and "social life" with all the activities and events taking place in it" [13, 234].

The center (core nucleus) of the conceptual structure of LIFE is the concept of "life", lexical variations of the concept that have most of the same attributes as the concept, including: life, living, existence...also seen as elements located at the center of the conceptual structure. Surrounding the conceptual nucleus will be peripheral factors, personal experiences, and national cultural characteristics such as: national culture, local culture, and social culture. ...

In this issue, we will clarify the irradiation scheme of the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY to see how poet Nguyen Trong Tao has realized about the target domain of LIFE:

THE SOURCE DOMAIN: THE JOURNEY

THE TARGET DOMAIN: THE LIFE

- | | |
|--|--|
| (a) Traveller →
(b) Transport =>
(c) Journey space =>
(d) Obstacles, difficulties =>
(e) Stopovers=>
(f) Journey's goal/purpose =>
(h) Baggage, companions in the journey =>
during the trip
(i) Crossroads =>
(j) Beginning =>
(k) End of trip => | People in life
Routes
Road, river, sea
Obstacles in life
Life's stages
The destination of human life
Consultant / intelligentsia / material / human's emotions
Choices
Time of birth
When dying |
|--|--|

The conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY in Nguyen Trong Tao's poetry is a mapping scheme based on the corresponding characteristics between the source domain and the destination domain. The destination domain is clearly expressed thanks to the characteristics of the source domain, it is the correlation that helps the reader to perceive the life corresponding to the characteristics in a certain journey, suitable for each stage of human life.

It is possible to imagine the sense of "life" in Nguyen Trong Tao's poetry associated with the concept of journey, which is a very universal concept, it is suitable for many cultures. Nguyen Trong Tao's thinking about life is expressed through the lens of a journey in which all things are always in motion, flowing non-stop and humans live in the world is constantly in motion.

2.3. The verbal expression of the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY in the poem of Nguyen Trong Tao

It can be visualized in that concept, the beginning of the journey is considered the moment of birth in life, the crossroads and turning points of the journey correspond to the times when faced with choices, wondering about life decisions. Vehicles in the journey can use such as bicycles, motorbikes, boats ..., the traveler also sometimes encounters difficulties, sickness, and falls, those are obstacles in life. Or when the end of the journey is also the time when people's lives close, returning to the inherent dust. With such a way of perception, it is clear that poet Nguyen Trong Tao has absolutely a reason to talk about the almost absolute similarity between these two conceptual domains. And the properties specified in the table below will clarify that irradiation scheme.

Similarity in characteristics of two conceptual domains	Irradiated properties	Number of metaphorical expressions with irradiation properties		
		No. BT/139 BT	Ratio%	
About the traveler	I	52	37,4	
	We	3	2,2	
	We	2	1,4	
	I	13	9,4	
	You	9	6,5	
	Me	8	5,8	
	Older brother	21	15,1	
	Younger sibling	14	10,1	
	Girl	2	1,4	
	Soldiers	8	5,8	
	Older sister	1	0,7	
	About the starting point	River wharf	1	0,7
		Station / platform	11	7,9
Edge		7	5,0	
Watershed		1	0,7	
About space	River	25	18,0	
	Road	38	27,3	
	Matrix	1	0,7	
	Plain	4	2,9	

Conceptual Metaphor Of Life Is A Journey In Nguyen Trong Tao's Poetry

	Forest	9	6,5
	Battlefield	4	2,9
	Lane /Alleyways	5	3,6
	Streams	3	2,2
	Hill	2	1,4
	City	12	8,6
	Borders	2	1,4
	Sea	8	5,8
	Market	5	3,6
	Bus station	2	1,4
	Town	2	1,4
	Acupoints	1	0,7
	Terrace	2	1,4
	Pagoda	3	2,2
	Hospital	1	0,7
	Homeland/Country	6	4,3
	Street	6	4,3
	Airport	1	0,7
	Hell	1	0,7
	Heaven	2	1,4
	Ground	1	0,7
	Alley	1	0,7
	Pitch	1	0,7
	Temple courtyard	1	0,7
	Island	2	1,4
	Dike	2	1,4
	Bare line	2	1,4
About the vehicle	Bridge	4	2,9
	Ferry	2	1,4
	Plane	4	2,9
	Ship	11	7,9
	Vehicle	4	2,9
	Car	1	0,7
	Carthorse	1	0,7
	Ships	1	0,7
	Oxcart	1	0,7
	Coach	1	0,7
	Boat	1	0,7
About the status of the traveler	Happy	15	10,8
	Equanimity	1	0,7
	Pain	6	4,3
	Dizziness	1	0,7
	Sweat	1	0,7
	Thirsty	2	1,4
	Laugh	16	11,5
	Wistful	1	0,7
	Cry	4	2,9
	Patience	1	0,7
	Irritability	1	0,7
	Sad	14	10,0
	Lonely	1	0,7
	Remember	13	9,4
	Agitate	1	0,7
	Happy	1	0,7
	Tired	1	0,7
About obstacles	Water line	1	0,7

Conceptual Metaphor Of Life Is A Journey In Nguyen Trong Tao's Poetry

	Bomb	7	5,0
	Storm	5	3,6
	Wind	19	13,7
	Rain	24	17,3
	Wave	16	11,5
	Fire	2	1,4
	Rock	11	7,9
	Dynamite	2	1,4
	Slope	2	1,4
	Pass	1	0,7
	Mountain	15	10,8
	Bullet	4	2,9
	Dust	2	1,4
	Dew	2	1,4
About time	Night	15	10,8
	Today	2	1,4
	Afternoon	4	2,9
	Dawn	1	0,7
	Tomorrow	2	1,4
	Now	5	3,6
	Forever	1	0,7
	That day	1	0,7
	Midnight	4	2,9
	Daytime	2	1,4
	Autumn	2	1,4
	Summer	3	2,2
	Winter	1	0,7
	Spring	1	0,7
	End of the year	1	0,7
	Midday	2	1,4
	Each year	1	0,7
	Oldtime	1	0,7
	Past	1	0,7
About activities	Go	37	26,6
	Fly	7	5,0
	Come back / Return	22	15,8
	Come back again	6	4,3
	Wade	1	0,7
	Pass / go over	7	5,0
	See off / Take away	2	1,4
	Run	2	1,4
	Wade	1	0,7
	Carry	1	0,7
	Hasten	1	0,7
	Adventure	1	0,7
	Sit	1	0,7
About the destination	South	5	3,6
	North	2	1,4
	Ha Noi	5	3,6
	Hang Voi	1	0,7
	Home /House	9	6,5
	Fatherland	3	2,2
	Kham Thien	1	0,7
	Phuc Trach	1	0,7
	Hoi An	1	0,7
	Đa Nang	3	2,2

	Central	1	0,7
	Con Son	1	0,7
	Horizon	2	1,4
	Huong river	1	0,7
	Hue	3	2,2
	Vinh	1	0,7
	Nghe An	1	0,7
	Ha Tinh	1	0,7
	Capital	1	0,7
	Cua Lo	1	0,7
	Song Ngu Island	1	0,7
	The earth	1	0,7

Table 2: Irradiated properties from source domain to destination domain in conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY

LIFE in Nguyen Trong Tao's poetry is irradiated through the prism of the JOURNEY. According to the survey, it accounted for the largest number, with 139/564 metaphorical expressions.

The concept of LIFE for him is also described as having a starting point, obstacles, a companion, a destination... People living in this world are also going on a long JOURNEY but finite, with many events happening, with many levels of emotions.

Conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY indispensable human is the traveler, the central character who will throughout his life journey, the road is sometimes a public space, existing, concrete but it can also be an abstract image, representing the life line associated with the author's intention. The road image has 38/139 language expressions, accounting for 27.3%, which he mentioned through the pages he wrote:

I follow the rocky stream that rushes to the shore
 Push the cart with so many girls
 The wind blows the shawl, the rock hill like burning coal

...

Across the river bridged, tarpaulin steep slopes
 Following the happy laughter I identified the road shape.

(Along the hot wind region)

Here, this linguistic expression illustrates the irradiation scheme outlined by Lakoff and Johnson, where the path is a means to achieve the goal and each person is a traveler along the way.

With Nguyen Trong Tao, war always takes on human identity and is closely linked to the lives of people like him, a traveler in the resistance war must also be associated with life's journey.

In that journey of thousands of miles, the starting point always makes us anxious every time we recall, the platform image is the symbol of the departure beginning, it appears in 11/139 linguistic metaphor expressions, accounting for 7.9%. It is clear that when irradiating to the target domain of LIFE, It's the beginning of human life at birth, and continuing to the next stages of human life, This is mainly drawn from real life experiences.

On the platform side, the soldiers boarded the train
 Soldiers passing through the city
 The sound of iron wheels vibrating the windows
 Whistle to greet the spiral at the end of the sky
 (Soldiers passing through the city)

Or like:

The city of ordinary life has many things I want to say
 You may have seen or heard

...

Like the sound of a train whistle that has always been familiar to the city platform side
 Sudden raging from the farewell to relatives

...

(City of ordinary life)

In the same JOURNEY, each of us personally, when we encounter difficulties and obstacles, have different ways of facing and overcoming them, therefore our attitude to walking on the road of life is also very different, it seems at times. they are tired, suffering, or even bewildered by the sadness of walking lost, lonely and even smiling moments on that journey, but the travelers have refrained from letting themselves be left behind, with the will, not afraid of hardship, they go beyond themselves to affirm their great values in life:

I get on my body

Healthy back spine
My will carries a hundred thousand tons of weight
Stepped off the ice in this country
(The rail)

I'm quiet like it's not
Thirty years old, bombs and bullets have spread
Not old yet, not young anymore
I smile less, not less smile
(The path of ripe leaves)

The statistics table of active verbs shows that travelers are rich in experience, sometimes they "go", sometimes "pass", "strive", "carry"...but in it, a series of words "go" " " dominates with 37/139 metaphorical linguistic expressions. To see Nguyen Trong Tao's cognitive thinking, going as a cross on the journey, as the most permanent action of human to know at least the traveler never stops in life.

And maybe the goal of life is still very far away, but with faith and an active attitude, the travelers are always the fulcrum for themselves, they have gone to the countryside, the rural or the city, they pass through remote villages, crowded markets – those spaces, places where travelers pass by in life leave impressions or experiences on the journey:

Many times I walked with the night
But the town in the night, I went for the first time
The big road in front of me, what's the name I don't know
Where does the oxcart carrying sand turn?
(In the town night)

When I look at the noonday sun, I suddenly remember: thirty years old
The shadow fell at my feet – the shadow of my youth.
Went through so many crazy cliffs
Laugh and sing and easily cry

Sun and wind and rain and storm

Standing alone in front of a high mountain
(Thirty years old)

Soldiers go through my heart deep
Through the torment of ordinary life, the most difficult days
Warm next to me, next to cold
Life and death - the middle is you

(Soldiers passing through the city)

It can be seen that the journey on the roads can not be without friends, which can be soulmates or simply the irradiation scheme of companions in the journey is also irradiated to the destination domain is the material material baggage, emotional, companion or even yourself, where the author implicitly affirms that the traveler's mind is always strong, the journey is arduous, but sometimes the travelers will have to accompany themselves, at times of sadness and joy, when stopping to rest:

" No one left. Bare road, oh so long...
Sitting alone. Sit back alone
Seeing the whole of humanity appear invisible
(No one left)

Walking along the Central region fainting in the mountains
Duplicate mountain. I'm lonely
The bumpy old road Nguyen Trai's poetry
Every mountain we meet is also Con Son.

(Remember Nguyen Trai)

With the thinking style of poet Nguyen Trong Tao, it can be seen that every journey will eventually come to a stop and end. Experience in the journey of human life or the journey of living a life on earth, it is time to stop. The destination of the irradiation scheme is the beautiful lands, the horizons or the places where there is no suffering. Therefore, in him, the image of the horizon or the beautiful destinations of the country appears a lot, as a signal of a life's destination in waiting for the traveler, which is the irradiation to further clarify the destination domain is LIFE. Those things proves that he has been to many places in the country and abroad, with Nguyen Trong Tao's personal experience and the influence of the cultural region making perceived concepts to become even more special.

We pass through crowded cities

We pass Hang Bong house number 60

...

The small room in the house is not numbered

Everywhere we go, the piece of our heart is there
Forever a place to live songs

(To Phan Lac Hoa)

The image icon of the home/house appears 9/139 metaphorical expressions, there is a place to return, to have family and warm loved ones by your side who always protect you after the hustle and bustle after months of hustle and bustle with the times. Or "horizon" is also a signal of a beautiful end, the South, the North, the cities : Hue, Da Nang, Hanoi, Ha Tinh, Nghe An...: Go to sleep, go to bed, tomorrow go far away from the city/ Walking towards the bright horizons..." or "Walking through street Hue/Remembering the afternoon away from Vinh/the sky lights up with blue stars/ Missing the blue eyes..." , the landmarks of destinations or return, is also the end of the journey, the end of human life.

III. Conclusion

By clarifying the mapping mechanism, we can partly imagine the path of transferring attributes between the two source domains JOURNEY and target domains LIFE in conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY in Nguyen Trong Tao's poetry. With his inherent experience and very "lifetime" understanding of people and national culture, the poet realistically describes the tireless journey of man, where his life is like a mirror is reflected. Somewhere, we also see Nguyen Trong Tao's unique way of thinking, that journey can be considered his life, as well as his life is a journey with countless interesting and poetic experiences. .

Through the organization of the image schema and the selection of attributes to irradiate from the two domains, the organization of verbal expressions expressing the concept of LIFE, Nguyen Trong Tao has brought readers with new and novel emotional experiences in his own creations. This can be explained from the fact that he is a poet, a talented musician and painter who always knows how to "mix" different vibrations and emotions to the public - those who love his poetry.

REFERENCES

- [1]. Tran Van Co (2007), *Cognitive Linguistics* (Notes and Thoughts), Social Science Publishing House, Hanoi.
- [2]. Tran Van Co (2006), *What is cognitive linguistics?*, Language Magazine.
- [3]. Do Huu Chau (1996), *Vietnamese semantic vocabulary*, Education Publishing House
- [4]. Huu Dat (1987), *Vietnamese poetic language*, Education Publishing House, Hanoi.
- [5]. Nguyen Dang Diep, (2011), "Nguyen Trong Tao blinks with a thousand years", Nguyen Trong Tao 's epic introduction, Writers' Association Publishing House.
- [6]. Nguyen Thien Giap (2012), *Methodology and language research methods*, Vietnam Education Publishing House, Hanoi.
- [7]. Nguyen Thi Bich Hanh (2014), *Cognitive Metaphor in Lyrics of Trinh Cong Son*, Doctoral Thesis in Linguistics, Academy of Social Sciences.
- [8]. Roan Van Hieu (2013), *The Art World of Nguyen Trong Tao's Poetry*, Master of Science Thesis, University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Hanoi National University, Vietnam.
- [9]. Phan The Hung (2009), *Metaphor from the perspective of cognitive linguistics*, Doctoral thesis in Linguistics, Ho Chi Minh City University of Education, Ho Chi Minh City.
- [10]. Nguyen Van Khang (1999), *Sociolinguistics: Basic issues*, Hanoi Social Sciences Publishing House.
- [11]. Do Trong Khoi (2011), "Reading Nguyen Trong Tao's poetry", Art Newspaper - Vietnam Writers' Association.
- [12]. David Lee (2016), *Introduction to cognitive linguistics*, Nguyen Van Hiep - Nguyen Hoang An (translated), Hanoi National University Publishing House.
- [13]. Hoang Phe (1992), *Vietnamese Dictionary*, Language Dictionary Center, Hanoi.
- [14]. Pham Thi Huong Quynh (2017), *Conceptual metaphor in Xuan Quynh's poetry*, Social Science Publishing House.
- [15]. Ly Toan Thang (2002), *Some issues of Vietnamese linguistics and general linguistics*, Social Science Publishing House, Hanoi.
- [16]. Ly Toan Thang (2005), *Cognitive Linguistics – From General Theory to Practical Vietnamese*, Phuong Dong Publishing House, Ho Chi Minh City.
- [17]. Nguyen Dinh Thi (2003), *Poetry Meanings, Poetry Supplement - Literature* (Quarter 2)
- [18]. Le Lam Thi (2017), *Metaphor of fire category in French and Vietnamese from the perspective of cognitive linguistics*, University of Science, Hue.
- [19]. Nguyen Thi Kieu Thu, Bach Thi Thu Hien (2014), *Metaphor and cultural model*, Journal of Science and Technology Development, Ho Chi Minh City National University.
- [20]. G. Lakoff, M. Johnon (1980), *Metaphors We live by*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London.