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**A STUDY ON ABSTRACT NOUNS
 IN ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE**

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. RATIONALE

Nouns are the first part of speech that we come across in any language. If a person in a foreign language situation knows some nouns then he/she is able to communicate somewhat. Nouns are the words that name things. We humans always need to name things that we use, see, and imagine. Clearly, nouns play an important role in communication. The noun category can be further subdivided into different noun classes according to semantic and syntactic criteria. One class of nouns is abstract. Abstract nouns are words that signify 'abstract' ideas, which cannot be experienced directly through the five senses. They are words for feelings, qualities and all other kinds of abstract concepts. They are names given to intangible ideas which form a part of our life. Without these nouns, expression of our feelings and ideas would be impossible. So, abstract nouns are very common and important in communication. That's the reason why I am eager to study on abstract nouns and choose the topic: **"A study on abstract nouns in English and Vietnamese"**

Cognitive linguistics holds that language is part of cognitive system which comprises perception, emotion, categorization, abstraction process, and reasoning. Lakoff claims that conceptual metaphor is defined as a cross-domain mapping in the conceptual system, and metaphors are expressions that are the surface realization of such cross-domain mapping. Thus, metaphor is an instrument which makes us understand abstract things well by more specific ones. This is also the aim of this paper.

1.2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1.2.1. Aims

The aim of the study is to clarify formation, classification, ontological metaphors, and conceptual metaphors abstract nouns in English and in Vietnamese.

1.2.2. Objectives

The study is expected to:

- Finding formation, classification, ontological metaphors, and conceptual metaphors of abstract nouns in English and in Vietnamese.
- Finding similarities and differences between the formation, classification, ontological metaphors, and conceptual metaphors of abstract nouns in English and those in Vietnamese.
- Offering some implications for language teaching and learning.

1.3. THE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Due to lack of time, knowledge and shortage of materials, the study only focuses on 30 abstract nouns in English and Vietnamese and similarities and differences between them through the conceptual metaphors, especially through the ontological metaphor.

1.4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study aims to seek the answers to the following questions:

1. What are the formations of abstract nouns in English and Vietnamese?
2. What are the classifications of abstract nouns in English and Vietnamese?
3. How are abstract nouns in English and Vietnamese understood through ontological metaphors?

4. How are abstract nouns in English and Vietnamese understood through conceptual metaphors?

5. What are similarities and differences between these nouns?

1.5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

- The result of this study will help Vietnamese learners of English improve their understanding of the field, get better results in subjects such as grammar, vocabulary, composition, translation, communication and so on.

- The result of this study will also help to raise the awareness of the importance of abstract nouns in using language.

- The result of this study will also help people realize that metaphors are omnipresent in our everyday language and that we are using them almost constantly, maybe unconsciously.

1.6. THE ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

This thesis consists of 5 chapters.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

As the background for my study on abstract nouns in English and Vietnamese, this chapter concerns itself with previous studies of the research and a brief view of the theoretical background for the research.

2.1. REVIEW OF PREVIOUS STUDIES

2.2. ENGLISH THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.2.1. The English Language

2.2.2. Linguistic Features of English Nouns

2.2.2.1. Definition

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2.3.1. The Vietnamese Language

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2.3.2.1. Definition

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2.4. A CROSS-LINGUISTIC COMPARISON OF VIETNAMESE AND ENGLISH

2.4.1. Lexical Function

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2.5. CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR THEORY

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2.6.1. Structural Metaphors

2.6.2. Orientational Metaphors

2.6.3. Ontological Metaphors

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1. RESEARCH DESIGN

On the purpose of making a study of abstract nouns in English and Vietnamese, we've decided to carry out the study through qualitative and quantitative approaches.

3.2. RESEARCH SUBJECT

Firstly, we study the information of abstract nouns in English and Vietnamese

Secondly, we study the classification of abstract nouns in the both language

Thirdly, we divide abstract nouns into three groups: psychological & mental states and events, social groups and progresses, personal experiences and events. In each group, we choose ten abstract nouns and study them under the light of ontological metaphors (the entity metaphor, the substance metaphor, the container metaphor and the personification)

Fourthly, we study conceptual metaphors of five typical abstract nouns in each language.

Lastly, we find out the similarities and the differences of the four areas above.

3.3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to meet the requirements of the objectives mentioned in chapter one, the study will be carried out by using descriptive, analysis, comparative and contrastive methods. However, I can't avoid encountering some difficulties when applying methods to our study because of its potential disadvantages. First of all, we are completely restricted in a scope of our study because we are required to depend on the data collected. Secondly, it takes us a lot of time to carry out the research with several stages such as collecting, sorting, and analyzing data etc. Besides, there's little guidance from experienced researchers on how to analyze some sources of data. In addition, the data sources of cognitive theories haven't been widely by Vietnamese linguists up to now.

3.4. RESEARCH PROCEDURES

The process of our research follows the steps:

1. We collect as many materials related to the research as possible.

2. We find out the general and specific syntactic features of abstract nouns in both languages. We describe, in turn, the definition, formation, and classification of abstract nouns. Through the description, we can obtain a sound knowledge of abstract nouns, which is a good basic for us to discover them in metaphors.

3. We describe fully the ontological metaphors of the chosen abstract nouns. In order to prove their semantic features clearly, we find out examples which are considered as reliable and convincing. Besides, we find out other metaphors of these abstract nouns through other kinds of metaphor.

4. We focus on analyzing the ontological metaphors of these abstract nouns on the theory of conceptual metaphor.

5. We compare and contrast the formation, classification, and ontological metaphors, and conceptual metaphors of these abstract nouns.

6. We review all we've studied and draw logical conclusions.

7. From the results found we suggest some implications.

8. Following the conclusion is the limitations of the study.

9. Finally, we close the study with references.

3.5. DATA COLLECTION AND DATA ANALYSIS

3.5.1. Data collection

The study is carried out over 1000 examples collected from different data sources.

3.5.2. Data analysis

From this source of samples, we study the information, the classification of them. Then to study the ontological metaphors.

However, if we only use ontological metaphor, we can't understand abstract nouns fully. So, in this part, we would like to study conceptual metaphors of chosen abstract nouns. However, each abstract noun has a number of metaphors. In the scope of this study, for many reasons, we can't find out the metaphors of all 30 abstract nouns above. Therefore, we only choose five abstract nouns and analyze them elaborately.

From the discussion of findings, we point out the similarities and differences between the metaphors of chosen abstract nouns in both languages.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. ENGLISH ABSTRACT NOUNS

4.1.1. Formation of abstract nouns

According to Radden and Dirven [12, p.81-83], abstract things have their linguistic expressions as abstract nouns. A very large number of abstract things, if not most, are based on relational concepts viewed as thing-like. The conceptual shift from a relational concept to a thing is known as reification. It makes us see a relation as having some kind of "ontological" existence. This type of metaphorical shift has therefore been named ontological metaphor. Since relations are essential to conceptual cores and situations, ontological metaphors allow us to understand events and states in terms of things.

The conceptual shift from relation to thing, or reification, has its linguistic counterpart in what is called nominalisation. Nominalisation refers either to the process of deriving abstract nouns

from other word classes or to the resulting abstract noun itself. Nominalised abstract nouns are typically derived from verbs, adjectives or nouns.

Nominalised abstract nouns are divided into two main kinds: attribute nouns which express attributes or qualities and verbal nouns which express state, condition, or action.

However, Radden and Dirven [12, p.82:83] also present that not all abstract nouns are morphologically derived forms. Some abstract nouns were not derived from any other part of speech, but were framed directly for the expression of certain ideas or phenomena. Such are *beauty*, *joy*, *hope*, *ease*, *energy*; *day*, *night*, *summer*, *winter*; *shadow*, *lightning*, *thunder*, etc.

4.1.2. Classification of abstract nouns

Radden and Dirven classify abstract nouns into types [6, p.84-86]. The abstract nouns "war", "attack", "protest", "problem", "doubt", and "desire" are generally used as count nouns. What these abstract count nouns have in common is that they describe episodic situations, i.e. situations which, due to their limited duration, are seen as discrete episodes. Episodic situations are typically events that take place or come up (*attack*, *protest*, *objection*), but also certain states that can suddenly arise are seen as episodic (*disease*, *idea*, *doubt*).

In contrast, the abstract nouns heterogeneous "peace", "knowledge", "happiness", "information", "help", "advice" are mostly used as mass nouns. They describe steady situations, i.e. situations which are seen as lasting indefinitely or holding in general. Steady situations are typically states (*peace*, *knowledge*, *happiness*), but also certain events are seen as steady (*information*, *help*, *advice*)

4.1.3. Ontological metaphors of abstract nouns in English

To understand abstract nouns, along with Radden and Dirven , other cognitive linguists such as Lakoff, Johnson and Kövecses use ontological metaphors- one of the four groundings of metaphor in the Cognitive Linguistic View. Lakoff and Johnson [4, p. 31] affirmed that an ontological metaphor is a metaphor in which an abstraction, such as an activity, emotion, or idea, is represented as something concrete, such as an object, substance, container, or person. Kövecses [14, p.83] stated that ontological metaphors are extremely basic ones, in that they give object, substance, or container “shape”, or status, to entities and events that are not physical objects, substances, or containers. If two concepts (one abstract, the other concrete) share this basic shape or status, this can induce the perception of certain structural similarities between the two.

Therefore, the author of this study would like to inherit this method to understand abstract nouns.

We find that Kövecses [8, p.27] classified common target domains can be into psychological and mental states and events (emotion, desire, morality, thought), social groups and processes (society, economy, human relationships, communication), and personal experiences and event (time, life, death, religion). From that, we have the following tables which list abstract nouns belong to the three groups above. However, the classification is relative, because some abstract nouns belong to this group maybe also belong to other groups. Because there are so many abstract nouns, we don't have ambition to list all here. We only choose 10 abstract nouns for each group and find out their ontological metaphors.

The thesis shows the tables which present the ontological metaphors as well as their examples of 30 abstract nouns in English.

Ten abstract nouns denoting psychological and mental states and events are “*anger*”, “*fear*”, “*surprise*”, “*happiness*”, “*sadness*”, “*shame*”, “*pride*”, “*desire*”, “*honesty*”, and “*courage*”.

Ten abstract nouns denoting social groups and processes are “*society*”, “*nation*”, “*war*”, “*peace*”, “*economy*”, “*friendship*”, “*marriage*”, “*love*”, “*idea*”, and “*information*”.

Ten abstract nouns denoting personal experiences and event are “*time*”, “*life*”, “*success*”, “*religion*”, “*help*”, “*advice*”, “*knowledge*”, “*wisdom*”, “*health*”, and “*experience*”.

In summary, most abstract nouns in English can be explained fully through the ontological metaphors. From the tables, we see that ontological metaphors give a new ontological status to general categories of abstract target concepts and to bring about new abstract entities. What this means is that we conceive of our experiences in terms of objects, substances, and containers, in general, without specifying exactly what kind of object, substance, or container is meant. We can also conceive of personification as a form of ontological metaphor. In personification, human qualities are given to nonhuman entities. Personification makes use of one of the best source domains we have—ourselves. In personifying nonhumans as humans, we can begin to understand them a little better. Since our knowledge about objects, substances, and containers is rather limited at this general level, we cannot use these highly general categories to understand much about target

domains. This is the job of structural metaphors, which is beyond this part.

4.1.4. Conceptual metaphors of Abstract nouns in English

As we know in the previous part, if we only use ontological metaphor, we can't understand abstract nouns fully. Since our knowledge about object, substance, container or personification is rather limited at the general level, we cannot use these highly general categories to understand much about target domains. This is the job of structural metaphors, which provide an elaborate structure for abstract nouns. So, in this part, we would like to list other metaphors of chosen abstract nouns. However, each abstract noun has a number of metaphors. In the scope of this study, for many reasons, we can't find out the metaphors of all 30 abstract nouns above. Therefore, we only choose five abstract nouns and analyze them elaborately. They are “*anger*”, “*happiness*”, “*friendship*”, “*life*”, and “*time*”.

4.2. VIETNAMESE ABSTRACT NOUNS

4.2.1. Formation of abstract nouns

Nguyen Tai Can [20, p.175] affirmed that most of the nouns denoting abstract concepts were borrowed from Chinese or comprised of Sino-origins. According to him, except the cases which have not been confirmed whether word or phrase yet such as “*điều lo sợ*”, “*sự tin tưởng*” etc..., abstract nouns in Vietnamese have 5 patterns.

Nguyen Tai Can has not confirmed if “*điều lo sợ*” or “*sự tin tưởng*” etc... is a word or a phrase yet. However, according to Tran Ngoc Dung [27, p.168], the majority of abstract nouns in Vietnamese enjoy back formation from adjectives or from verbs. To

become nouns, they need classifiers, most of which are *niềm, nỗi, sự, etc...*. This means that “*điều lo sợ*”, “*sự tin tưởng*” etc...are confirmed words and named compound nouns. Many abstract nouns in Vietnamese are compound nouns due to the disyllabic characteristics of Vietnamese.

Nominalizations are formed from common nouns:

1. Classifier + Noun- Loại Từ + Danh Từ

- a. *Cuộc* + noun: “*cuộc đời*” (life span), “*cuộc tình*” (an amour)
- b. *Nỗi* + noun: “*nỗi lòng*” (sentiment), “*nỗi sợ hãi*” (terror)
- c. *Sự* + noun: “*sự kiện*” (event), “*sự nghiệp*” (career), “*sự thế*” (circumstances), “*sự tích*” (story, tale), “*sự tình*” (all the details)

2. Noun + Noun- Danh Từ + Danh Từ

For example: “*nghề nghiệp*” (career), “*ngôi vị*” (position), “*quê hương*” (hometown), “*lý lẽ*” (logic), “*trụ cột*” (important figure, bread-winner) ...

Nominalizations are formed from adjectives:

Classifier + Adjective- Loại Từ + Tính Từ

- a. *Cái* is also used with an adjective to make it a noun, similar to that style of English noun formation, disregarding the meaning: “*cái tốt*” (the good), “*cái xấu*” (the ugly)
- b. *Cuộc* + adjective: “*cuộc đò đen*” (bout of gambling), “*cuộc vui*” (pleasure party), ...
- c. *Kẻ* or *người* for a significant contrast: “*kẻ sang*” (the noble), “*người hèn*” (the inferior)
- d. *Sự* + adjective: “*sự buồn phiền*” (grief), “*sự giàu sang*” (wealth and nobleness)

Nominalizations are formed from verbs:

1. Classifier + Verbs - Loại Từ + Động Từ

a. *Nỗi* + verb: “*nỗi bàng hoàng*” (horrification), “*nỗi nhớ*” (memory) ...

b. *Niềm*+ verb: “*niềm hy vọng*” (hopefulness), “*niềm thương yêu*” (attachment),...

However, ¾ in literature writers tend to reverse *nỗi* for *niềm*: “*niềm đau*”.

d. *Mối* + verb: “*mối tương tư*” (lovesickness), “*mối quan hệ*” (relationship)...

e. *Con* + verb: “*con bàng hoàng*” (a squall of bewilderment), “*con giận dữ*” (a fit of temper),...

2. Verb + Verb- Động Từ + Động Từ

E.g: *quan* (observe) + *niệm* (conceive) > “*quan niệm*” (opinion), *suy* (infer)+ *nghĩ* (think) > “*suy nghĩ*” (thinking)

4.2.2. Classification of abstract nouns

According to Hoang Van Thung [16, p.86], most of abstract nouns in Vietnamese such as “*tình cảm*”, “*ý*”, “*ý nghĩ*”, “*quyền lợi*”, “*điều kiện*”... can be absolutely countable because they can combine with numerals directly.

Moreover, Tran Ngoc Dung [27, p.168] also confirmed that though abstract, abstract nouns are capable of being used as countable, which means they can go with quantifiers.

In short, most of abstract nouns in Vietnamese can be absolutely countable because they can combine with numerals directly.

4.2.3. Ontological metaphors of abstract nouns in Vietnamese

The thesis shows the tables which represent 30 abstract nouns in Vietnamese which are equivalent to those in English and their ontological metaphors as well as their examples.

4.2.4. Conceptual metaphor of abstract nouns in Vietnamese

Similarly to the previous part, we choose five abstract nouns in Vietnamese and find out their conceptual metaphors. They are “*sự tức giận*”, “*hạnh phúc*”, “*tình bạn*”, “*cuộc đời*”, and “*thời gian*”.

4.3. SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

English and Vietnamese are two genetically unrelated languages. English is an Indo-European language and Vietnamese belongs to the Viet-Muong sub-branch of the Mon-Khmer branch, which is itself a part of the large Austro-Asiatic family of languages. Given this, one would expect that most of the figurative language that applies to the abstract nouns in English does not apply to the same abstract nouns in Vietnamese. On the other hand, however, it is obvious that the two languages have been in (direct or indirect) contact with each other to some extent. Given this, one would expect some degree of similarity between the two, when figurative language is used in connection with the same abstract nouns. These are clearly hypotheses that simplify, yet they can serve as a useful way to begin to determine the relative differences and similarities between two languages in the domain of abstract nouns.

4.3.1. Similarities between abstract nouns in English and Vietnamese

1. English abstract nouns are typically derived from verbs, adjectives or nouns: *marriage* derives from the verb marry or be married, *happiness* from the adjective happy, and *friendship* from the

noun friend. However, Radden and Dirven [6, p.82:83] also present that not all abstract nouns are morphologically derived forms. For example: *beauty*.

The majority of abstract nouns in Vietnamese also enjoy back formation from adjectives, verbs, or nouns. To become nouns, they need classifiers, most of which are *niềm, nỗi, sự, tia, trí,* There are also abstract nouns which don't need classifiers. For example: *hạnh phúc*.

2. Most of abstract nouns in English can be explained fully through the ontological metaphors. From the tables, we see that ontological metaphors give a new ontological status to general categories of abstract target concepts and to bring about new abstract entities. What this means is that we conceive of our experiences in terms of objects, substances, and containers, in general, without specifying exactly what kind of object, substance, or container is meant. Since our knowledge about objects, substances, and containers is rather limited at this general level, we cannot use these highly general categories to understand much about target domains.

Understanding our experiences in terms of objects and substances allows us to pick out parts of our experience and treat them as discrete entities or substances of a uniform kind. Once we can identify our experiences as entities or substances, we can refer to them, categorize them, group them, and quantify them, and, by this means, reason about them. Our experiences with physical objects provide the basis for an extraordinarily wide variety of ontological metaphors, that is, ways of view events, activities, emotions, ideas, etc., as entities and substances.

We can conceive of personification as a form of ontological metaphor. In personification, human qualities are given to nonhuman entities. Personification makes use of one of the best source domains we have ourselves. In personifying, nonhumans as humans, we can begin to understand them a little better.

3. Comparing the tables, we see that most of the abstract nouns in table 4.1 and 4.9 can be explained fully by four kinds of ontological metaphors. There are two abstract nouns in each table don't have the container metaphor and the personification. Surprisingly, both the abstract noun "*courage*" and its equivalent "*sự can đảm*" can't be explained by the container metaphor.

Table 4.17: Comparison of selected English and Vietnamese abstract nouns denoting psychological and mental states and events

Num	Words	Entity	Substance	Container	Person
1	Anger	+	+	+	+
	Sự tức giận	+	+	+	+
2	Fear	+	+	+	+
	Nỗi sợ hãi	+	+	+	+
3	Surprise	+	+	+	+
	Sự ngạc nhiên	+	+	+	+
4	Happiness	+	+	+	+
	Hạnh phúc	+	+	+	+
5	Sadness	+	+	+	+
	Nỗi buồn	+	+	+	+
6	Shame	+	+	+	+

	Sự xấu hổ	+	+	+	+
7	Pride	+	+	+	+
	Niềm tự hào	+	+	+	+
8	Desire	+	+	+	+
	Sự khát khao	+	+	+	+
9	Honesty	+	+	+	+
	Sự trung thực	+	+	-	+
10	Courage	+	+	-	+
	Sự can đảm	+	+	-	+

Due to their meaning, the abstract nouns in the table 4.2 and 4.10 lack of more mappings. Following our findings, some are not substances. Some are not containers. Others are not persons.

Table 4.18: Comparison of selected English and Vietnamese abstract nouns denoting social groups and processes

Num	Words	Entity	Substance	Container	Person
1	Society	+	-	+	+
	Xã hội	+	-	+	+
2	Nation	+	-	+	+
	Dân tộc	+	+	+	+
3	War	+	-	+	+
	Chiến tranh	-	+	+	+
4	Peace	+	+	+	-
	Hòa bình	-	+	+	-
5	Economy	+	-	+	-
	Nền kinh tế	+	-	+	-
6	Friendship	+	-	+	+
	Tình bạn	+	+	+	+

7	Marriage	+	-	+	+
	Hôn nhân	+	-	+	+
8	Love	+	+	+	+
	Tình yêu	+	+	+	+
9	Idea	+	+	-	+
	Ý tưởng	+	+	+	+
10	Information	+	+	-	+
	Tin tức	+	+	-	-

The table below shows the comparison of the table 4.3 and 4.11.

Table 4.19: Comparison of selected English and Vietnamese abstract nouns denoting personal experiences and events

Num	Words	Entity	Substance	Container	Person
1	Time	+	+	+	+
	Thời gian	+	+	+	+
2	Life	+	+	+	-
	Cuộc đời	+	-	+	+
3	Success	+	+	+	+
	Sự thành công	+	+	+	+
4	Religion	+	+	+	+
	Tôn giáo	+	+	+	+
5	Help	+	+	-	-
	Sự giúp đỡ	+	+	+	+
6	Advice	+	+	-	+
	Lời khuyên	+	+	-	+
7	Knowledge	+	+	+	+

	Kiến thức	+	+	-	-
8	Wisdom	+	+	+	+
	Sự hiểu biết	+	+	+	-
9	Health	-	+	+	-
	Sức khỏe	+	+	-	-
10	Experience	+	+	-	+
	Kinh nghiệm	+	+	+	+

Many of these abstract nouns in the table 4.3 and 4.11 can also be explained fully by the four kinds of the ontological metaphors except for “*health*” and “*tôn giáo*”. The container metaphor is absent frequently in both tables. Besides, some are not personified.

4. The abstract nouns “*anger*”, “*friendship*”, “*life*” and their equivalents in the tables 4.4 and 4.12, 4.6 and 4.14, 4.7 and 4.15 have common metaphors.

4.3.2. Differences between abstract nouns in English and Vietnamese

Beside the similarities noted above, there are some salient differences between abstract nouns in English and Vietnamese. The most striking points we can see are that:

1. Abstract nouns fall into count nouns and mass nouns. Their distinction is, however, less clear-cut than concrete nouns. As a rule, episodic situations, i.e. situations that are thought of as holding for a limited time, are converted into objects and hence coded as abstract count nouns, such as “*attack*”, while steady situations. i.e. situations that are thought of as lasting indefinitely, are converted into substances and hence coded as abstract mass nouns, such as *knowledge*.

Whereas most of abstract nouns in Vietnamese such as “*tình cảm*”, “*ý*”, “*ý nghĩ*”, “*quyền lợi*”, “*điều kiện*”... can be absolutely countable because they can combine with numerals directly.

2. Due to the fact that Vietnam was dominated by the Han for nearly one thousand two hundred years (207BC–939AD), the Vietnamese language borrowed a large number of words from Chinese. For this reason, many scholars estimate that 70 per cent of the Vietnamese vocabulary is comprised of Sino-origins. According to Nguyen Tai Can, most of nouns expressing abstract ideas in Vietnamese are borrowed from *Hán*. This kind of abstract noun is not usually accompanied by a classifier, or sometimes is accompanied by the classifier “*cái*”. For example, “*nguyên tắc*”, “*chính sách*”, “*phương châm*”, “*tiêu chuẩn*”, “*mục đích*”, “*tôn chỉ*”, “*chương trình*”, “*chủ trương*”, “*bổn phận*”, “*nguyên nhân*”, “*kết quả*”, “*điều kiện*”, “*bổn phận*”,... Whereas a significant number of English words are constructed based on roots from Latin.

3. Due to the different cultures of English and Vietnamese people, some metaphors of chosen abstract concepts are natural in English, but they seem to be strange in Vietnamese.

The above differences in metaphorical expressions come from different value concepts of English and Vietnamese people. Because “the language itself is a kind of cultural force and cultural mode, people acquire this language from childhood, and the cultural symbols including all the cultural concepts, values, norms and customs are molded into their own thought and behavior”. So, the values of different nations are inevitably reflected in their languages.

Summary

In this chapter, we divide the target domains (abstract nouns) into three groups: psychological & mental states and events, social groups and progresses, personal experiences and events. In each group, we choose ten abstract nouns and study them under the light of ontological metaphors (the entity metaphor, the container metaphor and the personification). It's interesting that most of these nouns, in both languages, can be understood fully through ontological metaphors. The analysis proved that there are "*Metaphors we live by*" which we use unknowingly.

However, concepts (both target and source) have several aspects to them, speakers need several source domains to understand these different aspects of target concepts. If we only use ontological metaphor, we can't understand abstract nouns fully. So, we choose some abstract nouns and find out other metaphors of them. It's surprising that the abstract nouns and their equivalents have common metaphors, apart the abstract noun "*time*" and "*happiness*" and their equivalent "*thời gian*" and "*hạnh phúc*"..

Besides, some similarities and differences in understanding abstract nouns between the two languages are also drawn out in this chapter. Since metaphors emerge from our experience with material world, it is impossible to have some kinds of world-wide understanding throughout different cultures. In different environments, people experience world differently and therefore metaphorical concepts they use must be rather different.

Table 4.20: Comparison of selected English and Vietnamese abstract nouns

Num	The area of comparison	English	Vietnamese
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1	Formation	- Are derived from verbs, adjectives or nouns - Are borrowed from Hán	- Are derived from verbs, adjectives ,or nouns - Are based on roots from Latin
2	Classification	Are classified into count nouns and mass nouns	Most of them are count nouns
3	Ontological metaphors	85 % can be explained by ontological metaphors	85 % can be explained by ontological metaphors
4	Conceptual metaphors	The same except for the metaphor HAPPINESS IS BEING OFF THE GROUND	The same except for the metaphor TIME IS A REMEDY

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

5.1. CONCLUSION

The study aims to find out the formation, classification, ontological metaphors, and conceptual metaphors of abstract nouns in English and in Vietnamese. In the end of the study, we have the following conclusions:

1. The researches of Alexander, Gordon, Jacobs, etc. in English and those of Diệp Quang Ban, Nguyễn Tài Cẩn, Trần Ngọc Dũng and Lê Biên in Vietnamese help to give an overview of nouns,

especially abstract nouns in the both languages. In cognitive linguistics, the famous researchers such as George Lakoff, Mark Johnson, Radden, Dirven, and Kövecses give the deep understanding of metaphors and kinds of metaphors. Besides, Giang M.Tang provides a cross-linguistic comparison of Vietnamese and English.

2. English abstract nouns are typically derived from verbs, adjectives or nouns: “*marriage*” derives from the verb marry or be married, “*happiness*” from the adjective happy, and “*friendship*” from the noun friend. However, Radden and Dirven [6, p.82:83] also present that not all abstract nouns are morphologically derived forms. For example: “*beauty*”.

The majority of abstract nouns in Vietnamese also enjoy back formation from adjectives, verbs, or nouns. To become nouns, they need classifiers, most of which are *niêm, nôi, sự, etc ...*

3. Abstract nouns fall into count nouns and mass nouns. Their distinction is, however, less clear-cut. As a rule, episodic situations, i.e. situations that are thought of as holding for a limited time, are converted into objects and hence coded as abstract count nouns, such as “*attack*”, while steady situations. i.e. situations that are thought of as lasting indefinitely, are converted into substances and hence coded as abstract mass nouns, such as “*knowledge*”.

Whereas most of abstract nouns in Vietnamese such as “*tình cảm*”, “*ý*”, “*ý nghĩa*”, “*quyền lợi*”, “*điều kiện*”... can be absolutely countable because they can combine with numerals directly.

4. Some similarities and differences in understanding abstract nouns through ontological metaphors between the two languages are also drawn out.

5. However, concepts (both target and source) have several aspects to them, speakers need several source domains to understand these different aspects of target concepts. If we only use ontological metaphor, we can't understand abstract nouns fully. So, we choose five abstract nouns in each language and find out other metaphors of chosen abstract nouns. Some have common metaphors, others have different metaphors.

Since metaphors emerge from our experience with material world, it is impossible to have some kinds of world-wide understanding throughout different cultures. In different environments, people experience world differently and therefore metaphorical concepts they use must differ.

5.2. IMPLICATION

Abstract nouns play an important role in communication. These nouns name things that can't be seen, heard, tasted, smelled or touched, but allow us to express information by defining them on some levels. What this study would like to focus is that about abstract things, there is no other way how to comprehend them then in terms of something that emerges from our experience with material world. So, using conceptual metaphors is the best way to understand abstract nouns.