

A Contrastive Study of Conceptual Metaphor "Death is Rest" in Vietnamese and English

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Abstract—The conceptual metaphor DEATH IS REST is a metaphor that appears with great frequency in discourse expressing the concept of "death" in Vietnamese and English. Its basic structure is a partial mapping schema with the characteristic of "rest" activated in association with the abstract idea of "death". Through analyzing the two languages used, Vietnamese and English, the results of this study aim to point out similarities and differences as well as provide some insights into the mechanism of perceiving "death" in Vietnamese and English through the mindset of "rest". The conclusions of the study can be used as a reference source for other studies on conceptual metaphors and applied language teaching relating to cultural factors.

Index Terms—conceptual metaphor, mapping mechanism, death, rest, sleep, relaxation

I. INTRODUCTION

According to the contents written in the book namely "Metaphor We Live By", Lakoff and Johnson (1980) have changed the traditional views on metaphor, it was no longer just a device of the poetic imagination and the rhetorical flourish, a matter of extraordinary rather than ordinary language, "metaphor is pervasive in everyday life" (p. 3). The two authors also affirm that metaphor is not simply a matter of language but also a matter of thought and action. Metaphors allow the speaker to express briefly, concisely, and vividly, reflecting a person's way of thinking, perspectives, and physiology.

The category of "death" is the one that has received a lot of attention and interest in scientific fields. Specifically, in the field of language research, the expression of an abstract concept "death" also reflects the way of thinking, belief, perception, and cultural influence of people in different cultures. Through a survey on linguistic materials in Vietnamese and English, applying the theoretical background of conceptual metaphors by Lakoff and Johnson and other authors, we identify a set of characteristic features belonging to source and target domains in the cognitive model, create mapping schema and explain the mechanisms of movement and copying of attributes between the two spatial domains "Source – Target" in the metaphor DEATH IT IS REST. Based on the results found, the study points out the similarities and differences in the ways of thinking and expressing "death" of Vietnamese and British people, and explain the influence of those factors as culture, ideologies, religions, and living environment, etc. on the language used of people who speak Vietnamese and English. The results of the research can be used as one of the reference sources serving a more specialized research fields in comparative linguistics, conceptual metaphor in different languages, and foreign language teaching that relating to intercultural factors in the context of international integration.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

A. Previous Studies

The common but abstract concept of "death" have various implicit linguistic expressions in different languages, and it can even be affirmed that the conceptual metaphor of death is always clearly, naturally, and widely present in everyday life. Because of the popularity in language used denoting "death", metaphorical expressions of "death" has become the main research topic or analysis in the works of many authors around the world and in Vietnam.

In the world, the studies of Lakoff and Johnson (1980), Lakoff and Turner (1989), Mar ń-Arrese (1996), Bultinck (1998), Fern ńdez (2006), etc. have applied Conceptual Metaphor Theory to build up the mapping schemas, which related the concepts such as departure, loss, journey, sleep, etc. into the awareness of death.

In "More Than Cool Reason – A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor", Lakoff and Turner (1988) had devoted a large part of chapter 1 "Life, Death, and Time" to list and analyze conceptual metaphors of life, death and time in the poetic works of Dickinson, T.S. Eliot, Dylan Thomas, Fitzgerald, etc. Conceptual metaphors of "death" are named, DEATH IS THE DEPARTURE, DEATH IS THE DESTINATION which comes from the metaphor HUMAN LIFE IS A JOURNEY, DEATH IS DARKNESS, DEATH IS WINTER comes from the metaphor HUMAN LIFE IS ONE DAY / ONE YEAR, DEATH IS THE WITHERING PERIOD OF TREES comes from the metaphor HUMAN LIFE IS A PLANT, DEATH

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IS SLEEP, DEATH IS REST comes from the similarity in image between the person sleeping / resting with the dead, DEATH IS THE LOSS OF FLUID IN THE CONTAINER comes from the metaphor LIFE IS FLUID IN THE BODY, DEATH IS DELIVERANCE comes from the metaphor LIFE IS BONDAGE (The human body is the container that "imprisons the soul", the event "death" brings "release" to the soul from "prison" body).

In the article "To die, to sleep - A Contrastive metaphors for Death and Dying in English and Spanish", Marín-Arrese (1996) approached metaphorical analysis of the concept of death by explaining the reason for using source domains from human experiences and social experiences, such as physiological factors and bodily experiences, associations, personification of "death" with dangerous people or animals, religious factors and beliefs, social factors and cultural practices in different communities who speak English and Spanish. The study also grouped expressions referring to the concept of "death" according to the physical experience of spatial domains such as: container, path, up-down orientation, or time interval.

Also from the cognitive linguistics approach, Bultinck (1998) conducted the study "Metaphors We Die by: Conceptualizations of death in English and their implications for the theory of Metaphor", in which he surveyed metaphorical expressions of death on a corpus of English dictionaries. He concluded that, in general, linguistic metaphors on the concept of death can be divided into the following conceptual metaphors:

- Physiological effects of death
- Death as movement
- Death as downward movement
- Death as sleep
- Death as loss
- Death as surrender
- Feelings concerning the death
- Death as the light gone out
- Religion, mythology and "folk stories": Personifications
- Religion, mythology and "folk stories": "Stories/tales about death"
- Eschatological expression
- Miscellaneous

From the pioneering studies mentioned above, especially based on the metaphorical classification of the concept of death that Bultinck proposed, a series of metaphorical studies on death were specifically conducted on linguistic data of countries or discourses in specific contexts such as Hebrew Bible (Adriaan, 2015); euphemism of death (Amy, 2011; Damaris & David, 2012); the obituaries (Crespo, 2006; Mari, 2014; Anashia, 2018), poetry (Elena, 2014), language used hospital environments, memorial speeches etc. relating to death (Cornelia, 2008; Danijel, 2016; Erich, 2012) or approaching from a comparative and contrasting perspective (Cong, 2014; Charles, 2020).

In Vietnamese language, the conceptual metaphorical studies of "death" have only been appeared as small parts in larger works, such as the treatise "Vietnamese Mind Through Several Key Words - Essay on Linguistics of Culture - Cognition" by Van (2017). The study explains Vietnamese's perception with keywords such as "*destiny*", "*body*" or "*soul*" to see the experience of the body, the way of thinking and the language used when referring to these notions of Vietnamese people.

The treatise "Conceptual Metaphors in Trinh Cong Son's Lyrics" written by Hanh (2015) also mentions the concept of "*death*" in the conceptual metaphor HUMAN LIFE IS A DAY with time segments of a day (morning, noon, afternoon, night, ...) correspond to the stages in a person's life (birth, adulthood, middle age, old age (death)); and Metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY with conceptual metaphor models expressing Trinh Cong Son's perception of life and people based on the processes in a particular journey (space, vehicle, destination, passenger status, ...). From this basic metaphor, the author has inferred metaphor DEATH IS SLEEP to further clarify the notion of life in the musician's view. Besides, through surveying and analyzing lyrics, the author has shown that directional metaphors are also used to reflect thinking about "death" – Diseases and Death oriented downwards.

In addition, in the thesis entitled "Contrastive Analysis Conceptual Metaphor of Death in Vietnamese and English corpus" by Ha (2023) and related articles, the author has generalized the conceptual metaphorical expressions used in two languages English and Vietnamese, pointed out the similarities and differences in the use of metaphorical expressions to indicate the concept of death between the two languages, explained the difference coming from factors related to living conditions, culture, belief, religion, etc.

In general, the above foreign and domestic researches help to form initial understandings of conceptual metaphor of death in English and Vietnamese. However, there is no truly in-depth research to compare the similarities and differences in expressing "death" between the two languages Vietnamese and English. Therefore, this research can be regarded as a part of contribution to the research field.

Besides, there are various books on cultural, customs and religion aspects relating to death, such as the explanations of Buddhism or Christian of karma, life and death (Tung, 2018; Joseph, 2023) and worshiping of Vietnamese (Lan, 2012; Binh, 2021). The information introduced in those books has been used as a source for reference in explaining the differences of thoughts and language used.

B. Theoretical Framework

(a). *Domain*

According to Langacker (1987), “Domains are cognitive entities such as mental experiences, representational spaces, ideas, or conceptual complexes” (p. 147). For cognitive linguistics, the term “Domain” is always associated with conceptual metaphor theory and has a relatively complex knowledge structure, related to unified aspects of experience. For example, when referring to the conceptual Domain JOURNEY, the representative aspects included in it can be mentioned as tourists, transportation methods, routes, destinations, difficulties along the way, etc. Domain is considered a collection of closely related ideas about mental content such as cognitive entities, attributes, or relationships. Perceptual entities are also called elements of the domain and are named by nouns or noun phrases. Attributes and relationships form a system of aspects of the conceptual domain and are expressed by adjectives or verbs.

(b). *Source Domain and Target Domain*

Source Domain and Target Domain are two terms that refer to conceptual domains in the conceptual metaphor structure. Kövecses (2002) defined source domain as the conceptual domain from which people draw metaphorical expressions so that another conceptual domain can be understood; Target Domain is the conceptual domain understood through the usage of Source Domain. From this definition, it can be generalized: Source Domain is formed mainly by people's own experiences through spatial perception activities and the use of six senses to perceive the outside world. Therefore, it is concluded that the images of Source Domain are specific things that can be touched, grasped, and contacted by the senses. On the contrary, Target Domain is a domain that lacks specific images such as thoughts, emotions, life, death, etc., or in other word, Target Domain contains abstract ideas that cannot be contacted through the senses.

In the Source - Target domain relationship, Target Domain needs Source Domain to copy the structure, borrow labels, or build image schemas, etc. to help understand abstract concepts and knowledge easily and appropriately, compatibly with the existing cognitive foundation. For example, LOVE, LIFE, ARGUMENT are abstract and difficult-to-define target domains. To make it easier to understand those abstract entities, these target domains are projected into familiar and specific source domains such as JOURNEY, PRECIOUS ENTITY, and WAR.

The conceptual domain is relatively independent and exists in human spirit, and the Source – Target domains are associated with conceptual metaphors. In specific cases, the conceptual domain can be either the source domain or the target domain. In this study, the author investigated universal and specific source domains to attribute to abstract target domain "death".

(c). *Mapping*

According to Kövecses (2002), mapping is "a set of systematic correspondences between the source and the target in the sense that constituent conceptual elements of B correspond to constituent elements of A" (p. 7). Therefore, understanding conceptual metaphors is often concretized through understanding the mapping mechanism between the source domain and target domain. Fauconnier (1997) also examined a central component of meaning construction: the mappings that link mental spaces.

Mapping in conceptual metaphors has a number of features: *First*, mapping is not conventional but comes from human movement in space, or personal experiences and perception of the outside world in everyday life; *Second*, mapping is partial, does not represent all the attributes of the source domain to the target domain, only highlights some prominent aspects, the remaining unsuitable aspects and characteristics are hidden; *Third*, mapping is unilinear, it is only structured from the source domain to the target domain, not reversed.

To conclude, from the above concepts, some basic arguments which serve as theoretical background to survey and analyze the source domain REST expressing the target domain DEATH in Vietnamese and English are:

- i) Metaphor is a mechanism of thinking, reflecting human thinking of the objective world;
- ii) The structure of a conceptual metaphor includes a source domain and a target domain;
- iii) Mappings are the projection of elements from the source domain to the target domain and must be based on bodily experience, hands-on experience, and knowledge.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. *Research Objectives*

This study uses a corpus of memorial messages written in Vietnamese and English by relatives of victims who passed away due to the infection of Covid-19 during the time between January 1, 2020 and December 31, 2021 (The high time of Covid-19 epidemic). The language used in those messages mentioning “death” and “rest”. Specifically, 92 Vietnamese messages were extracted from the section "Remembrance of Covid-19 victims" posted on website www.VnExpress.net; 104 English messages were taken from "Memorial" column posted on www.Rememberme2020.uk. Data sources are collected randomly in the order they appear on the website, then the author carried out classifying and identifying the conceptual metaphor of death, basing on research method given.

B. *Research Methods*

Specific research methods used include:

- Descriptive method: used to describe the conceptual metaphor DEATH IS REST in Vietnamese and English discourse.
- Conceptual metaphor analysis method: used to analyze the mapping schema. The corpus was surveyed and identified according to the metaphor identification process MIP (Metaphor Identification Procedure) proposed by Pragglejaz Group (2007), performed with 4 steps.
- Statistical and classification methods: used to show the popularity of the cognitive model and are the basis for quantitative comparisons between Vietnamese and English.
- Interdisciplinary analysis methods: used to explain the reasons for the appearance of conceptual metaphors in two languages, Vietnamese and English.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Research Results

The conceptual metaphor DEATH IS REST has the correlation in physical experience of visually perceptible manifestations of "rest" (Source Domain) onto the concept of "death" (Target Domain). The target domain selectively acquires some attributes of the source domain. The source domain REST, which contains several attributes such as: state of relaxation, positivity, sleep (state of body inactivity), etc. are activated and irradiated onto the target domain DEATH. The target domain is selectively acquired according to the principle of partial projection, reflecting human thinking when referring to abstract categories. At the same time, in terms of religion and psychology, people tend to avoid mentioning experiences that cause negative feelings such as "death", therefore, expressing this experience as "rest" is considered as an explanation or expression of "avoidance" to reduce the psychological "fear" or "grief" of facing the loss called "death". The quantitative statistics below list the attributes of "the rest" in source domain which are activated in the metaphor DEATH IS REST in both Vietnamese and English languages.

TABLE 1
ATTRIBUTES OF SOURCE DOMAIN ACTIVATED IN CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR DEATH IS REST IN VIETNAMESE AND ENGLISH LANGUAGES

No.	Attributes	Number of discourses used conceptual metaphors relating DEATH IS REST		Number of metaphorical expressions relating DEATH IS REST		Number of allegories	
		Vietnamese	English	Vietnamese	English	Vietnamese	English
1	Physical and mental release	27	37	53	54	4	7
2	Feeling of enjoyment/ positivity when resting	21	29	24	44	5	4
3	Caring for the rest	6	2	6	2	3	2
4	Sleep / posture, state of the body during sleep	22	18	24	21	4	3
5	Nature/perception of sleep	12	17	12	22	2	2
6	Sleeping place	4	1	4	1	3	1
	Total	92	104	123	144	21	19

Based on 6 typical attributes of the source domain REST, a mapping schema has been activated with the correlations in experience and perception between the source domain and the target domain. The mapping mechanism also operates on the principle of partiality and unidirectionality. Table 2 below models this experiential correlation.

TABLE 2
MAPPING SCHEMA OF "DEATH IS REST" METAPHOR

Source domain: REST		Correlates to	Target domain: DEATH
(1)	Physical and mental release	→	The state of stopping human perception when dying
(2)	Feeling of enjoyment/ positivity when resting	→	Positive psychology towards the event of "death"
(3)	Caring for the rest	→	The good conditions that the deceased receives after death (in religious/religious beliefs)
(4)	Sleep / posture, state of the body during sleep	→	Motionless position and body manifestations at death
(5)	Nature/perception of sleep	→	The peace of mind towards the event of "death"
(6)	Sleeping place	→	The resting place of the dead

From the attributes of the source domain REST relating to factors such as the release of the mind and body from problems, feeling of enjoyment, conditions of care, state of body, feelings about sleep and sleeping place, there are two inferences from basic metaphor DEATH IS REST, namely, DEATH IS THE STATE OF RELAXATION and DEATH IS SLEEP. In metaphors with the source domain RELAXATION STATE, death is conceptualized through the correlation

between the nature of rest as relaxation, allowing the body and mind to rest, stop working, enjoy good care to restore the body to its best state, compensating for the obstacles and injuries people encounter in life.

Although it is the same state of rest, the metaphor with the source domain SLEEP focuses on expressing the sense of correlation between the dead person's position with the sleeping person's motionless position and the ceasing of perception when sleeping. The use of the REST metaphor is a typical illustration of how to choose language to avoid talking about things that are taboo or cause discomfort to the listener. The image of rest brings comfort and ease to both the speaker and the recipient of the information. Therefore, in many condolence messages, the metaphor with the source domain REST is used universally.

B. Conceptual Metaphor DEATH IS REST in Vietnamese

In Vietnamese discourse, typical characteristics of rest are selected and projected onto the target domain DEATH, including: the state of stopping work, the feeling of relaxation, enjoyment, sleep, etc., thereby forming specific inference metaphors: DEATH IS A STATE OF RELAXATION and DEATH IS SLEEP.

(a). Conceptual Metaphor DEATH IS A STATE OF RELAXATION

Conceptual metaphor DEATH IS A STATE OF RELAXATION appears in 54 Vietnamese discourses, with 3 attributes belonging to source domain, and 83 metaphorical expressions. Metaphorical expressions in the discourse commemorating the dead are activated from the dominant attributes of the source domain STATE OF RELAXATION, such as the body and mental release from problems in life such as “*không phải lo toan*” (no longer worried), “*không còn vất vả*” (no longer working hard), “*không còn đau đớn*” (no longer painful),... or the positive thinking, enjoyment feelings of relaxation as “*thanh thân*” (calmly), “*an vui*” (happily), “*bình yên*” (peacefully) or the feeling of being cared “*trong vòng tay ấm áp của nội*” (grandmother's warm embrace), “*an nghỉ nơi miền cực lạc*” (rest in the land of bliss), etc. (Table 3)

TABLE 3
METAPHORICAL EXPRESSIONS DENOTING DEATH IS A STATE OF RELAXATION METAPHOR IN VIETNAMESE LANGUAGE

No.	Source domain	Metaphorical expressions	Frequency
1	Physical and mental release	<i>ngủ ngơi</i> [resting]	19
		<i>không phải lo toan / vướng bận / vất vả</i> [no more worried / busy / working hard]	13
		<i>không còn đau đớn / bệnh tật / mệt mỏi</i> [no more painful / diseases / tiresome]	16
		<i>siêu thoát</i> [sublimity]	5
2	Feeling of enjoyment/ positivity when resting	<i>thanh thân</i> [calm]	7
		<i>an vui</i> [joyful]	8
		<i>bình yên</i> [peaceful]	5
		<i>hạnh phúc hơn</i> [happily]	3
		<i>cười tươi</i> [smiling]	1
3	Caring for the rest	<i>bên vòng tay của Chúa/ hưởng nhan Chúa</i> [In the arms of God / receive God's rewards]	2
		<i>an nghỉ nơi miền cực lạc</i> [rest in the land of bliss]	2
		<i>trong vòng tay những người thân yêu / vòng tay ấm áp của nội / tổ tiên</i> [in the arms of loved ones / grandmother's warm embrace/ ancestors]	2
Total			83

Some typical examples illustrating the activation of those attributes are shown below:

With the viewpoint "life is suffering", life experiences are challenges for the living, "death" is seen as physical and mental liberation from difficulties and obstacles in social life.

(1) *Hôm qua, cái Thất đầu tiên của Út. Út đi rồi nhưng chưa kịp nhắn nhủ với ai điều gì. Thì ã th không còn mệt, không còn mất ngủ nữa Út nhỉ!*¹

[Yesterday, Ut's first week. Ut left but didn't have time to say anything to anyone. Well, **no more tiredness, no more insomnia**, Ut!]

¹ <https://vnexpress.net/nguyen-van-dung-1962-2021-4392285.html>

(2) *Ba cuối cùng đã không còn phải đau đớn khi phải sống dựa vào máy móc hàng tuần nữa rồi. Cũng không phải khó chịu khi ăn uống nữa. Và quan trọng là cuối cùng ba đã được giải thoát²*

[Dad finally **no longer has to endure the pain of having to rely on machines for weeks anymore. No more discomfort when eating or drinking.** And most importantly, Dad **was finally released**]

Metaphorical expressions such as, “*không còn phải đau đớn khi phải sống dựa vào máy móc*” (finally no longer has to endure the pain of having to rely on machines), “*không còn mệt, không còn mất ngủ*” (no more tiredness, no more insomnia) in the two examples above reflect the thinking of death as a state in which people no longer have to face physical problems (pain caused by illness) or are no longer responsible for their relationships, or social constraints (worrying and worrying about making a living)

The feelings of enjoying physical and mental relaxation, and being cared for are expressed as follows:

(3) *Bác ơi, con tin là giờ này bác đã được an nghỉ trong vòng tay ấm áp của nội. Bác qua với nội, con ở nơi này nhớ hai người!³*

[Uncle, I believe that you are now **resting in my grandmother's warm arms.** You came over with my grandmother, I miss you two here!]

(4) ... *Và y như rằng điều con không muốn đã thành sự thật, sáng Mẹ báo Di Hải đã đi. Di Hải luôn là người con, người chị và người đi đặc biệt là người Mẹ hiền hậu nhất, yêu thương, hy sinh cho mọi người trong nhà nhất ... Di Hải luôn cười tươi và bình yên nhé. Gia đình mình luôn thương và nhớ nụ cười đẹp như cô Tiên của Di Hải.⁴*

[And just like what I didn't want had come true, in the morning Mom told me that Aunt Hai had left. Auntie Hai is always the daughter, sister and especially the gentlest mother, loving and sacrificing for everyone in the family... Auntie Hai **always smiles brightly and peacefully.** My family always loves and remembers Auntie Hai's fairy-like beautiful smile.]

Those metaphorical expressions as “*an nghỉ trong vòng tay ấm áp*” (resting in my grandmother's warm arms), “*cười tươi và bình yên*” (smiles brightly and peacefully), etc. help specify the source domain RELAXATION. The use of positive references, associated with relaxation, enjoyment, resting, and psychological comfort to express "death" makes the original negative meaning of it less intense, and avoids causing fear and awkwardness in communication when mentioning “death”.

(b). Conceptual Metaphor DEATH IS SLEEP

This conceptual metaphor is found in 38 discourses (Table 1) with frequency of 40 appearances (Table 4). The mapping schema from the source domain SLEEP to the target domain DEATH is based on the perception of body experience. When sleeping, people fall into an unconscious state, and through visual observation, the image of the sleeping person will be in a motionless body state with a lying position, associated with the image of a sleeping person. Because of the similarities in the inference, when talking about the concept of "death", to avoid having to mention it directly, the speaker can refer to "sleep" with the states related to sleep such as "sleeping", "lying", etc., positive feelings about sleep such as: (sleeping) peacefully, soundly, "spacious", "cool" sleeping place, etc.

TABLE 4
METAPHORICAL EXPRESSIONS DENOTING DEATH IS SLEEP METAPHOR IN VIETNAMESE LANGUAGE

No.	Source domain	Metaphorical expressions	Frequency
1	Sleep / posture, state of the body during sleep	<i>nằm</i> [lie]	4
		<i>an giấc</i> [sleep peacefully]	5
		<i>ngủ</i> [sleep]	12
		<i>không tỉnh dậy</i> [not wake up]	3
2	Nature/perception of sleep	<i>(ngủ) yên / ngon</i> [(sleep) well / deeply]	11
		<i>Mơ</i> [dream]	1
3	Sleeping place	<i>nơi Ba nằm rộng rãi, khang trang, mát mẻ</i> [the place where Ba lies is spacious and cool]	1
		<i>dưới mộ</i> [in grave]	2
		<i>Trong Chúa</i> [in God]	1
Total			40

Below are some typical examples:

(5) *Thầy ơi, tuy con chỉ mới học với thầy được một thời gian ngắn, nhưng biết tin thầy đi lòng con tiếc nuối nhiều lắm. Thầy thật sự rất giỏi, hiền và là người cha tốt. Thầy hãy ngủ thật ngon thầy nha, thầy đã vất vả nhiều rồi!⁵*

[Teacher, although I have only studied with you for a short time, knowing that you had left makes me feel very sad. You are really very good, gentle and a good father. Please **sleep well, teacher**, you have worked hard!]

(6) *Xin vĩnh biệt hai em và nhớ mãi sự đau thương, mất mát này. Hân nay giỗ trăm ngày, hai em hãy ngủ yên trong Chúa và ra đi bình an.⁶*

² <https://vnexpress.net/nguyen-cong-thinh-1953-2021-4393197.html>

³ <https://vnexpress.net/nguoi-bac-tan-cao-hien-hau-cua-con-1966-2021-4405304.html>

⁴ <https://vnexpress.net/di-hai-2021-4392612.html>

⁵ <https://vnexpress.net/thay-nghi-2021-4392819.html>

[Goodbye to both of you and I will remember this pain and loss forever. Today is the hundred-day anniversary of your death. Please **sleep peacefully in God** and go in peace.]

In the above example, sleep is also identified with rest. When sleeping, people no longer must face with problems in life, their body and mind are in an inactive state. That state of rest is described by positive adjectives “*ngủ ngon*” (sleep well), “*ngủ yên*” (sleep peacefully).

The reference to the burial place of the dead is expressed as a place to live, a comfortable place to rest, but does not cause a feeling of horror when being mentioned.

(7) *Cuối cùng hôm qua 28/11 vợ chồng con và Má cũng hoàn thành được tâm nguyện trước khi mất của Ba là tổ chức lễ an táng cho Ba an nghỉ ở Hoa Viên Bình Dương, vì lúc sống Ba muốn có chỗ để con cháu lúc nào cũng tới thăm Ba được. Nơi Ba nằm khà rộng rãi khang trang, mát mẻ, cây cối được chăm sóc tỉ mỉ. Ba hãy an giấc thanh thân Ba nhé!*⁷

[Finally, yesterday, November 28, my husband and I and Mom had fulfilled Dad's wish before he passed away, which was to organize a funeral ceremony for him to rest in Hoa Vien Binh Duong, because when Dad was alive, he wanted to have a place for his children and grandchildren can come to visit. **The place where Dad have lied down forever is located is quite spacious, cool, and the trees are meticulously cared for. Please sleep in peace, Dad.**]

In the example above, the state of "death" is described by “*an giấc thanh thân*” (sleep in peace) and the burial place is perceived as a place to sleep with a resting attitude “*nằm*” (lie), “*rộng rãi*” (spacious), “*mát mẻ*” (cool).

C. Conceptual Metaphor DEATH IS REST in English

In the English corpus, conceptual metaphors with the source domain REST appear in 104 discourses with 144 metaphorical expressions (Table 1). The basic metaphor DEATH IS REST in English also gives rise to two inference metaphors: DEATH IS A STATE OF RELAXATION and DEATH IS SLEEP.

(a). Conceptual Metaphor DEATH IS A STATE OF RELAXATION

In English corpus, conceptual metaphor DEATH IS A STATE OF RELAXATION also appears with relatively high frequency, specifically in 68 linguistic expressions, 13 metaphorical expressions with frequency of 100 (Table 5). “*Pain / cancer/ (...) free*”, “*isn't suffering*” are examples that help think about the vague concept of "death" more specifically, making it easier to imagine that it is just like rest, the dead person is just enjoying the freedom with no pain and no more suffering.

The expressions “*relax*”, “*rest*”, “*find peace of mind and happiness*” etc., combined with words showing emotional states such as “*peacefully*”, “*enjoy*”, or words mentioning caregiver and resting place “*God cares in heaven*” bring positive emotions when talking about death. It can be seen from quantitative statistics that the target domain DEATH is expressed through the source domain RELAXATION by the verb “*rest*” combined with words such as “*peaceful*”, “*at peace*” which are used with the greatest frequency to indicate the quality of a “state of relaxation”.

TABLE 5
METAPHORICAL EXPRESSIONS DENOTING DEATH IS A STATE OF RELAXATION METAPHOR IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

No.	Source domain	Metaphorical expressions	Frequency
1	Physical and mental release	(pain/ cancer/...) free	18
		no longer suffering	9
		can't get sick anymore	3
		doesn't have trouble	1
		relax / singing	1
		Rest	21
2	Feeling of enjoyment/ positivity when resting	found peace of mind and happiness	1
		Enjoy	1
		(rest) in peace / at peace / peacefully	32
		Easily	8
3	Caring for the rest	Happily	3
		God cares	1
		God takes care in heaven	1
Total			100

In the example below, the expression “*rest in peace*” is used to refer to the state of death. This is a positive approach referring death to a relaxing break after struggling with the pain of illness.

(8) *Rabah Bensifi - I had 25 happy years with Rabah. He was visiting family in Algeria when he caught Covid. His funeral had been held before I even knew he had died so I was unable to be with him. Rest in peace my darling I miss you.*⁸

⁶ <https://vnexpress.net/pham-van-ngoc-pham-van-hung-1970-2021-4392609.html>

⁷ <https://vnexpress.net/le-van-thang-1949-2021-4396347.html>

⁸ <https://www.rememberme2020.uk/page/10/#memorials>

The following example is typical of the way of perceiving "death" with the privilege of being cared for, protected, and surrounded by the divine (God in Christian belief). God saves people, frees people from physical fatigue and brings people "home", freeing them from pain.

(9) *God saw you getting tired when a cure was not to be, he wrapped his arms around you and said come with me, you fought so hard to stay but that was all in vain, he took you to his loving home and free you from your pain.*⁹

Purposely, to avoid talking about death directly, people use source domains such as "relaxation state", and activate attributes of the nature of rest to refer to the concept of "death". It is regarded as a positive approach, expressed in euphemisms to ensure the politeness, and reduce the feeling of fear or difficulty in communicating in case mentioning "death", a theme relating to taboo and embarrassments.

(b). Conceptual Metaphor DEATH IS SLEEP

The conceptual metaphor DEATH IS SLEEP appeared in 36 discourses, of which 6 metaphorical expressions appeared 44 times (Table 6), helping to relate the abstract concept of "death" with a specific physiological experience of humans - Sleep. This metaphor mainly depicts source domain attributes such as the physical experience of sleep such as a state of motionless, human posture when sleeping such as the "laying" position, the greeting "goodnight", adjectives such as "peaceful", "tight", "deep", "well" are used in combination with verb "sleep" in many linguistic expressions to indicate the quality of "sleep". By adding adjective or adverb describing positive state when "sleeping" such as "sleep tight", "sleep safe", "sleep peacefully", "sleep well", people find it easier expressing "death" in many contexts.

TABLE 6
METAPHORICAL EXPRESSIONS DENOTING DEATH IS SLEEP METAPHOR IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

No.	Source domain	Metaphorical expressions	Frequency
1	Sleep / posture, state of the body during sleep	Lays	2
		never wake up	2
		Sleep	17
2	Nature/perception of sleep	(sleep) tight / safe / peacefully / well	17
		Goodnight	5
3	Sleeping place	in bed	1
	Total		44

Considering the following metaphorical expressions:

(10) *Forever in our hearts. **Sleep tight** our beautiful man. You were a diamond. We will cherish the memories of our loving Son, Dad, Partner, Brother, Grandson and Friend.*¹⁰

(11) ***Goodnight**, God bless. Always in our hearts, we love you forever.*¹¹

The messages used in the above examples have activated attributes of source domain such as the sleeping state "sleep tight" and the greeting "goodnight" to partially structure the target domain DEATH.

The following examples relate sleep to the ceasing of perception. When sleeping, people fall into a state of rest where the brain does not control the senses to perceive objective things. In the following case, it is the cessation of feeling pain caused by illness "pain free".

(12) *To my darling Richard, taken from me and our family too soon. You can **sleep at peace now, pain free**. Thankful for the wonderful memories we had together. Love you always. Eileen Kim Sally and Stephen.*¹²

This way of perception helps to think about the abstract concept of "death" more specifically, making it easier to imagine that "death" is like sleep, the dead person is just enjoying his forever sleep. These positive ways of thinking and expressing help to approach the fear and sadness about death as well as mentioning "death" somewhat less difficult.

D. Discussion

From the survey results of 92 Vietnamese discourses and 104 English discourses (on two data sources, Vnexpress.net and Rememberme2020.uk), the similarities and differences between the way of perceiving "death" have been revealed and presented in conceptual metaphor DEATH IS REST in Vietnamese and English:

(a). Similarities

First, the use of conceptual metaphor DEATH IS REST is popular in both languages: in both Vietnamese and English languages, this conceptual metaphor is used with high frequency (Statistics shows that in Vietnamese language, out of 92 discourses surveyed, there are 123 metaphorical expressions; in English language, out of 104 discourses containing metaphors, there are 144 expressions). From this quantitative data, it can be concluded that in the way of thinking of not only Vietnamese, but also British people, the perception of "death" is as a "rest" with the inference of "a state of relaxation" and "sleep" are common. This conclusion proves the universality of the DEATH IS REST metaphor in expressing "death".

⁹ <https://www.rememberme2020.uk/page/15/#memorials>

¹⁰ <https://www.rememberme2020.uk/page/15/#memorials>

¹¹ <https://www.rememberme2020.uk/page/6/#memorials> posted June 12, 2021

¹² <https://www.rememberme2020.uk/page/6/#memorials>

Second, the way to perceive and activate knowledge in the specific source domain is similar: perception through the physiological experience of sleep and the influence of ideology and belief. Regarding physiological experience, both Vietnamese and British people rely on the attributes of "sleep" to "death" such as the state of motionless of the body or the cessation of perception. Besides, referring to ideological aspect, although the approach and explanation of the phenomenon "death" is different, the similarity in relating the source domain of REST with the belief of "death". In the belief of both Western and Eastern cultures, "death", especially caused by deceases or illness, is the liberation of the body from difficulties, problems, and challenges.

Third, the use of conceptual metaphor DEATH IS REST is the positive approach when mentioning "death". Psychologically, "death" is a kind of "taboo" in language which causes awkward feelings or embarrassment in communication. Metaphorizing the concept DEATH IS REST is a way to interpret objective reality in a positive direction using euphemisms.

(b). Differences

From the quantitative data and the mapping mechanism from the source domain REST to the target domain DEATH, two main differences in the ways "death" are perceived by Vietnamese and English people throughout conceptual metaphor DEATH IS REST are as follows:

The first is the difference in caregiver-related factors at rest. In Vietnamese discourse, "*beside God*", "*in the arms of ancestors*", etc. refers to the various "care-giver" (God / Buddhist / Ancestors) that the dead are cared for and taken care of when resting, depending on the beliefs of the alive, while in English discourse, people only use the expression "*God cares in heaven*" in which "God" is referred to the "care-giver" for the dead ones when they have eternal rest in heaven (Joseph, 2023). This difference can be explained by the religious beliefs of Vietnamese and British people. Vietnamese people, influenced by diverse life of religious beliefs, from indigenous ancestor worship beliefs, the long-standing existence of Buddhism to the intrusion of Christianity in centuries ago. Each belief and religion has different way of explanation on how the dead ones can enjoy rest and care after death. That is why, in Vietnamese discourse, there are diverse appearances of subjects who care for the dead (Buddhist, God, Ancestors, relatives, etc.) (Lan, 2012).

The British's main religion is Christianity and the belief in a happy life after death in Heaven, so the image of God represents the one who protects and takes care of the pious people. Therefore, in English, generally, the "care-giver" is believed to be God.

The second difference is the resting place. Resting places in Vietnamese people's conception include both tangible resting places (graves) and invisible resting places that are symbols according to religious beliefs such as "land of bliss" (according to Buddhism) (Tùng, 2018), "in the arms of loved ones" (Ancestor Worship belief), "God's arms" (according to Christianity). Meanwhile, the British only use metaphors to refer to an invisible, symbolic resting place such as "Heaven". In English corpus, there is no expression describing the resting place as the grave where the dead are buried.

Regarding the intangible and symbolic resting place, the difference comes from the influence of various religions and beliefs on the thinking of Vietnamese people. In Eastern culture in general and Vietnamese culture in particular, symbolic resting place maybe *Suối Vàng* (the Golden Stream), the place of the ancestor or the heaven. On the contrary, the British think about the place of rest as Heaven, where God resides according to Christian belief.

Regarding the tangible resting place, namely "grave", in Vietnamese discourse, there are expressions describe the resting/sleeping place of the dead as "*spacious, cool*". This difference is explained from the Eastern and Western views on Life and Death. Vietnamese people, with their belief in ancestor worship, attach great importance to graves, which are the places where the dead are buried. Binh (2021) has affirmed "Vietnamese people believed that ancestors and descendants are interconnected by blood, if the ancestors' graves are well-cared, the descendants will be at peace. The descendants have the duty to respectfully look after the buried places of the pass-away" (p.29). Therefore, Vietnamese people are very careful in choosing land and choosing the direction to place and build a grave for the deceased, showing their complete affection by taking care of the deceased to have a peaceful and beautiful grave.

For Westerners, they pay more attention to the issue of 'birth', so birthdays are often highly emphasized and celebrated every year, and death days are hardly something they think about much. In the East, on the contrary, the date of birth is paid little attention, but the date of death is remembered more carefully and celebrated every year, called the taboo day or death anniversary. Eastern people considered life as temporary and limited, death is the true return; therefore, the burial places of Eastern people are often highly respected. That way of thinking is reflected in the fact that Vietnamese people describe the resting place of the dead while British people do not tend to talk about graves or burial places.

V. CONCLUSION

Conceptual metaphor DEATH IS REST appears with great frequency in discourses expressing the concept of "death" in Vietnamese and English. Through a survey of 196 Vietnamese and English discourses, the study has shown that the source domain REST is used to express the abstract target concept DEATH. The study also demonstrated that knowledge about humans (psychology, physiology) and culture has influenced the way Vietnamese and British people think and express "death". Finding this common source domain also provides suggestions for people from other cultures

on how to choose and use language appropriately when practicing communication in international environments, avoiding causing confusion, awkward or uncomfortable communication in situations that mention "taboo" content.

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