

## Study the poem “WAVE”-XUÂN QUỲNH from a conceptual metaphor perspective

Dr. Pham Thi Huong Quynh<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

Cognitive linguistics studies language in relation to people-people in thinking activities such as thinking and acting. Conceptual metaphor is a way of thinking through language. This article focuses on finding and constructing a plan to learn about Song-a poem written by Xuan Quynh in Literature grade 12 through conceptual metaphors. This is an applied study to prove the universality of conceptual metaphors.

**Keywords:** cognitive linguistics, conceptual metaphors, love, grade 12, human thinking

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<sup>1</sup> Vietnam Institute of linguistics  
Corresponding author E-mail: hqp2000@gmail.com

## 1. Introduction

In cognitive linguistics, conceptual metaphors are seen as a mental manipulation that helps us to understand the world as well as a tool to create meaning for conceptual scopes close to the real human experience domain. Conceptual metaphors have become a popular object of study of linguistics and the surrounding sciences. Literature is also a form of human thinking and a way for people to communicate with the world. In literature, the point of view of indifferentism is deeply expressed. Conceptual metaphors also exist in literary works because that is the human way of thinking. Literary metaphor is largely an extension of our conventional system of metaphorical thinking. Metaphorical ideas can go beyond ordinary ways of thinking into the realm of thinking and poetic language. In the scope of this article, we offer applied research of conceptual metaphors in guiding students to learn about Xuan Quynh's poem "Wave" in the Literature program 12.

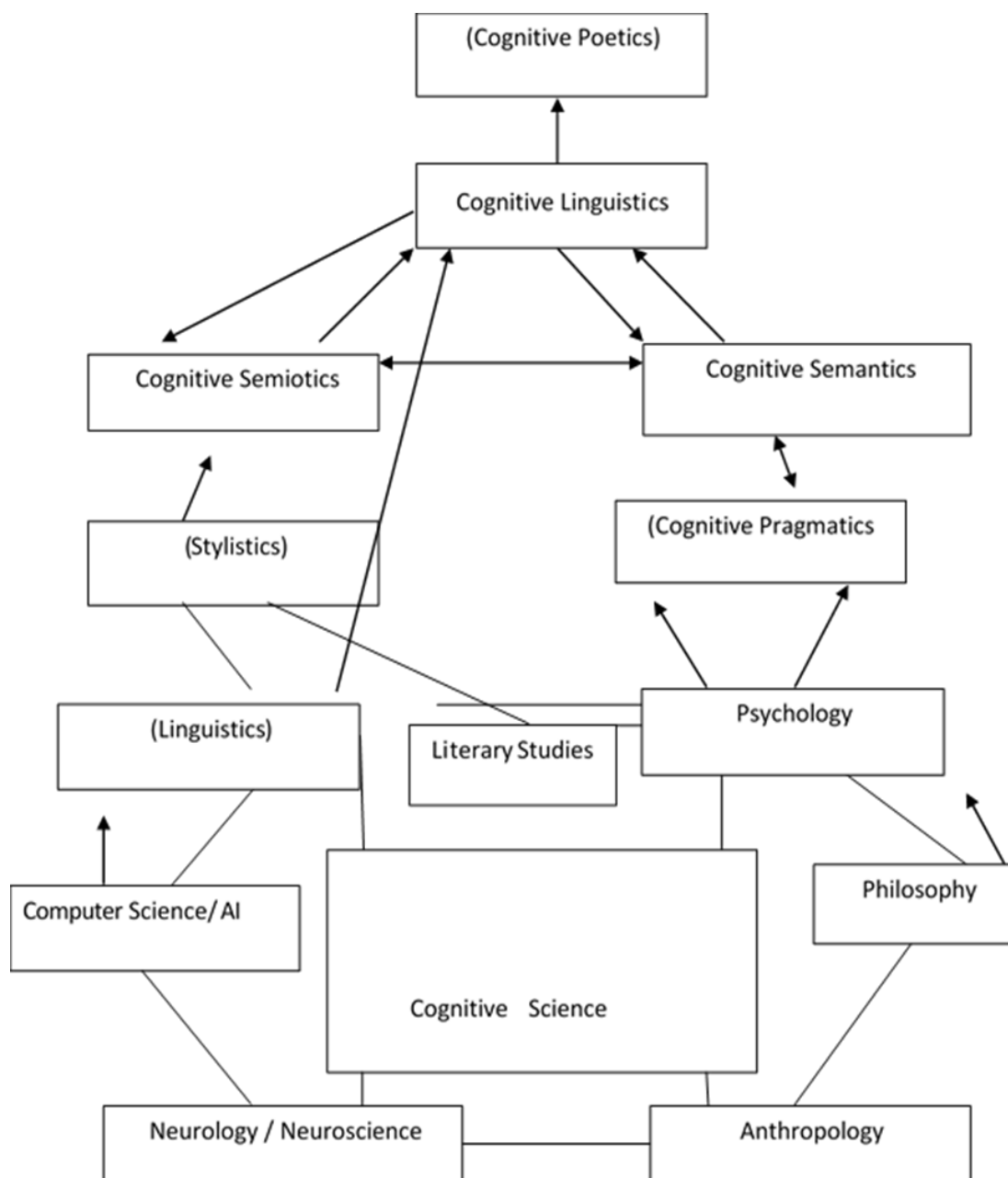
## 2. Theoretical basis

### 1. The position of Cognitive poetics

Cognitive poetics is the direction of study of conceptual metaphors in poetry. There are many scientists studying this issue such as Stockwell (2002), E. Semino and J. Culpeper (2002), G. Steen and J. Gavins (2003), Kovecses (2002), Tsur (2008), ... Conceptual metaphor is not an object but a new direction in the study and reception of literature in general and poetry in particular. It is the study on the level of human thinking, culture and conceptual system.

Lakoff, Turner, Ray, and Gibbs have shown that poets routinely use a number of methods to create novel languages and unique images from everyday languages and thinking. These include: extending, elaboration, questioning, combining, personification [cited by Kovecses (2002), p49].

The history of cognitive linguistics shows that cognitive poetics has very deep roots in cognitive science. The following diagram will show the location of cognitive poeticism.



**This chart is provided by Tsur**

Around cognitive science, there are anthropology, philosophy, neuroscience, computer science, psychology, literature. The studies of language have developed and formed the discipline of cognitive linguistics. In turn, cognitive linguistics is affected and adversely impacted by a number of disciplines such as applied research, the study of grammar, semantics, rhetorical style, cognitive semiotics. In the development, cognitive linguistics has formed the poetic learning of perception.

## **2. Conceptual processes**

One of the basic theories of cognitive linguistics is conceptualization. This theory holds linguistic units such as words, speech, ... all express ideas and they have corresponding meanings. For example, the notion of HOA cannot be determined without the field of PLANT. These two concepts are closely related and their relationship must be visualized in a conceptual structure. In which, HOA is conceptual silhouette and PLANT

is the conceptual background, ie conceptual structure is presupposed by the idea of HOA. “Our ideas about the way our conceptual system is shaped by our constant successful functioning in the physical and cultural environment come partly from the tradition of research in human development begun by Jean Piaget and partly from the tradition in ecological psychology growing out of the work of JJ Gibson and James Jen ”[G. Lakoff, M. Johnson (1980), p3]. The basis of the concept is the direct emotional experience that people gain through the process of perceiving the world by sensory organs, through thinking activities and communicating in the form of language.

A concept is an image, it can move from a sentimental to a thought. The *hot* concept is a sensorial one/an emotional one because it is the result of the perception of temperature. When the temperature is hot, people feel frustrated and uncomfortable, so the *hot* concept is converted to the concept of anger. This has its basis. Physiologically, when someone gets angry, the manifestations often include: twitching temples, sweating palms, trembling hands and feet, blood filled with adrenaline, faster heart beats, muscles ready to operate. In fact, the reason will no longer be alert when it comes to anger and physiological manifestations will make us lose our temper and control. Therefore, there are many statements expressing this conceptual thinking such as anger, warm blood, hot face, ...

In spoken language, we often structure the experiences we intend to convey and that is when we use conceptualization processes. If Talmy talks about structure mapping, perspective implementation, attention distribution and motivation, then Langacker refers to concepts like choice, perspective, background image, point of view, indexing. Conceptual metaphor is a conceptualization in language. We also agree with this point of view and assume that if traditional metaphors are often seen as a figurative use based on the similarity of the bow (to the nose), they are convention. Then, conceptual metaphors are not only considered in terms of words but also in the scope of thinking and action. For example, we think LOVE IS JOURNEY, we are conceptualizing the category LOVE as a process of moving with many elements and events through the category OF THE JOURNEY goal. Consider the following statements:

So you go your **way**, I go my **way**

Married, then go to the **destination**

Bold words are all elements related to human life's journey but are used for love.

Obviously, conceptual metaphor is an irradiation of the structure and internal systems of the spirit to the target domain. Usually the target domain is more abstract and the source domain is more specific and we rely on our own experience of the world to conceptualize abstract categories.

### 3. Literature in school

Literature is the name of the current subject of Vietnam (from middle school to high school). The Literature program has 3 goals [Do Ngoc Thong (2014)]:

Firstly, Literature provides students with general, basic, modern, systematic knowledge of language (focus on Vietnamese) and literature (focus is on Vietnamese literature), appropriate with the development level of the age group and human resource training requirements in the period of national industrialization and modernization [Ministry of Education and Training (2006)].

Secondly, Literature forms and develops the ability to use Vietnamese, receive literature, perceive aesthetics....

Thirdly, Literature fosters the spirit like love of Vietnamese, love nature, family, and national pride.

In order to experiment with the application of cognitive exams in teaching literary works in schools, we designed lesson plans containing the knowledge of conceptual metaphors. We choose the poem “Wave” in Literature program 12, volume 1, because it is very popular with the students. In terms of age psychology, the 12th grade students at the age of 17, a new age, they have vibrations with their opposite sex and have their own conceptions of love and life. This poem is about love, a topic that always attracts youth. Moreover, the poem “Wave” has a typical conceptual metaphor that LOVE IS THE JOURNEY. For this experiment, we wanted to select a work with recognizable typical conceptual metaphors to present to students.

### 3. Learn the poem Wave (Sóng) - Xuan Quynh from the perspective of conceptual metaphors

The poem has 2 images, wave and a woman. Waves are central images because waves are the source circuits connecting poetic images. In fact, the two images, though two but one, all show the ego of Xuân Quỳnh. The lyrical character in poetry is the author. This poem has 9 stanzas, 5-word poetic form. The basic contents of this poem are:

The wave is a symbol of the mystery in love and a strong desire for love. (stanza 1,2,3,4)

Wave - a symbol of nostalgia in a woman's love (stanza 5)

- Wave - fidelity to a woman's love (stanza 6, 7)

- Waves - the concern of anxiety in the hearts of women and aspirations immortalized love (stanza 8, 9)

Wave - symbolizes the conceptual thinking of poet Xuan Quynh. To guide students through the understanding of the Wave poem from a conceptual metaphor perspective, we propose a process of inquiry through questions and activities. The following is a presentation of a system of questions and a guide to the answer of the teacher.

Teacher: Through studying the poem, Can you point out the movement states of the waves?

Students answer: The movement states of the waves correspond to the following manifestations: finding the sea, the wave has the starting point for the journey is the wind, the wave's journey tends to be forward / reverse, the destination of the wave is the lover.

Sông không hiểu nổi mình

Sóng tìm ra tận bể

(The river cannot understand itself

Waves find their way to the sea)

These two verses represent the journey of the waves.

Sóng bắt đầu từ gió

Gió bắt đầu từ đâu

Em cũng không biết nữa

Khi nào ta yêu nhau?

(Waves start from the wind

Where does the wind start

I do not know either

When do we love each other?)

This stanza wants to find the starting point for the wave's journey.

Ôi con sóng nhớ bờ

Ngày đêm không ngủ được

(Oh the waves miss the shore  
They lose sleep all day and night)  
The shore wave is an event that takes place during the wave's movement.

Dầu xuôi về phương Bắc  
Dầu ngược về phương Nam  
Nơi nào em cũng nhớ  
Hướng về anh một phương  
(Although down to the North  
Though back to the South  
Everywhere I remember  
Towards you one way)

Up / down is the journey of the wave and the destination of the wave is the direction of the wave.

- Ở ngoài kia đại dương  
Trăm nghìn con sóng đó  
Con nào chẳng tới bờ  
Dù muôn vời cách trở  
(Out there in the ocean  
Hundreds of thousands of waves  
All come ashore  
In spite of a myriad of impediments)

This stanza also shows that the destination of the wave is shore.

Teacher: In your opinion, from the dynamic states of waves, what did Xuan Quynh compare love with in human life?

Students answer:

The movement of the waves corresponds to the journey of movement in human life. For example, the downward journey, the destination of the wave, the girl's destination is the man.

Teacher: Find the correspondence between the human journey illuminating the love.

Answer: In the poem "Wave" by Xuan Quynh, wave / you and you are lovers, tourists of the journey. The medium is the love story of me and me in poetry, the journey is the forward / backward, intense / mellow, .. states of the wave. Covered distance is the real separation of two lovers, very typical nostalgic states of love. The obstacles encountered are anxiety, restlessness in the girl's mind. The decision on which path to go is a choice of waves that always head to the shore. The destination of the journey is the brother, the desire to immortalize love.

Teacher summarizes: Thus, the journey corresponds to the love of couples in 7 aspects: tourists, vehicles, developments in the journey, distance in the journey, obstacles encountered, decisions the path to go, the destination of the journey. Thanks to this correspondence, love is made clear and conceptual metaphors call it irradiation. We have the following irradiation scheme:

- (1) Tourists are lovers
- (2) The vehicle is the love relationship itself
- (3) Movements in the journey are events in the relationship
- (4) The distance covered in the journey is the development of a love relationship
- (5) The obstacles encountered along the way are hard experiences

(6) Deciding on a person's path to go on the journey is making choices about what to do

(7) The destination of the journey is the destination of love

Teacher introduces conceptual metaphors: Thus, the way of thinking of love as the journey of poet Xuan Quynh is a conceptual metaphor called LOVE IS TRIP. Conceptual metaphors are defined as the understanding of one idea (or domain of ideas) through another idea (or conceptual domain). Conceptual metaphors are always associated with human experience, for example we organize our whole understanding of the journey to awareness of love. Conceptual metaphor of LOVE IS A JOURNEY where LOVE is the destination domain, JOURNEY is the source domain. The characteristics of the source domain will be the basis for clarifying the meaning of the target domain and are thus called irradiation. For example, the journey will have participants in the itinerary, vehicle, destination, ... irradiated to the destination region to make the destination domain LOVE become understandable.

- Teacher outlined requirements: Please write quickly generalizations about the content and art of Song's poem, then present it to the class.

The presentation of students should ensure the following ideas:

+ The poem "Wave" has expressed a passionate and faithful, sweetness. I love overcoming the test of time and the finiteness of human life. Through the image of waves, the poet has discovered many emotional laws as well as the good qualities of a woman in love.

+ The poem has unique artistic creations, from building a parallel image between "wave" and "I" to the use of five-letter poems. Simultaneously poetic rhythms are created like the resounding rhythm of waves and quartets and symbolic poetry image are also built.

+ The poem shows a metaphor of the concept LOVE IS THE JOURNEY. All the characteristics of love such as nostalgia, fidelity, ... are expressed through the characteristics of the journey in human life.

- Teacher asked: What is the most quiet thing about you when you finish studying this poem? Which poem do you like best in this poem? Why?

- Students answer according to their personal thoughts.

- Teacher calls a student to memorize.

Thus, for the poem Song - Xuan Quynh, it is quite feasible to design a lesson plan in the direction of conceptual metaphor. Because this is a refreshing way of guiding students to learn a poem. This approach creates excitement for students to learn Literature. This is also a way to foster the ability to perceive literature as well as develop thinking for students in Vietnam.

#### 4. Conclusion and Discussion

Cognitive poetics focuses on the study of conceptual metaphors in poetry, it still has the common properties of conceptual metaphors on the principle of 'cause of cause'. Cognitive poetics is not a separate field from conceptual metaphors but a branch that delves deeply into a linguistic array from which to find the psychological processes related to perception in poetry. . It helps us to answer the question of how knowledge is organized in the poetic world and what conceptual systems can be visualized. At the same time, poetic learning of perception also gives us an understanding of cognitive models, methods of conceptualizing reality to explain the thinking process in poetry. Poetry is not only about emotions but also associated with thinking processes, human awareness of the world and the values hidden deep in the human subconscious. The subconscious itself is



constituted by experiences in which individual conscience and ideals are constituted by norms, norms, norms and perceptions of values, of society, of morality and of religion, ...

Designing a poem from the perspective of conceptual metaphors is a new direction in which students are interested in learning about poetry. We believe this will give teachers and students a new dimension to understanding poetry more deeply. The poem “Wave” will be received by the students and its meaning will be well absorbed.

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