



Received: 03-05-2026
Accepted: 13-06-2026

International Journal of Advanced Multidisciplinary Research and Studies

ISSN: 2583-049X

Conceptual Metaphors of Marriage in English and Vietnamese Idioms and Proverbs: Universal Patterns, Cultural Specificities, and Socio-Cultural Foundations

Nguyen Thi Tuyet Hanh

Department of English Language, Ho Chi Minh City University of Economics and Finance, Vietnam

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.62225/2583049X.2026.6.3.6504>

Corresponding Author: Nguyen Thi Tuyet Hanh

Abstract

The present study aims at identifying the socio-cultural bases of similarities and differences of English and Vietnamese idioms and proverbs, especially the conceptual metaphors of marriage, that are universal and culture-specific. The study shows that metaphors can be seen as cognitive tools that retain cultural perceptions and as linguistic devices. It is based on the conceptual metaphor theory by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) ^[1] and the classification of universal and culture-specific metaphors by Kövecses (2010) ^[6]. Marriage is an intricate social institution of journeys, contracts, unions, harmony, and destiny. English idioms and proverbs are often based on the Western values of individual choice, equality, and institutional regulation, and often describe marriage as a partnership or contract. Vietnamese proverbs and idioms, however, tend to emphasize family obligations, fate, and harmony, consistent with collectivist values and Confucian traditions. The study also explores the role of idioms in

reinforcing or subverting social hierarchies and cultural norms and metaphors related to gender roles and destiny/fate. Idioms have a large degree of metaphorical value, semantic unpredictability, and formal fixity. The features that characterize proverbs are syntactic completeness, pedagogical character, conciseness, and oral transmission. Proverbs and idioms are products of collective wisdom; they transmit cultural norms and influence cognition and behavior. Comparative study shows that English and Vietnamese share common metaphorical structures, but their differences are the symbols of different socio-cultural contexts. The West is founded on Christian theology and individualism; Vietnam is founded on the ethics of Confucianism, the philosophy of Buddhism, and the traditions of the agrarian. The study points to the importance of analogies for understanding cultural diversity and the influence of such diversity on perceptions of one of the most basic institutions of humanity.

Keywords: Conceptual Metaphors, Idioms of Marriage, Proverbs, Gender Roles, Destiny/Fate, Sociocultural Context

1. Introduction

Marriage is an institution fundamental to society. Every culture has a different word for this idea. More precisely, marriage idioms are based on conceptual metaphors that illuminate many aspects of marital life and, on the other hand, reflect cultural and social values, conventions, and beliefs. Metaphor is not only a linguistic phenomenon but also a cognitive tool to help people to express their perceptions and conceptualizations of the world (Lakoff and Johnson's conceptual metaphor theory, 1980) ^[1]. Marriage metaphors are expressions of cultural notions about the husband-wife relationship, the roles of each gender, and the organization of the family in terms of marriage. Idioms and proverbs are the most deeply embedded parts of the language in the culture. They have a wealth of conceptual metaphors for marriage. Idioms are not merely fixed expressions. They are linguistic expressions of the metaphorical thought processes that underlie them. "Proverbs are short sentences of common sense and experience. Their metaphors are often conventionalized products of generations of usage, indicative of present attitudes and assessments of the institution of marriage.

This study's main purpose is to compare the use of marriage metaphors in Vietnamese and English idioms and proverbs. The main goal is to identify the main metaphorical patterns of marriage in the two languages, compare their similarities and differences, and clarify the relationship between metaphor and socio-cultural context. Marriage is a universal institution, often figuratively conceptualized through cultural values, social norms, and collective experience. Proverbs and idioms are the

shortest bits of wisdom. Second, they provide information about the different ways people in different cultures understand and talk about marriage. Marriage is often depicted as a partnership, a journey, and a contract in proverbs and idioms in the English language. A marriage contract is the legal and social obligation of a husband and wife. English proverbs at the same time warn of the dangers of married life, which is seen as a delicate balance of love, concession, and perseverance. But in the Vietnamese idioms and proverbs defining the concept of marriage, it is the responsibility, destiny, and harmony of the family that are characterized.

Nguyễn Đình Hùng (2007) ^[3] stresses the importance of unity and the power of numbers in the words "A house divided against itself cannot stand." Moreover, marriage is connected with destiny, suggesting that it is predestined and controlled by spiritual or cosmic forces. The Vietnamese allegory also emphasized the importance of family responsibilities such as the creation of social order and the continuation of the family line through marriage. The patterns are consistent with the collectivistic orientation of Vietnamese culture and the Confucian tradition that marriage is a personal choice as well as a social obligation. Both the English and Vietnamese metaphorical systems perceive marriage as a partnership that needs support, endurance, and cooperation. The metaphors highlight the positive and negative aspects of conjugal life in the two languages. But the cultural framing is most evident when distinctions are drawn. Collectivism, concord, and destiny are Vietnamese metaphors. English metaphors of contractual obligations and of individualism. This difference is an example of the interaction of culture and metaphor and the impact of culture on metaphor. English idioms and proverbs on marriage stress individual choice and institutional regulation; Vietnamese idioms and proverbs on marriage stress spiritual destiny and community harmony. Each group will be analyzed using the theory of conceptual metaphor with a focus on Indigenous thinking and sociocultural factors.

2. Theory and Methods of the Research - Overview

2.1 Conceptual metaphors in cognitive linguistics

In their book "Metaphors We Live By," Lakoff and Johnson (1980) ^[1] propose a new view of metaphor. They claimed that metaphor is not only a rhetorical device but also a basic cognitive mechanism of human beings. According to the theory, metaphors are mappings from the source to the target domain. Usually, the target domain is abstract and difficult to understand directly, while the source domain is usually concrete concepts that can be sensed with the senses. Kövecses (2010) ^[6] has advanced the theory further by proposing the concepts of "universal metaphors" and "culture-specific metaphors." These are metaphors derived from universal human experience and may be shared by all cultures. Others are culture-specific and reflect the history, environment, and value system of each community. Marriage is one of the oldest social institutions and is still a conceptual and complex idea. This is aggravated by the conjunction of emotional, legal, cultural, and religious dimensions. Conceptual metaphors play an important role in shaping perceptions of marriage in individuals and society. Metaphors are not ornaments of language but cognitive devices. They help us make sense of abstractions in terms of more concrete domains. Metaphors that describe marriage,

that establish expectations, and that guide behavior.

The article focuses on three main reasons for the importance of conceptual metaphors in the study of marriage. First, marriage is an abstract and complicated institution that is metaphorically grounded. Second, the marriage metaphors are shaped by socio-cultural and religious factors. Third, metaphors are able to represent and affect the attitudes and practices of married life. Marriage is a social institution. It is not a matter of the body but of the law, an attachment of the heart, and a moral obligation. It is abstract, so it is explained with metaphors. The marriage is presented as a couple's journey through the years, surmounting obstacles and reaching milestones. The metaphor provides a powerful framework for the marriage journey, emphasizing the importance of sharing a direction, working as a team, and persevering. The marriage metaphor is two becoming one. This metaphor is related to the concepts of harmony, unity, and interdependence. Marriage can be looked at as a contract as well, emphasizing the economic and legal aspects of marriage. Such analogies are likely to contribute to the understanding of the abstract concept of marriage by adding a source domain of physical union, traveling, and legal contracts. Without such metaphors in everyday language, we wouldn't understand marriage. Metaphors function as cognitive anchors that make complex marriage relationships an intelligible experience. The metaphors chosen for marriage are never universal but are deeply colored by religious and socio-cultural contexts. In the Christian tradition, marriage is generally understood to be a sacred covenant instituted by God to signify the relationship of Christ to the Church.

This metaphor stresses the holy and authoritative, and endless, nature of God. In contrast, secular societies may emphasize metaphors of partnership, stressing equality, cooperation, and mutual responsibility. Cultural traditions also shape the metaphors of marriage. In many Asian cultures, marriage is not just the union of two people. Marriage is the joining together of two families. This is typical of collectivist values, where marriage is a social contract strengthening kinship ties. But in the West, it is romanticized as a marriage of emotional fulfillment and personal liberty. Metaphors are etched into the collective unconscious by rituals of religion and culture. Wedding ceremonies are laden with metaphors of union (e.g., exchange of rings as evidence of an eternal bond) or journey (e.g., vows to walk together "for better or worse"). Metaphors are also artifacts of culture, reflecting and reproducing social values. But maybe the most significant thing a metaphor does is affect the thinking and behavior of the people in a marriage. For some married couples, marriage is a road of trials and tribulations. This metaphor is about endurance and longevity. But this idea of marriage as a contract can also lead to a more transactional dynamic where people are thinking about their rights and obligations and fairness. Metaphors also shape gender roles and expectations. Consider, for instance, the metaphor of marriage as a castle. The wife is the nurturer, and the husband is the protector. This reinforces traditional gender hierarchies. With the partnership model, there is more of a sense of equality; respect and decision-making are mutual. Metaphors also affect how couples manage conflict. Marriages are battlegrounds. And battles are hostile and competitive. If it's a metaphor, then the garden could represent the couple's focus on growth, perseverance, and

nurturing. Metaphors are thus not only abstract representations of conjugal life but also contribute to constituting its effect, i.e., they affect emotional responses, actions, and attitudes. The conceptual metaphors are important to the understanding of marriage. This is because they provide a concrete structure to an abstract institution. Their values and customs are reflective of the diverse religious and socio-cultural contexts in which they are found. Metaphors shape people's expectations, roles, and actions and thus shape the way people see and experience marriage. The analysis of marital metaphors is aimed at a more general picture of the cognitive and cultural processes behind this institution. Metaphors are thus used to describe marriage but also to construct and reconstruct the concept of marriage in different societies.

2.2 The research on the notion of idioms, proverbs, and conceptual metaphors

Idioms represent a peculiar phenomenon of natural language, being "phrases whose meaning cannot be predicted from the literal meaning of the words that compose them" (Moon, 1998) [5]. They are a strange mix of semantics, culture, and cognition. Like conventional phrases, idioms are not compositional, i.e., their meaning is not simply a function of the sum of their parts. Idioms are a type of cultural knowledge, metaphorical reasoning, and fixed linguistic patterns.

This essay discusses the implications for language, thought, and culture of three properties of idioms: semantic unpredictability, formal fixedness, and high metaphorical value. The most remarkable feature of idioms is their semantic unpredictability. Compositional expressions can be interpreted by considering the literal meanings of their parts. Idioms are not like this. For instance, the English idiom "tie up" does not mean to tie something literally, but figuratively, it means to bind or restrain it. (Lã Thành & Bùi Ý, 1995) [2] Similarly, "kick the bucket" means "death" (Lã Thành & Bùi Ý, 1995) [2], and "spill the beans" means "to disclose a secret" (Lã Thành & Bùi Ý, 1995) [2]. Learners who attempt to understand these meanings literally only vaguely understand them. Idioms are conventionalized expressions. Their meanings are not inferred logically but by usage in a culture. This makes them unpredictable. "They are linguistic shortcuts, little packets of complex ideas. Idioms are processed as whole units by native speakers who often store them in the mental lexicon as a single lexical item. But idioms are a big problem for second language learners because they have to be memorized and not figured out.

Semantic unpredictability also demonstrates the importance of shared cultural knowledge. Most idioms are based on historical references, folk traditions, or standard practices that may not be familiar to outsiders in the community. For example, the Vietnamese proverb "chở củi về rừng" and the phrase "carry coals to Newcastle" (meaning "to do something redundant") assume knowledge about Newcastle's coal industry in the past. So, idioms are not only linguistically opaque but also culturally embedded. (Nguyễn Đình Hùng, 2007) [3].

2.2.1 Idioms

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) [1] have offered a new view on metaphor in their book "Metaphors We Live By." They claim that metaphor is not merely a figure of speech but a fundamental cognitive mechanism of human beings. The

theory says that metaphor is a mapping of a source domain onto a target domain. The source domain is generally composed of tangible, perceptible ideas, and the target domain is often abstract and difficult to grasp. Kövecses (2010) [6] extended the theory to include the concepts of "universal metaphors" and "culture-specific metaphors." There are some metaphors that are universal across cultures, because they are based on the universal experience of human beings. Some are culture-specific, based on the history, environment, and value system of the particular community.

Marriage is one of the oldest social institutions, but it is still an abstract and complex concept. The situation is compounded by the intertwining of emotive, legal, cultural, and religious dimensions. Therefore, there is a significant role of conceptual metaphors in shaping people's and societies' perception of marriage. Metaphors are cognitive tools, not just linguistic decorations. They help us understand abstract ideas in the context of more concrete fields. Metaphors are used to create expectations, to mark the importance of marriage, and to change behavior. The article argues that conceptual metaphors are relevant to the study of marriage for three reasons: (i) the abstract and complex nature of marriage necessitates a metaphorical basis; (ii) the socio-cultural and religious factors that affect metaphors of marriage; and (iii) the power of metaphors to both reflect and influence attitudes and behaviors in married life. Marriage is a social invention. It is not a physical thing but a legal contract, an emotional bond, and a moral duty. It is often explained through metaphors because it is abstract. Marriage is often referred to as a journey that the couple will take together throughout their life, facing challenges and reaching significant milestones. This metaphor provides a tangible context for the marital journey, emphasizing common direction, collaboration, and endurance. The marriage metaphor is used to symbolize the uniting of two persons into one. The metaphor emphasizes the ideas of interdependence, harmony, and unity. Marriage is also sometimes considered a contract, like sexual relations, emphasizing its economic and legal importance. These analogies combine source domain, physical union, travel, and legal contracts. They help explain the abstract concept of marriage. Without such metaphors, we should be unable to comprehend the idea of marriage in ordinary language. Metaphors serve as cognitive anchors, helping us to understand the subtleties of marriage. The metaphors used to describe marriage are not universal but are rather influenced by religious and socio-cultural contexts. In the Christian tradition, marriage has generally been regarded as a sacred covenant, instituted by God, and symbolizing the relationship between Christ and the Church. The metaphor underscores the everlasting, the holy, and the mighty of God. By contrast, secular societies might prefer metaphors of partnership emphasizing mutual responsibility, cooperation, and equality. The marital metaphor is employed in different ways by various cultural traditions. In many Asian cultures, marriage is not about two people but two families. This is a typical aspect of collectivist ideals where marriage is a social alliance that strengthens kinship bonds. But in Western cultures, marriage is often seen as a union that prioritizes emotional fulfillment and individual autonomy. Through religious rituals and cultural practices, such metaphors have been imprinted on the collective consciousness. For example, wedding ceremonies are often

rife with metaphors of union (e.g., exchanging rings as evidence of an eternal bond) or journey (e.g., oaths to walk together “for better or worse”). Metaphors are linguistic devices, as well as cultural artifacts, which reflect and reproduce the values of a society.

The most important potential roles of metaphors are the cognition and action of the participants in a marriage. For some couples, marriage is a journey that requires resilience and overcoming challenges. This is a metaphor for perseverance and long life. But this contract view of marriage can lead to a more transactional dynamic, where individuals weigh their rights, responsibilities, and fairness. Gender roles and expectations are established through the use of metaphors. A good example is the analogy between marriage and a castle, the husband as the protector and the wife as the nurturer of the castle. It promotes traditional gender hierarchies. In contrast, the partnership paradigm promotes egalitarian principles through the focus on mutual respect and collaborative decision-making.

Couples' use of metaphors also affects their conflict resolution. If you see marriage as a battlefield, you can turn arguments into battles and hostilities. If the garden is a metaphor, the couple's priorities could be growth, perseverance, and nurturing. Metaphors are therefore not merely abstract representations of conjugal life, but rather they enhance its impact by influencing emotional responses, actions, and attitudes. The conceptual metaphors are of great importance in understanding marriage, as they provide a tangible frame to an abstract institution. Their values and customs are representative of the different religious and socio-cultural settings in which they are found. Metaphors are powerful in shaping the expectations, roles, and behaviors of persons and, hence, their understanding and experience of marriage. The present paper attempts, through the study of marital metaphors, to gain a deeper understanding of the cognitive and cultural mechanisms underlying this institution. Therefore, metaphors are not only used to represent marriage but also to establish and restore the importance of marriage in different societies.

2.2.2 Book of Proverbs

Proverbs are some of the most persistent forms of conventional wisdom in concise linguistic forms. They are the storehouse of collective experience and moral teaching. They are usually short, pithy, and comprehensive statements that are intended to help or warn. Proverbs are idiomatic, but they are syntactically independent utterances, unlike idioms. They can be used as meaningful utterances. Their pervasiveness and persistence in cultures around the world point to their importance as mechanisms of social regulation, cultural transmission, and education. In the essay, I examine four defining features of proverbs: their didactic character, syntactic coherence, brevity and imagery, oral transmission, and their broader significance for language, culture, and cognition. One of the features that separates proverbs is syntactic cohesiveness. Unlike idioms or portions of sentences, proverbs are complete sentences with a subject and predicate and can stand alone. Birds of a feather is an English proverb that is equivalent to the Vietnamese proverb “Cùng một giuộc với nhau” (Nguyễn Đình Hùng, 2007) [3] and that expresses a general truth about human association concisely. This thoroughness eliminates the need for additional explanation, facilitating the use of proverbs in the discourse. They can be used as authoritative statements in speeches, conversations, or text to lend

credibility to an argument or piece of advice. They are also more memorable because they obey the rules of grammar. It's easier to remember and say full sentences when you talk. The formal aspect of syntactic completeness is that proverbs can be carriers of meaning independently. Proverbs are inherently didactic, unlike other figurative languages. They are often rich in moral lessons, admonitions, and warnings derived from life experience and available to all members of the community. "Honesty is the best policy" is the same moral principle as "Do not be dishonest" (or "Don't be dishonest"). However, a proverb is a warning against naivety. The saying “Nói trước bước không qua” (Nguyễn Đình Hùng, 2007) [3] is intended to enhance the quality of one's existence. (Nguyễn Đình Hùng, 2007) [3].

The socializing function of proverbs makes clear their educational function. They pass on cultural norms, ethical values, and practical wisdom from one generation to the next. Proverbs often offer advice to those in agricultural communities about the weather, farming, or working together on farms. They continue to be a resource in modern settings regarding morals, work ethics, and human relationships. Thus, proverbs are informal teaching instruments that mold behavior and uphold cultural norms. The proverbs are also authoritative due to their community origin. Proverbs are not subjective; they are universal and legitimate. These beliefs are not based on individual opinion but on the collective experience of a people. When used authoritatively in disputes or decision-making, they confirm their status as instruments of moral and social education. The uniqueness of proverbs is brevity and imagery. They use evocative imagery to back their concise and powerful arguments. The concise statements are the quintessence of deep principles. "The early bird catches the worm" uses concrete images to represent the abstract concepts of initiative and timeliness. (Nguyễn Đình Hùng, 2017). Likewise, the phrase “You can't have your cake and eat it too” (Nguyễn Đình Hùng, 2017) is a simple culinary metaphor that shows how you can't have two mutually exclusive benefits. Proverbs are memorable and understandable because they are image-based. Proverbs help to understand and remember things by giving abstract ideas a real experience. They are short, making them easy to pass on by word of mouth and to be remembered by future generations. The brevity of the statements makes the rhetorical power even greater, for they are more convincing than long explanations.

Generally, proverbs have imagery that is related to the culture from which the proverbs are derived. Proverbs about trade, money, and social relationships are common in urban societies, while those about agriculture, livestock, and seasons are common in rural societies. The cultural specificity means that proverbs are mirrors of collective experience, encoding the material and social realities of a community. There are no written records, so they are often passed down through memory and repetition from generation to generation. The texts are likely to have survived because of their rhythmic qualities and brevity, which make them easy to transmit orally. The oral character of proverbs makes them easily adaptable. This flexibility enables them to remain relevant in shifting social contexts. Proverbs also build a collective identity.

2.2.3 The blurred line between proverbs and idioms

The author of this study considers the expressions that are at the intersection of idioms and proverbs as a remarkable

linguistic phenomenon, which has an individual value in the reflection of conceptual metaphors about marriage. The author does not try to rigidly classify these expressions but rather focuses on the analysis of the basic conceptual metaphors and socio-cultural values that are reflected in these expressions, regardless of their type, since many fixed linguistic units have features of both idioms and proverbs, which creates a remarkable intersection in linguistic research.

3. Research Methodology

Qualitative methodology is implemented in this investigation. The subsequent procedures are implemented:

3.1 Data Acquisition

Idioms regarding marriage were compiled from "Từ điển thành ngữ" ("The Vietnamese idiom dictionaries") and "Tuyển tập thành ngữ tục ngữ ca dao Việt-Anh thông dụng" [a compendium of common Vietnamese-English idioms, proverbs, and folk songs] by Nguyễn Đình Hùng (2007) [3] and "Anh Việt (Dictionary of current English-Vietnamese idioms)" by Lê Thành, & Bùi Ý (1995) [2]. These are noteworthy resources.

3.2 Classification of Data

Idiomatic expressions are a special linguistic phenomenon reflecting cultural values, collective experiences, and metaphorical reasoning. They are not mere ornamental expressions, but cognitive tools helping the speakers to conceive of abstract concepts through concrete imagery. Idioms may represent many metaphorical domains. There are two types I am especially interested in. Metaphors of fate or destiny. The following are examples of cultural attitudes toward human existence and social organization transmitted by language. In this paper, the cognitive, cultural, and linguistic features of idioms in two categories of metaphor are examined.

The idioms of fate and destiny frequently express the human experience of ambiguity, the inevitable, and the limits of human agency. They are symbolic representations of life events projected on physical processes, natural forces, or predestined trajectories. Idioms are also oral expressions of the organization of society, especially in terms of gender relations. They often reproduce the cultural assumptions, stereotypes, and power relations on which they are founded. Idioms can reinforce stereotypes of how men and women ought to behave. Both these idioms construct and justify gendered activities and affect social attitudes. Gender role idioms are especially interesting because they show the influence of language on social hierarchy.

Some idioms reinforce traditional gender roles, while others subvert them. This is a sign of changing cultural attitudes to gender equality. Thus, idioms are metaphors of the relations between language, psyche, and culture, as well as gender roles and destiny. Cognitively, idioms provide cognitive conveniences for conceptualizing abstract domains (e.g., fate or social roles) in terms of concrete imagery. They make the subject easier to understand by connecting complicated concepts and ideas to ones you already know. As cultural transmission shows, idioms are used to transmit and preserve cultural notions of gender and fate across generations. They are storehouses of collective wisdom, rooted in the language of the common place. As the term 'social regulation' indicates, idioms are informal ways of social regulation. They like some ideas on gender or fate.

These beliefs shape the community's behavior and expectations.

3.3 Metaphors of Comparison

Cognitive structures and linguistic devices known as comparison metaphors influence the manner in which individuals interpret and perceive the world. They enable speakers to conceptualize abstract concepts in concrete contexts, thereby bridging the divide between language and thought. Scholars typically identify both universal similarities and culturally specific differences when they compare metaphors across two languages. Sociocultural backgrounds are profoundly rooted in the similarities and differences that are the result of the shared human experience and individual cultural traditions. By conducting a comparative analysis of metaphors in two languages, this essay aims to investigate universal patterns, cultural variations, and their relationship to socio-cultural contexts. Metaphors frequently demonstrate universal similarities due to the fact that humans share common embodied experiences. Metaphors that pertain to time, love, mortality, and life frequently share primary domains across various languages. The fundamental domain of these metaphors is frequently a physical force, cycle, or voyage.

3.3.1 Metaphors of fate/destiny in English and Vietnamese idioms and proverbs

Metaphors of fate/destiny that are frequently employed in English and Vietnamese idioms and proverbs Sentences, Vietnamese idioms and proverbs, and English idioms and proverbs: Meaning

1. "Hổ phụ sinh hổ tử" or "Cha nào con nấy" (Nguyễn Đình Hùng, 2007) [3]

("Like father, like son") (Nguyễn Đình Hùng, 2007) [3] as a representation of fate or destiny in the human experience. This implies that certain characteristics, behaviors, or life courses are passed down from one generation to the next, either by accident or by necessity. In this regard, the proverb conveys the notion that an individual's fate is significantly influenced by their family and education.

2. "Chạy trời sao khỏi nắng" or "Chạy đâu cho khỏi nắng trời? Ở đây mà trả nợ đời cho xong." (Nguyễn Đình Hùng, 2007) [3]

"He who is born to be hanged shall never be drowned." or "There is no escape from fate." (Nguyễn Đình Hùng, 2007) [3].

Both possess a notion of fate or destiny as an unavoidable result. The statements demonstrate that certain outcomes are inevitable, as they are unable to be avoided when the conditions are altered by English. Predestination, with the initial proverb, asserts that a man who is destined to die by hanging will not perish by any other means, including drowning. It indicates a conviction in the unchanging nature of outcomes and the impossibility of their modification by coincidence.

The inevitability of fate is underscored by the second proverb, "No flying from fate." Ultimately, inevitability prevails, regardless of the measures taken to circumvent it. Cultural resonance with these statements expresses a perspective in which life events are determined by external forces that are beyond the control of the individual, and human action is restricted. They are frequently associated with religion, philosophy, or indigenous knowledge, and they represent broader cultural concepts of destiny and fate.

3. "Ai giàu ba họ, ai khó ba đời."

or "Every dog has its/his day."

or "Even the longest day must conclude."

or "The morning sun never lasts a day." (Nguyễn Đình Hùng, 2007) [3].

They are all English reflections on fate and destiny. Change is unavoidable; the human condition is succinct. This is the subject of each expression. This adage underscores the fact that every individual, regardless of their background or circumstances, will experience a moment of success or recognition at some point. Even the pets have their designated time. It is a representation of the notion that destiny presents opportunities to all individuals, regardless of their feelings of powerlessness or apathy. This proverb pertains to the conclusion of each day, regardless of its duration. "Destiny will guarantee that all circumstances will conclude sooner or later, regardless of their complexity or duration." It serves as a representation of the conviction that suffering and anguish are not eternal. The image is indicative of the fleeting nature of youth, vitality, or good luck. The dawn sun is unable to remain for an entire day. It is a reminder of the adage that destiny necessitates change and that success or radiance cannot endure indefinitely.

4. Results and Discussion

1. "Hổ phụ sinh hổ tử" or "Cha nào con nấy" (Nguyễn Đình Hùng, 2007) [3]

"Like father, like son." (Nguyễn Đình Hùng, 2007) [3]

Proverbs and idioms are linguistic fossils, containing the collective experience, moral lessons, and cultural wisdom. Vietnamese proverbs such as "Hổ phụ sinh hổ tử" (A tiger father spawns a tiger son) and "Cha nào con nấy" (Like father, like son) are strikingly similar to the English proverb "Like father, like son." These phrases (Nguyễn Đình Hùng, 2007) [3] are focused on the inheritance of qualities, values, and fate of individuals through generations. A close analysis of these metaphors reveals their tight links with socio-cultural contexts, their similarities, and their cultural specificities. "Like father, like son" is a metaphor across cultures and reflects the universal faith of inheritance, that children will be like their parents in character, conduct, or destiny. The proverbs in English and Vietnamese relate to the body and the DNA, which shows their biological similarity. The English version only mentions the general similarity, while the Vietnamese metaphor of the tiger (Hổ phụ sinh hổ tử) emphasizes the inherited strength and courage.

These proverbs also reflect the transmission of values, habits, and moral orientations from parents to children in terms of morals and behavior. Genes and environment decide one's fate. Inevitability of fate: Both traditions emphasize the inescapability of family background and the inevitability of resemblances in shaping one's destiny. The universal similarity is thus the result of the transmission of the familial similarity to the destiny in a metaphorical way. It shows the natural, inevitable succession of generations. The metaphors are similar but also show culturally specific differences in the conceptualizations of fate and inheritance. The tiger is a hugely powerful and popular animal in Asian culture. In Vietnamese proverbs, the tiger is a symbol of nobility, strength, and heroism: "Hổ phụ sinh hổ tử." The metaphor is a reflection of a culture that prizes heroic traits and expects children to inherit not only physical but also moral characteristics. Of the facility and universality of the English tongue. We're more familiar with 'like father, like

son,' which suggests similarity but not the cause of it. In other words, it reflects a pragmatic position that privileges visible resemblances over symbolic representations. Many Vietnamese proverbs emphasize family dignity and community identity, so the child's destiny is a mirror of the whole family. The emphasis on the similarities among people in English proverbs points to a more individualistic culture. These differences reveal how metaphors are infused with cultural goals such as symbolic images and collective honor. Metaphors are directly related to socio-cultural environments, as they are ideologically grounded.

The influence of Confucianism has been very strong on Vietnamese proverbs, which emphasize filial devotion, family dignity, and moral continuity. The tiger metaphor suggests that children should inherit the virtues of their parents so that social stability and collective identity are maintained. This English proverb is a manifestation of a *Weltanschauung* shaped by Western pragmatism and Christian theology. This proverb is in line with the Western idea of individualism, but Christian teaching is based on the idea of divine providence and moral heritage. But these ideas don't tell the whole story. This means that the idea of resemblance is a secular idea. Vietnamese metaphors are distinguished by the use of natural imagery (plants, animals, cycles), unlike those in industrial environments. This suggests an agrarian tradition. English idioms are more concrete or abstract. They reflect the industrial and urban environment. Metaphors are, therefore, cultural mirrors, reflecting sociocultural circumstances into ordinary language. The connections also show the cognitive and ideological implications of fate and inheritance. Both traditions are tied to family lineage, which means that fate is not a matter of chance but of inheritance. Vietnamese proverbs are moralizing: "Children are responsible for the honor of their family." English proverbs are less moralizing, but they too imply that one's fate is in the hands of one's parents. These analogies are informal social control. They tell people that everything they do is a representation of their family name and legacy. The metaphors place destiny within family resemblances and continue cultural norms and expectations of continuation across generations. A typical illustration is the metaphorical conceptualization of destiny in Vietnamese proverbs such as "Hổ phụ sinh hổ tử" and "Cha nào con nấy," and the English proverb "Like father, like son." They exemplify specific and general universal features of culture. They all point to the inevitability of intergenerational resemblance and inheritance. The metaphors of English are based on personal resemblance and pragmatic observation. Vietnam's metaphor is based on Confucian ideas, symbolic imagery, and communal honor. Finally, these metaphors are not only linguistic expressions but also ideological constructs and thus embed socio-cultural underpinnings into mundane discourse. They remind us that fate is generally understood as a family inheritance, a product of moral obligation, culture, and blood. These metaphors enable scientists to deepen their understanding of how language embodies cultural values, propagates social norms, and mirrors the underlying links between kinship, fate, and identity.

2. "Chạy trời sao khỏi nắng" or "Chạy đâu cho khỏi nắng trời? Ở đây mà trả nợ đời cho xong." (Nguyễn Đình Hùng, 2007) [3]

"He who is born to be hanged shall never be drowned."

or "There is no escape from fate." (Nguyễn Đình Hùng,

2007) [3].

Proverbs are short verbal statements of common experience and cultural knowledge. They are generally occasions for reflection on fate, regulation of society, and moral instruction. For example, “Chạy trời sao khỏi nắng” (How can one escape the sun by running?) and “Chạy đâu cho khỏi nắng trời, Ở đây mà trả nợ đời cho xong” (Where can one run to escape the sun?). “Stay here and pay back the debts of life” strongly echoes the English sayings, “He that is born to be hanged shall never be drowned” and “No flying from fate.” These sayings expose profound cultural perceptions of fate and inevitability (Nguyễn Đình Hùng, 2007) [3]. If we dig down into the metaphorical roots, we can find both the universal commonality and culture-specific variances and their relation to socio-cultural background. Both Vietnamese and English proverbs tell of the nature of fate itself. “No flying from fate” is an English proverb that means “You can't run away from your destiny.” This is the same as the Vietnamese saying “Chạy trời sao khỏi nắng,” which translates to “You can't escape the trials of life.” Each metaphor stresses the futility of fighting the fated. This saying, “He who is born to be hanged shall never be drowned,” brings to mind some Vietnamese idioms that mean the way to die has been decided. It demonstrates how widespread an idea of predestination was. Cosmic inevitability: Both traditions link fate to larger cosmic or natural forces, such as the sun in Vietnamese analogies or divine decree or fate in English. It illustrates the general human concern with death and destiny. Therefore, these parallels indicate that metaphors of fate are based on the universal human experience of inevitability, uncertainty, and limitation. Even if these representations draw on universal themes, they highlight the cultural differences in the understanding of fate. Vietnamese natural metaphors: The inevitable is symbolized in Vietnamese proverbs by natural objects like the sun. The metaphor of sunlight is one of an agrarian way of life in which the sun determines the rhythm of the day and the cycles of the farm. This shows the relation of fate and life duties and the nature of the world (“nợ đời”), the importance of moral duty, and the cyclical nature of existence. English judicial and theological imagery and English proverbs are often redolent with imagery of divine decision (born to be hanged) or punishment (no flying from fate). These are the symptoms of Christian theological traditions, linking fate with divine providence and moral justice. The metaphor emphasizes the external control by God or fate, not the natural cycles. Vietnamese proverbs reveal their collectivist principles in contrast to an individualist attitude with respect to collective responsibility and moral obligations. The English proverbs are more concerned with the fate of the individual and thus show a more individualistic point of view. The contrast between Vietnamese natural cycles and moral obligations and English divine justice and human destiny demonstrates how cultural priorities are embedded in metaphor. Such metaphors are embedded in sociocultural contexts and the ideological implications they carry. Vietnamese proverbs illustrate the relevance of transience and morality under the influence of Buddhist philosophy and Confucian ethics. “Repaying the debt of life” is a metaphor for the Buddhist concept of karma. The imagery of sunlight is a reference to agrarianism. The notion of fate in the cycles of nature was grounded in moral responsibility. English proverbs originate from Christian theology and Western legal traditions and are

socio-culturally marked by the emphasis on divine justice and providence. “No flying from fate” has the sense of theological determinism, and hanging is a metaphor for judicial punishment. Destiny is called “cosmic law” or “divine decree.” The Vietnamese metaphors came from intellectual and agricultural life; the English metaphors came from religious disputes and legal procedures. They are reflections of the historical trajectories of the two societies. Thus, metaphors of fate act as cultural mirrors, reflecting the socio-cultural realities of everyday language. Furthermore, these patterns suggest the cognitive and ideological significance of fate. The doom to come. Both religions regard fate as inevitable and therefore endorse the view that human action is limited. Vietnamese metaphors talk about moral debts and karmic duty, while English metaphors talk about divine providence and judicial justice. Social regulation: The proverbs serve as informal social regulation. They are urging people to do their moral duty and accept their fate. They set the social standards and expectations on human life through their metaphoric presentation of destiny as sunlight, punishment or fate. The Vietnamese proverbs “Chạy trời sao khỏi nắng” and “Chạy đâu cho khỏi nắng trời, Ở đây mà trả nợ đời cho xong” and the English proverbs “He that is born to be hanged shall never be drowned” and “No flying from fate” will be used to illustrate the universal similarities and the culturally specific differences in the metaphorical conceptualization of destiny. All of them are insistent upon the certainty of fate and the futility of resistance. Whereas Vietnamese metaphors are concerned with the natural cycle and moral duty, English metaphors are concerned with divine providence and judicial justice. After all, these metaphors are not just linguistic statements but ideological constructs that map sociocultural background into ordinary language. They remind us that usually fate is understood as the inevitable consequence of divine will, ethics, or nature. These metaphors are a few of the ones that help scholars understand how language encodes cultural values and social norms and reflects the deep connections among fate, ideology, and identity.

3. “Ai giàu ba họ, ai khó ba đời.”

or “Every dog has its/his day.”

or “Even the longest day must conclude.”

or “The morning sun never lasts a day.” (Nguyễn Đình Hùng, 2007) [3].

They are aids to cognition, not mere verbal decoration. Metaphors show the intellectual origins of a civilization. The paper critically examines the metaphors of idioms in English and Vietnamese to seek the origin of the metaphor. It shows a big difference in how fate and destiny are thought of. The English cliché “Every dog has its/his day” stems from Western theological and astrological traditions, while the Vietnamese idiom “Ai giàu ba họ, ai khó ba đời” is rooted in cultural values influenced by Confucian principles, Buddhist philosophy, and rural life. This essay addresses the ideological aspects of the metaphors, their universal likenesses and culture-specific differences, and their relationships with sociocultural contexts. Several English idioms have been influenced by theology, especially the idea of divine providence. “Every dog has his day” means that sooner or later, all, no matter who they are, will have their fair and decent share of opportunities. This is equivalent to Christian ideas of divine justice. The Christian idea of divine justice is that God guarantees justice in the history of

mankind. According to McGrath [6], Christian philosophy is founded on the idea of divine providence. It's about the idea of one God that created the universe. Thus, the idea of a superior divinity watching over the affairs of men. Theological beliefs about God's role in human life are expressed as idioms of inevitability or justice. The term also has origins in Western astrology, which originated in ancient Greece and Rome and was later integrated into the philosophy of medieval Europe. The stars were libraries of wisdom, histories of man's destiny. It is a metaphor for a worldview in which fate is an inscrutable power inscribed into the cosmos beyond our control. But most Vietnamese idioms stem from Confucianism, Buddhism, and the agrarian tradition. "Ai giàu ba họ, ai khó ba đời" (no family is affluent for three generations; no family is destitute for three generations) is the saying we often hear to remind us of the cycle of fortune and misfortune. It comes from the Buddhist notion of impermanence and the Confucian notion of moral balance, not the Christian notion of divine providence. In the concept of a cycle, destiny is not a thing but a dynamic thing that can change over time. Wealth and poverty are relative positions made by moral conduct, social obligation, and harmony in the collective. This is the collectivist character of Vietnamese society, in which the fate of the individual is intertwined with that of his family and community. The pastoral mode of existence has also contributed to the metaphors of the Vietnamese. We see this in the cycles of agriculture, seasons, and nature. For example, the phrase 'sowing and reaping' (sown and harvested) emphasizes moral causation and is analogous to Buddhist ideas of karma. Thus, in Vietnamese idioms, the destiny of natural and social cycles is different from divine decrees. Universal analogs of metaphors in English and Vietnamese in the context of ideological differences. Such analogies are based on common human experience. Both traditions believe that fate can't be changed. Fate cannot be avoided. Both tongues know the vicissitudes of fortune. English proverbs such as "No flying from fate" and Vietnamese proverbs such as "Số phận đã an bài" (fate has been planned) refer to the inevitability of the event. English idioms are similar to Vietnamese proverbs of success and poverty from generation to generation; for instance, "The wheel of fortune spins." (God in Christianity, karma, and nature in Vietnamese philosophy). This means that one's life is a part of a larger cosmic order. Such links evoke metaphors of fate that touch upon the universal human issues of justice, mortality, and uncertainty. But the holes are just as big. English idioms are based on divine providence and external control, whereas Vietnamese idioms are based on moral causality and cyclic change.

Determinism and morality: English idioms show determinism in the sense that your destiny is determined by the stars or by God. Vietnamese proverbs are saturated with references to human behavior and social responsibility and to the belief that fate is controlled by moral choices and social collaboration. Vietnamese idioms are collective over generations ("Ai giàu ba họ, ai khó ba đời"), while English idioms are more likely to be individual ("Every dog has its day"). **Cosmic inscription and natural cycles:** Externalized destiny inscribed on the sky in English metaphors. Luck in Vietnamese is expressed through the cycles of nature and agriculture. The contradictions imply cultural principles embedded in the metaphors: the Vietnamese metaphor is of peace in the community, and the English metaphor is of

justice for the individual. Metaphors are an integral part of intellectual and socio-cultural environments. Destiny is interpreted as divine providence and cosmic order. The use of English idioms has been a feature of Christian theology through the centuries.

Astrology also helped to develop metaphors in which fate is embedded in celestial pictures. Vietnamese idioms are influenced by the rhythm of the agricultural calendar, Buddhist notions of impermanence and karma, and Confucian notions of filial piety and social solidarity. These acts show the need for collective responsibility and the transformation process. The English metaphors are founded on scientific study and theological discourse, and the Vietnamese metaphors are based on philosophical traditions and agrarian activities. In both societies, these are the ways of the past. Metaphors are also cultural mirrors reflecting the socio-cultural background engraved in the language of the people. A comprehensive study of the birth of metaphors in English and Vietnamese idioms shows that the conceptual basis of the two languages is surprisingly different. The English expressions 'Every dog has its/his day' and 'written in the stars' are derived, respectively, from Christian theology and Western astrology, emphasizing the role of divine providence and external control. Vietnamese idioms such as "Ai giàu ba họ, ai khó ba đời" (The rich have three family names, the poor three generations) are steeped in Confucian ethics, Buddhist philosophy, and agrarian traditions and emphasize moral causation and cyclical development. Both religions are concerned with fate and destiny, but their metaphors have been influenced by the different cultural purposes conditioned by the socio-cultural context. The comparison of metaphors in this way may help scholars to get a better understanding of language as ideology, cultural traditions of fate, and metaphors as cognitive and cultural frameworks. Metaphors are not simply linguistic events but ideological constructs that ultimately reveal the complex relations between language, intellect, and society.

5. Conclusion

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) [1], in their work "Metaphors We Live By," introduced a new perspective on metaphor. They argued that metaphor is not simply a figure of speech but a basic cognitive function of human beings. The theory is that a metaphor is a mapping from the source domain to the target domain. Sometimes the target domain is abstract and difficult to understand, because the source domain has concrete conceptions that are experienced. Kövecses (2000) further refined the concept with the concepts of the "universal metaphors" and the "culture-specific metaphors." Some of the analogies are of universal human experience and hence may be common to various cultures. Some are culturally bound. It was the product of the history, environment, and value system of each culture.

Marriage is one of the most enduring of all social systems, but always a complicated and abstract idea. The matter is further complicated by the confluence of emotional, legal, cultural, and religious aspects. Conceptual metaphors, then, lie at the heart of how people and communities perceive marriage. Metaphors are not only linguistic adornments. They are instruments of cognition. They let us understand abstract concepts in terms of more concrete worlds. Metaphors are used to signify the value of marriage, to develop expectations, and to alter behavior. The paper

suggests three reasons why conceptual metaphors are relevant to the study of marriage: (i) the need to metaphorically ground the abstract and complicated notion of marriage; (ii) the socio-cultural and religious elements that inform metaphors of marriage; and (iii) the potential of metaphors to mirror and affect perceptions and actions in married life. Marriage is an institution. It is not something. This is a legal document. It's an emotional link. We have a moral obligation. It is abstract and frequently expressed in terms of analogy. Marriage is depicted as a journey that the two of them take together for a lifetime, facing obstacles and reaching milestones. This metaphor serves as an excellent foundation for the journey of marriage and highlights the importance of one clear path, teamwork, and perseverance. Marriage is the merger of two into one. As a metaphor, the metaphor enhances the notions of wholeness, harmony, and connectivity. Sex is sometimes seen as a contract. That is the economic and legal importance of marriage. The distinctions in source domain, physical connection, transportation, and legal contracts serve to make the abstract idea of marriage understandable. Without such metaphors, we would have no common word for marriage. The analogies are cognitive anchors that make the complexity of married relationships familiar and comprehensible. Metaphors of marriage are not universal but are formed by religious and socio-cultural contexts. In the Christian tradition, marriage is usually seen as a sacred partnership, formed by God, and a symbol of the union of Christ and the Church. The metaphor stresses the eternal, divine, and almighty nature of God. In secular civilizations, metaphors of cooperation might be more applicable, stressing shared responsibility, cooperation, and equality. Cultural groups employ metaphors of marriage in different ways.

In many Asian traditions, marriage is not a union of two individuals but a union of two families. In the idea of collectivism, marriage is usually a social union that adds strength to family ties. But in Western societies, marriage is generally depicted as a partnership that increases individual autonomy and emotional gratification. They are metaphors burned into the communal mind by religious ritual and cultural practice. Metaphors of unity (rings as a symbol of an enduring relationship) and journey (vows to travel together 'for better or for worse') are widely used in wedding rituals. Metaphors are not just verbal devices. They are cultural objects that both reflect and support the ideals of a society. They contain the greatest potential for the influence of metaphors on the cognition and behavior of those who are married. Some couples consider marriage a journey to be weathered through difficulties. This comparison encourages perseverance and patience. The idea of marriage as a contract also sets up a more transactional dynamic where people think about their rights and obligations and justice. Metaphors also reinforce gender norms and expectations. One suitable image is the comparison of marriage as a castle, with the husband being a castle guard and the woman being a castle nurturer. It supports the current gender hierarchy. The partnership paradigm, on the other hand, is more egalitarian in its goals, emphasizing mutual respect and shared decision-making. Metaphors also shape how couples resolve their conflicts.

Sometimes marriages become wars. Arguments become fights. Hate. If the garden is a metaphor, then things like nurturing, perseverance, and growth could mirror the couple's priorities. Metaphors are not just abstractions of

marital life. They affect emotional responses, behaviors, and attitudes and increase the impact. For the understanding of marriage, conceptual metaphors are particularly significant since they create a concrete framework for an abstract institution. Their values and practices are formed by the many theological and socio-cultural contexts in which they are embedded. Metaphors can change people's expectations, responsibilities, and actions and transform the way individuals understand and experience marriage. This study investigates marriage metaphors to better understand the cognitive and cultural mechanics of this institution. Hence, metaphors are utilized not only as symbols of marriage but also as a technique of constructing and re-creating the relevance of marriage in varied civilizations.

6. Acknowledgement

This research is funded by the Department of English Language, Ho Chi Minh City University of Economics and Finance, which assisted with this study. We appreciate our colleagues' valuable insights that contributed to the research.

7. References

1. Lakoff G, Johnson M. *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago, IL, USA: University of Chicago Press, 1980.
2. Lê Thành, Bùi Ý. *Từ điển thành ngữ Anh - Việt thông dụng* [Dictionary of current English - Vietnamese idioms]. Nhà xuất bản Giáo dục, 1995.
3. Nguyễn Đình H. *Tuyển tập thành ngữ, tục ngữ, ca dao Việt - Anh thông dụng*. NXB Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh, 2007.
4. Phạm Thị Hà Anh. *Nghiên cứu đối chiếu về ẩn dụ ý niệm hôn nhân trong thành ngữ, tục ngữ tiếng Anh và tiếng Việt*. Tạp chí khoa học Trường Đại học quốc tế Hồng Bàng, 2025. <https://tapchikhoahochongbang.vn/js/article/view/993>
5. Moon R. *Fixed Expressions and Idioms in English: A Corpus-Based Approach*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998.
6. Kövecses Z. *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*, 2nd ed. New York, NY, USA: Oxford University Press, 2010.