

LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

ONTOLOGICAL METAPHOR ‘*EMOTION* *IS BODILY MOVEMENT*’ IN NAM CAO'S WORKS

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ABSTRACT: The language in Nam Cao's works not only represents the typical characteristics of his own literary creative style but also mirrors everyday Vietnamese in which there are multiple conceptual metaphors, particularly ontological metaphors of emotion, uttered by his characters. After investigating fifty-seven of Nam Cao's stories, it was discovered that the writer tends to frequently perceive and explain human emotions in terms of bodily movement. From the perspective of cognitive metaphor theory, this paper focuses on analyzing the mapping between the source domain of EMOTION and the target domain of BODILY MOVEMENT in his works. At the same time, the embodiment that underlies his cognition is also identified. The results are suggested to be applied to reading and teaching Nam Cao's works in Vietnam.

KEY WORDS: Nam Cao; Nam Cao's stories; cognition; cognitive linguistics; conceptual metaphor; ontological metaphor.

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1. Introduction

Cognitive linguists study the relationship between language and thought, and they have claimed that conceptualization is the process of perceiving the world and forming complex concepts (Lakoff G & Johnson M., 1980). Conceptualizing capacity “*gives human beings the power of abstract reason*” (Kovecses, 1990, p.80). They also admitted that metaphor is a type of conceptualization in human thought. The locus of metaphor is not in language at all, but in the way we conceptualize one mental domain in terms of another (Gerard Steen, 2009, p.14). In our thinking process and inference, we intend to project characteristics of concrete domains (the source) onto abstract or less concrete domains (the target). Thus, abstract conceptual domains are restructured and closely linked to embodied experiences.

Emotion is an important aspect of our mental world as well as a complex and abstract concept. Generally, in literature, emotion is the focus of portrayal for the reason that it provides a deep insight into the ‘human nature’ of characters. The writers also conceptualize emotion in terms of different source domains. The source and its emergent properties, which were chosen to map onto the target of EMOTION, reflect their profound thought.

Nam Cao was one of the most famous writers of Vietnamese literature in the 20th century. In his writing, he always paid attention to describing the characters’ emotions. In this research, we try to find out the way he talks about EMOTION metaphorically and establish a conceptual mapping structure from the source to the target of EMOTION. This study expects to claim his own cognition of EMOTION.

2. Theoretical background

The paper adopts the Conceptual Metaphor Theory proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and cognitive psychology as its research approach to how the concept of EMOTION in Nam Cao's stories is conceptualized.

2.1. Conceptual metaphors and ontological metaphors

In the book *Metaphor We live by*, Lakoff and Johnson insist that ‘*our conceptual system is largely metaphorical*’ and ‘*metaphor is not a matter of words, but a matter of thought and action*’ (Lakoff G. & Johnson M., 1980, p.4). At its most basic, metaphor is defined as understanding one domain of

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experience in terms of a very different domain of experience. For example, we talk about LIFE in terms of A JOURNEY, we express EMOTION in terms of TEMPERATURE, etc. A metaphor has a simple formula: TARGET-DOMAIN IS/AS SOURCE-DOMAIN. The target domain is usually more abstract than the source; while the source, which is employed to understand the target, is more concrete, physical than the target. More specifically, a metaphor is a set of correspondences or cross-domain mappings from the source domain (the sensorimotor domain) onto the target domain (the domain of subjective experiences). Correspondences between the source and the target include ontological correspondence and epistemic correspondence. Once the former is activated, it will lead to the latter. As a result, a rich inferential structure is formed. Through metaphors, abstract domains (such as emotion, love, happiness, life, etc.) are structurally reorganized and closely linked to our embodied experiences.

It should be noted that the mapping structure is partial in nature. Both the source and the target have a number of different aspects. However, only some aspects are projected from the source onto the target, and only some aspects of the target are brought into focus. To cite an example, let us consider the metaphor "LOVE IS FIRE". This metaphorical source domain focuses on a single aspect of the concept of love, namely, its intensity. The metaphor "LOVE IS A JOURNEY" is another example. The central themes of this metaphor seem to be progress and content. The phenomenon in which only a part of the source is used to understand the target is called '*metaphorical highlighting*'. '*Metaphorical highlighting*' has explained why a target domain is perceived in terms of more than one source domain. '*This is because each source can only structure certain aspects of a target; no source domain can structure, and thus provide full understanding for all aspects of a target*' (Kovecses Z., 2010, p.103).

Based on cognitive function, cognitive linguists divide conceptual metaphors into three categories: *structural metaphors*, *ontological metaphors*, and *orientational metaphors*. In ontological metaphors, the concrete domain provides a certain ontological, or existential, status for the abstract domain. '*As a result, intangible phenomena become metaphorical 'things', visual perceptions become containers, actions become metaphorical objects, and states become substances*' (Kovecses, 2006, p.117). For example, the mind is viewed as an object, or emotion is expressed in terms of liquid. In fact, there are '*a variety of ontological metaphors that specify the existential status of processes, actions, states, and so on*' (Kovecses, 2006, p.117). Thus, conceptual metaphors of emotion are classified as ontological metaphors.

2.2. Concept of EMOTION

The classical view claims that emotion is '*all those feelings that so change men as to affect their judgments, and that are also attended by pain or pleasure*' (Rhetoric by Aristotle, written 350 B.C.E., translated by W. Rhys Roberts). Accordingly, emotion is considered feelings devoid of conceptual content (Kovecses Z., 1990).

Recently, cognitive psychologists have proposed a different view of emotion. They have defined emotion as '*affective responses to certain kinds of events of concern to a subject, implying conspicuous bodily changes and motivating a specific behavior*' (Fushs T. and Koch S. C., 2014, p.7). From this view, emotion is a complex concept preceded by perception, and consists of four aspects as follows: (a) affective intentionality, (b) bodily resonance, (c) action tendency, and (d) function and significance.

Firstly, emotion is characterized by *affective intentionality*. Emotion appears once we understand and measure a state of affairs, an event, an object, or someone. Hence, emotion and perception are intrinsically connected, as '*each situation affects us emotionally does also concern us cognitively, and vice versa... Just as there is no cognition without emotion, at least in the sense of emotionally driven attention and interest, there is also no emotion without a cognitive grasp of the given situation*' (Fushs T. and Koch S. C., 2014, p.8). For instance, you need to perceive the offense before you are angry; or you must evaluate the harmful state of affairs before you are frightened and want to run away.

Secondly, emotion is closely associated with the human body. Thomas Fush and Sabine Koch (2014) indicated that emotion is experienced through what we call '*bodily resonance*'. For instance, anger can be felt locally as an increase in body temperature and pulse rate, trembling, dyspnea (shortness of breath), etc. '*More generally, our feeling body is the way we are emotionally related to the world, or, in other words, affective experiences are bodily feelings-toward*' (Goldie, 2000, p.54).

Thirdly, emotion typically leads to an *action tendency*. This being so, emotion is experienced as the directionality of one's potential movement. They frequently elicit numerous patterns of behaviour including approach (e.g. desire), avoidance (e.g. fear), being-with (enjoyment, confidence), attending (interest), rejecting (disgust), non-attending (indifference)... According to Kafka (1950) and De Rivera (1977), emotion causes four basic emotional movements: moving oneself '*toward the other*' (e.g., affection, mourning), moving the other '*toward oneself*' (e.g., desire, greed), moving the other '*away from oneself*' (e.g., disgust, anger), and moving oneself '*away from the other*' (e.g., fear, disgust) (Fushs T. and Koch S. C., 2014). For example, when you feel angry, you plan to expand toward an object so as to push it away from yourself; or after you feel happy, you open and radiate toward an object or person.

Finally, emotion has their own functions and significance. It gives us a basic orientation to evaluate objects and ourselves, helps us determine our goals and priorities. Johnson M. emphasized as follows: '*Emotional responses... are bodily processes (with neural and chemical components) that result from our appraisal of the meaning and significance of our situation and consequent changes in our body state, often initiating actions geared to our fluid functioning within our environment*' (Johnson M., 2019, p.33).

All in all, when people are in an event or situation, they tend to perceive and estimate the level of danger or safety. Nervous stimuli along with evaluation affect human emotion, which causes biological and behavioral responses. These responses help the body recover equilibrium by '*adjusting its internal milieu and instigating bodily changes that often result in overt action*' (Damasio, 2003, p. 80). Notably, emotion provides us with orientation in order to evaluate ourselves and our surroundings.

2.3. Conceptual metaphors of EMOTION

In cognitive theory, emotion is connected to bodily resonance and action tendency. In folk theory, it is also represented as a cause or force that leads to some kinds of bodily responses (expressions and impressions). On these views, it cannot be denied that emotion is embodied in nature. The embodiment of emotion is a fundamental foundation for conceptual metaphors of emotion. Actually, we have a tendency to map biological and behavioral responses onto emotions, which constrains our rational inferences about emotions. For example, we talk about anger in terms of heat, express fear in terms of cold, or experience sadness in terms of pain, etc.

Theories about basic emotions propose six basic emotions, including anger, fear, surprise, happiness, sadness, and disgust, which are natural and universal in all human cultures. These emotions are all associated with distinct physiological signals linked to human reactions (Paul Ekman, 1992). Then, Kovecses investigated conceptual metaphors of specific emotions such as anger, happiness, fear, and sadness using basic emotion theories. When studying conceptual metaphors of specific emotions, Kovecses distinguished three types of conceptual metaphors of emotion: (1) *general emotion metaphors*; (2) *metaphors that provide an evaluation of the concept of a particular emotion*; and (3) *metaphors that provide much of the phenomenological nature or character of a particular emotion*. The first one can be applied to some or most emotion concepts, not only to a particular emotion. The second one captures the evaluative aspect of a particular emotion (e.g., appraisal metaphors of happiness, anger, sadness, etc.). Finally, the third one depicts the way a person experiences a particular emotion (e.g., the way a person experiences happiness, sadness, etc.).

3. Research data and methodology

As sources of data, the research surveys Nam Cao's stories written from 1930 to 1945, including 55 short stories, 1 long story (*Truyện người hàng xóm - A neighbor's story*), and a novel (*Sống mòn - Living a corroded life*)¹ (in the total collection of Nam Cao published in 2002). These stories are investigated to seek out linguistic expressions containing one of the following: 1/words denoting the concept of EMOTION; 2/words whose meanings relate to the concept of EMOTION in some ways. Then, we identify the source domain that maps onto the target EMOTION and analyze the cross-domain mapping structure. The study applies the following methods:

The first method is metaphor identification procedure (MIP) published by Pragglejaz Group (2007), followed by a more refined and somewhat extended version of MIP. In this paper, we employed the MIP method for identifying metaphorical expressions from linguistic expressions containing words denoting or relating to the concept of EMOTION.

The second method is the metaphor identification procedure developed by G. J. Steen et al. (2009). This method contains five steps that provide us with a tool of conceptual analysis to explain the underlying cross-domain mappings.

4. Research findings

Through the investigation, 183 metaphorical expressions in which EMOTION is expressed in terms of BODILY MOVEMENT have been found. The research results have demonstrated that there exists the conceptual metaphor EMOTION IS BODILY MOVEMENT in Nam Cao's writings.

'*Movement*' refers to a change in place, position, or posture occurring over time. Thus, "*bodily movement*" is understood as the act of changing the posture, state, or location of the body and body parts. Bodily movement may occur as in the following schema:

- (1) Forces acting on the body.
- (2) The body is touched directly, and then bodily movement happens in various ways and levels:
 - Movement can be slow or fast depending on the level of force.
 - Movement may be difficult to detect.
 - Movement may or may not cause the body or parts of the body to change position or not
- (3) Movement may be controlled or uncontrolled
- (4) The body returns to equilibrium after movement.

As mentioned earlier, '*emotion*' is regarded as a '*force*' that affects the body and leads to human responses. According to the cognitive viewpoint, having an emotion clearly involves some sense of bodily movement (Gibbs R.W., 2005, p.244). In fact, people usually '*experience their emotions as movement toward something in themselves*' (Gibbs R.W., 2005, p.244). Body movements are '*specific for certain emotions to some degree*', and they reflect '*not only the quantity of an emotion, but also its quality*' (Gibbs R.W., 2005, p.251). Thus, the conceptual metaphor EMOTION IS BODILY MOVEMENT is a general metaphor of emotion.

In his stories, Nam Cao used bodily movements to describe characters' emotions. As noted above, the concept of BODILY MOVEMENT is characterized by a number of different aspects. However, in the metaphor EMOTION IS BODILY MOVEMENT, just two aspects of the source concept of BODILY MOVEMENT, including '*different levels of bodily movement*' and '*the control of bodily movement*' are adopted to map onto EMOTION. Correspondingly, only two traits of the target concept of EMOTION - different levels of emotion and emotional control - are highlighted.

The ontological correspondences of this metaphor are manifested in the mapping table (table 1) as follows:

Table 1. The mapping from the source BODILY MOVEMENT to the target EMOTION

The Source BODILY MOVEMENT	The Target EMOTION	The number of metaphorical expressions
Different levels of bodily movement	=> Different levels	156

¹ From this page onwards, the translation from Vietnamese into English is by the author of the article.

(<i>run lập cập, rung chuyển, run rẩy, run run, loạng choạng, giật mình, giật nảy mình, nảy lên, run (ruột), (não) bị rung chuyển mạnh, (tim) đập mau thon thót, (tim) nhảy thót lên, (tim) run lên, lão đảo, đảo lộn, cúi gằm, nhẩn nhó, (mặt) co dúm, nức nở...</i>) (to shake, to jar, to quake, to tremble, to reel, to start, to startle, to spring up, to feel quiver in one's gut, (brain) to shake violently, (heart) to beat rapidly, (heart) to jump suddenly, (heart) to palpitate, to stagger, to turn upside down, to bow down, (face) to twitch, to sob...)	of emotion	
The control of bodily movement (<i>chịu đựng, nhịn, nén, nín, nín nhịn, dằn...</i>) (to endure, to curb, to hold on, hold back, to suppress, to restrain...)	=> Emotional control	27

Some examples:

Hắn dùng dằng không nỡ bước.	He hesitated and couldn't bring himself to take a step
Trẻ con không được ăn thịt chó	Kid shouldn't eat dog meat
Tôi hơi lảo đảo . Bây giờ thì tôi không lẩn trốn những ý nghĩ của tôi được nữa. (Mua nhà)	I staggered a bit. Now I can't hide my thoughts anymore. (Buying house)
Nhưng mới bước chân đến đường, tim y đã bắt đầu đập mạnh rồi. (Sống mòn)	But as soon as his feet touched the road, his heart began to beat strongly . (Living a corroded life)
Tim y nhảy thót lên . Y nhận ra Tư. (Sống mòn)	His heart jumped suddenly . He recognized Tu. (Living a corroded life)
Bà đồ thấy trống ngực đập mau thon thót . Bà đoán là cậu phán đã về. (Đón khách)	He felt her heart pounding rapidly and guessed that the young man had returned. (Greeting guests)
Hiền giật nảy mình . Hắn nắm lấy cái thúng của người kia. Bốn mắt nhìn nhau, Hiền kêu lên. (Truyện người hàng xóm)	Hien startled . He grabbed the woman's basket. They looked each other, Hien exclaimed. (A neighbor's story)
Con mụ này nó mới điên đây hử. Hắn đã thấy máu đưa lên cổ , nhưng cố nín . (Cười)	This bitch was crazy. He felt that blood was going up to his neck , but he held on . (Laughing)
Thị đành nín nhịn cho xong chuyện. (Trẻ con không được ăn thịt chó)	She had to hold back until the matter was over. (Kid shouldn't eat dog meat)

The metaphorical expression 'hesitated' does not refer to a pause in doing something but rather to the fragile emotion. Some linguistic expressions coming from the domain of bodily movement, such as 'staggered', '(his heart) beat strongly', and '(blood) was going up to his neck', are used to characterize the intense emotion. Other linguistic expressions such as "(heart) pounding rapidly",

'startled', and '(heart) jumped suddenly' are adopted to talk about sudden-released emotion. Besides, the verb phrases 'held on' and 'hold back' are not about movement control but about a person's ability to refrain from expressing emotion.

Statistically, the number of metaphorical expressions in which 'different levels of bodily movement' characterize 'different levels of emotion' dominates the metaphor. It can be seen that the levels of emotion are brought into focus when the author perceives emotion. Furthermore, the research findings also show that submetaphor DIFFERENT LEVELS OF EMOTION ARE DIFFERENT LEVELS BODILY MOVEMENT is derived from primary metaphor EMOTION IS BODILY MOVEMENT. When analyzing cross-domain mappings of the submetaphor, we found a correlated mapping structure as shown in the following table:

**Table 2. The mapping structure of submetaphor
"DIFFERENT LEVELS OF EMOTION ARE DIFFERENT LEVELS BODILY
MOVEMENT"**

The sub-source DIFFERENT LEVELS OF BODILY MOVEMENT	The sub-target DIFFERENT LEVELS OF EMOTION
Slight and slow bodily movements that do not change body location (<i>dùng dằng, (hàng mi) run nhẹ, run run, ngáp ngừng...</i>) (to hesitate, (eyelashes) to quiver, to quiver slightly, to hesitate, ...)	=> Fragile emotion
Movements that change the position or state of the body or body parts (<i>rùng mình, (trái tim) đập mạnh, lão đảo, ngất đi, (tim) động một cái, loạng choạng, ngất ngã ngất ngưỡng, run rẩy, rùng mình, thốn thốn, nức nở, (tim) rung lên, (tim) đập mạnh, (lòng) rối loạn, rung chuyển, (ruột gan) rộn rạo, (môi) run bắn bật...</i>) (to shiver, (heart) to beat strongly, to stagger, to faint, (heart) to move, to reel, to nod and sway, to quake, to shiver, to tremble, to sob, (heart) to palpitate, (heart) to beat strongly, to be turned upside down, to jar, (gut/intestines, liver) to be in turmoil, (lips) to tremble uncontrollably...)	=> Intense emotion
Swift and sudden movements that change the position or state of the body or body parts (<i>(tim) nhảy chồm lên, giật nảy mình, (tim) nhảy vọt lên, (tim) nảy vọt lên, (tim) đập mau thon thót, trống ngực đập mau thon thót, tóc dựng ngược, (ruột gan) đảo lộn ...</i>) (heart) to leap up, to startle, (heart) to jump up, (heart) to jolt, (heart) to beat rapidly, (heart) to pound rapidly, (hair) to stand on end, to churn (gut/ intestines, liver)...	=> Extreme, uncontrollable, and sudden-released emotion

The aforementioned mappings of the submetaphor imply the writer's detailed description of various levels of emotion through levels of bodily movement. Besides, as can be seen clearly, Nam Cao tends to apply different movements of internal body parts (e.g., *the heart, brain, bones, intestines, gut, and liver*) to express deep emotion, which is quite hard to recognize. This both shows the writer's profound understanding of the different levels of human emotion and his intense empathy for his characters.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, in Nam Cao's stories, the metaphor of EMOTION is based on embodied experiences of movement, which are quite universal. Through metaphorical expressions containing the source of bodily movement in his stories, readers can adopt their embodiment to interpret

characters' emotions. These lead to sympathy between readers and characters, as well as between readers and the author. In addition, it is worth noticing that Nam Cao focused on describing levels of emotion. The focus not only reflects his own way of perceiving emotion but also demonstrates his understanding of various levels of emotion and his remarkable ability to describe human emotions vividly.

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Ẩn dụ bản thể “CẢM XÚC CON NGƯỜI LÀ SỰ VẬN ĐỘNG CƠ THỂ” trong tác phẩm của Nam Cao

Tóm tắt: Ngôn ngữ trong tác phẩm của Nam Cao không chỉ là sự sáng tạo riêng của tác giả mà còn tiêu biểu cho ngôn ngữ thường ngày của tiếng Việt; trong đó có những ẩn dụ ý niệm phức tạp, đặc biệt là các ẩn dụ bản thể về cảm xúc, được thể hiện thông qua các nhân vật. Quá trình khảo sát 57 tác phẩm của Nam Cao đã giúp chúng tôi nhận thấy nhà văn có khuynh hướng nhận thức và lý giải về cảm xúc con người dựa trên các đặc tính của sự vận động cơ thể. Trong bài viết này, từ góc nhìn của lý thuyết ẩn dụ của ngôn ngữ học tri nhận, chúng tôi tập trung thảo luận về sự ánh xạ giữa miền Nguồn CẢM XÚC và miền Đích SỰ VẬN ĐỘNG CƠ THỂ trong các tác phẩm của ông. Đồng thời, chúng tôi cũng xác định và phân tích những yếu tố nghiệm thân là nền tảng cho cách thức tri nhận này. Kết quả nghiên cứu được đề xuất ứng dụng vào việc tiếp nhận và giảng dạy tác phẩm của Nam Cao tại Việt Nam.

Từ khoá: Nam Cao; tác phẩm của Nam Cao; tri nhận; ẩn dụ ý niệm; ẩn dụ bản thể.