

INTRODUCTION

1. Motivation of the study

Being very profound and distinctive conclusions on various aspects of social behavior, on folktales and on priceless life experience, proverbs have been seen as a unique cultural property of any nations and they have actually been regarded as an indispensable part in the language (as special words or phrases). The ability to use such proverbs in language and communication can be said to be of high artistic competence by first (1) the ways to express one's ideas distinctively and then (2) the ways to use language in such a way that it could best reflect the society's philosophy. That means proverbs are generated from a subtle, comprehensive observation over reality and from the ability to use accurate language that individuals, communities and the whole society have done. While proverbs themselves are the abundant components of a language, they have, in return, beautified the language.

The manipulation of proverbs in today communication, especially in direct spoken communication, has been very popular as proverbs can denote the speaker's implications accurately, beautifully and quite profoundly, which could be naturally utilized. Short but informative messages, under the cover of proverbs, can help people understand each other better and are suitable to communication mode in a modern society.

Vietnamese speakers have many difficulties in communication with foreigners as they are supposed to use English or other languages rather than their mother tongue. The difficulties range from their language incompetence to intangible hindrance with regard to lifestyle, customs, ideology and culture. Vietnamese is definitely different from English both in vocabulary, grammar and there are big gap between the English thinkings and Vietnamese ones, too. It is, therefore, hard for a person from one language background to understand a

proverb spoken in another language background. It will surely be harder for a speaker to choose a certain proverb to fully express his ideas.

Language is, however, a special social phenomenon as it was born and developed in a close relation with social development and human's lives. As human beings are social creatures, they would share similar aspects in their thinkings when they have experienced similarities in society's organization and development despite being in different geographical features, in various customs. Beside their differences, it is strongly believed that both Vietnamese and English proverbs have many things in common.

Despite spending a little time in teaching translation skill to English majored students in Dong Thap University, the writer has realized that the students here have faced thousands of difficulties in dealing with proverbs when carrying out their translating tasks. In a search for better personal understandings of this special linguistic phenomenon as well as a desperate hope to help students work faster and better in their translation, the writer is determined to make this a scientific study.

2. Research objectives

This study is ultimately aimed at finding the similarities and differences between linguistic and cultural aspects in English and Vietnamese proverbs.

Therefore, the followings will surely be made clear in the study:

- General characteristics of English proverbs in term of linguistic aspects and culture aspects.
- General characteristics of Vietnamese proverbs in term of linguistic aspects and culture aspects.
- The similarities and differences on linguistic aspects and culture aspects between English proverbs and Vietnamese proverbs

3. Research questions

Based on the given objectives, this study is going to give the answers to the following questions

1. What are the characteristics of English proverbs and Vietnamese ones in term of linguistic aspects and culture aspects?
2. How are English proverbs and Vietnamese ones similar and different regarding to linguistic and culture aspects?

4. Research methodology

The research methods to be applied in this study include:

- ✓ Quantitative and qualitative analysis: this will be used for reading and categorizing typical English and Vietnamese proverbs (the equivalents)
- ✓ Contrastive analysis: Proverbs in English and Vietnamese will be compared and contrasted in the aspects of linguistics and culture to find out their similarities and differences.

5. The significance of the study

Contrastive research is always a topical question in the field of contrastive linguistics, as hundreds of problems would arise once the differences and similarities between the two accidental languages are taken into account. The similarities and differences between English and Vietnamese proverbs in the aspects of linguistics and culture will have valuable contribution to the current work of linguistics research and language teaching and learning. Learning language and culture can be done in different forms and through various sources and proverbs are among these sources as proverbs are of high frequency of use in daily communication and are means to express the speakers' culture, namely knowledge of the world, their experience and attitude to life and the society. Because no relevant studies in Vietnam so far and only some limited articles in other countries have been published, it's necessary for the topic to be dealt with for a better understanding of linguistics and culture, which will give valuable contribution to the teaching and learning of foreign languages.

The findings of this study can be used a useful and reliable reference material for the English majored students or those who are engaging their approaches to foreign culture studies, mainly British and American culture. The

findings also provide the rich source of reference for the students who have encountered tremendous hindrance in learning translation. Under the light of intensive analysis on the proverbs, the similarities and differences in British culture and Vietnamese one will surely help bring students out of the maze of uncertainty whenever they deal with culture matters.

Finally, the result of the study will be an important contribution to the movement of self study-based teaching and learning renovation, proposed and encouraged by the school. At the same time, the study will make a humble contribution to future intensive studies on proverbs of Vietnamese and English.

6. The organization of the study

Apart from the Table of Content, Appendices, this study is structured as follow

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Conclusion

CHAPTER I

PROVERBS AND THEIR TYPICAL CHARACTERISTICS

1.1. Definitions of proverbs

In the context of linguistic practice and folk application, proverbs have been defined in various ways although they share one thing in common, e.g. *“short rhythmic sentences that summarize people’s life experience, moral values and reality of daily life”* (translated) ¹. More detailed definitions, both by Vietnamese linguists and by English counterparts, are introduced below.

“Tục ngữ là một câu nói hoàn chỉnh, gọn sắc, xuôi tai, diễn đạt trọn vẹn một ý nghĩa mà nội dung thuộc về những kinh nghiệm đời sống, kinh nghiệm lịch sử xã hội của nhân dân” (Lương) *“A proverb is a complete sentence that is short and pleasant to ear. They express something the meaning of which is about people’ life experience and socio historical experience”* (Luong)

“Tục ngữ là thể loại văn học dân gian nhằm đúc kết kinh nghiệm, tri thức của nhân dân dưới hình thức những câu nói ngắn gọn, súc tích, có nhịp điệu, dễ nhớ, dễ truyền”. (Tuấn) *“A proverb is a kind of folk lore literature that summarizes people’s experience and knowledge in the form of a short and concise sentence which is rhythmic, easy to be learned, memorized and propagated”*

“Tục ngữ thông thường được hiểu là những câu dùng để phản ánh các tri thức và kinh nghiệm dân gian của dân tộc về giới tự nhiên và xã hội, qua đó đồng thời là lời khuyên về cách xử thế và đạo lý làm người” (Dân) *“By general understandings, proverbs are sentences to express the nation’s knowledge and experience about the nature and society. At the same time, they give advice on how to behave and practice moral principles.”*

In English, proverbs are defined as follow.

¹ Từ điển Tiếng Việt, Viện ngôn ngữ học, Nhà xuất bản Khoa học xã hội, 1992, trang 1043

*“A proverb is a short, pithy saying in frequent and widespread use, expressing a well-known truth or fact.”*², or *“A proverb is a traditional saying which offers advice or presents a moral in a short and pithy manner”*³

In many other documents, we found that proverbs are defined in the English language as follows:

A proverb is a short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorizable form and which is handed down from generation to generation” (Mieder 1993, p. 5).

“A proverb is a short sentence of wisdom” (Mieder 1993, p. 5)

“The proverb is a traditional, conversational, didactic genre with general meaning, a potential free conversational turn, preferably with figurative meaning” (Norrick 1985, S. 78).

Proverbs are in general originated from people’s real life, in their production and struggle for existence. They are produced by people, in either daily conversations or in literature works.

There is a close relationship between a proverb’s form and its content as a proverb usually has two layers of meanings, namely the literal sense and the figurative sense. Proverbs are rich in producing images, that is to say they picture out many figurative images, which are created thanks to similes, personification and metaphor.

In term of their syntactic features, proverbs are rhythmically structured in rhymes including close rhymes and medial rhymes. When they are cited, they are separated by syllabled fragments or words. The opposite between the phrases in a proverb gives rise to harmonious balance and a steady construction. Proverbs can include just only one phrase with one sole judgment or several phrases with different judgments

² Từ điển bách khoa toàn thư, Nhà xuất bản Houghton Mifflin Company, 1980, trang

³ The Oxford Concise Dictionary of Proverb, Simpson, 1998).

Born in different aspects of society including human's literature, daily work and folklore tales, proverbs then are of significant importance. First, proverbs are seen as precious treasure of people's codes of behavior in their relations among family members, individual-to-individual, individual to society, individual to the nature. In family, such principles as “cha làm sao con bào hao làm vậy” (*as the old cocks crows, so does the young*), or “cha nào con nấy” (*like father, like son*), “anh em như thể tay chân” (*brothers are like hands and feet*) are almost applied all the time.

Second, proverbs are a social phenomenon as each individual, no matter what he/she will be, either the educated one or the uneducated one, has his/her own stock of proverbs and tends to use them in their daily life. The proverbs in use are said to best suit the people's living conditions, working environment, and be appropriate with their life experience and ideology. They all have created a rich stock of proverbs which best reflect their education, awareness and ideology in a certain historical period.

The third function of proverbs can be expressed in their possibility of being used in communication. As they are summaries of high condensation, generalization, proverbs can bring forth telling effectiveness in daily communication.⁴ Proverbs are short in words but long in meaning, simple in form but quite profound in implication so they are favored by almost all speakers. Proverbs have even been used as “vocabulary” to write interesting stories like that of “Thừa một con thì có”⁵. Using proverbs in communication is really an art of language use.

1.2. English proverbs and their characteristics

There are many rhetoric techniques in English proverbs, for instance similes, metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, personification, antithesis, contrast, repetition, alliteration, rhythm and so on. These rhetoric techniques make the form of English proverbs terse, the content rich, and the meaning deep. As we

⁴ A Proverb in the hand is often worth a thousand words (Horace Reynolds, 1959)

⁵ Vietnamese popular folk tales

know, the figures can be divided into two kinds, one is on the language (about vocabulary and sentence); the other is on the thought (about material and condition). The first kind includes antithesis, contrast, repetition, alliteration, rhythm and so on; and the second one includes simile, metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, personification etc.

1.2.1 Typical linguistic features

The first feature of proverbs, in term of thier linguistic aspect, is thier conciseness and clearness as proverbs are fixed in their structure. They are less in words but they express more meaning. The second feature of proverbs can be seen in their symmetrical sentence pattern. In term of structure, the proverbs have an obvious characteristics, that is clause or sentence patterns is symmetrical. No matter in sight or language sense, it always appears in harmony and unity. Take these proverbs for example:

Easy come, easy go

No pains, no gains

Ill got, soon spent

It's six of one and half a dozen of another.

The two parts of the proverbs above are symmetrical in structure, with the word class being similar, and the syllables being almost the same. Some of them use the similar thing to replenish each other; the others use the completely different to forms strong contrast. Moreover, some proverbs use the harmony to have the syllable well proportioned, and full of music beauty.

The third feature of English proverbs is that many rhetoric techniques such as repetition, antithesis, and metaphor are used. In the first place, repetition brings about deeper meaning and strengthens the proverbs' tone. For example,

Soon ripe soon rotten

Out of debt, out of danger

Diamond cut diamond

Like cure like

The use of antithesis can make sentence harmonious and symmetrical, and make know the dialectic relationship among things, such as: where there's smoke, there's fire; waste not, want not. Lastly, the use of metaphor in proverbs is more common, which makes sentences more active and turn to life as sophisticated moral advice like “*Love me, love my dog*”; “*Never offer to teach fish to swim.*”

In term of grammatical structure, English proverbs are usually in these compositions

- If clauses

If you sell the cow, you sell her milk too

If one will not, another will

If you can not bite, never show your teeth

If the bed could tell all it knows, it would put many to the blush.

If you touch pot, you must touch penny

- Adjective clauses

He that has a great nose thinks everybody speaks of it

He that has no children knows not what love is

He that has money has what he needs

He that is warm thinks all so

He who laughs last laughs best

He who says big does a little

He who makes no mistakes makes nothing

He who rides on a tiger can never dismount

1.2.2 Typical culture features

It is always a hard job whenever we are supposed to talk about culture as culture is not simply what we can see, what we can touch or read. Under a very deliberate analysis and discussion, Tran Ngọc Them concluded that “*Culture is reciprocal system of material and spiritual values created and accumulated by human beings through their daily activities in the context of mutual interaction*

between people to the society and environment” (translated).⁶

Accordingly, culture is all things related to human beings, and English culture has something to do with English people, their living environment. In about 1000 proverbs, we presumably propose the following features that are reflected by proverbs.

1.2.2.1 Proverbs reflecting weather conditions

It's obvious that weather is reflected in proverbs because this element is an indispensable part in the lives of almost all peoples in the world. For the English people, weather conditions are of significant meanings to them as “*Britain is well-known for the bad and changeable weather with a lot of rain and very thick fog*”⁷. In England, it rains a lot, with the average annual rainfall of 800 mm to 1.000 mm. Besides, England has suffered from the very unpleasant stage of fog, so much serious that this country has long been called “*the country of fog*”. Consequently, many proverbs express the weather conditions or words of weather condition are used as the signified for the other things in the society. “*It never rains but it pours*” is the best proverb demonstrating England's bad weather condition as well as people's sufferings beside the other ones.

Rain, Rain, go away, come back another day

South Wind Surely Brings Us Rain, the North Wind Blows It Back Again

A quarrelsome wife is like a constant dripping on a rainy day.

The English people have much experience in giving forecast on weather conditions.

If you sneeze three times within a second, the next day will be sunny

Many flowers close up before a storm, pine cones do too

Clear moon, frost soon

Rainbow in the morning gives you fair warning

Halo around the sun or moon, rain or snow soon

⁶ Trần Ngọc Thêm, Cơ sở văn hóa Việt Nam, Nhà xuất bản Giáo dục, 1998, trang 10.

⁷ Dương Anh Lâm, British culture, Nhà xuất bản Giáo dục, 2005, trang 25

Red Sky at night, sailor's delight. Red sky in the morning, sailor take warning.

The north wind bringeth forth rain

Seagull, seagull, sit on the sand. It's never good weather when you're on the land

As the inclement weather has been a great nuisance to their lives, weather is known as the common conversation topics for the English people. They always wish to get rid of bad weather as soon as possible and they are pleased to see that the weather has changed for the betterment.

Rain before seven, fine before eleven

March winds and April showers bring forth May flowers

1.2.2.2 Proverbs reflecting English people's work and working styles

For every individual, community or nation, jobs are of the utmost meaning, not just for earning livings but for the purposes of prosperity and self-improvement. By asserting that “*work of any kind is good*”, the English people seem to find jobs for their own livings despite the State well –organized welfare system⁸. The sense of being industrious enables the English people to overcome difficulties in life, to take hardship and endurance, and to highly appreciate those who have the true sense of workmanship, the right attitude to work.

No pains no gains

No bee no honey

A handful of trade is a handful of gold

Lazy hands make a man poor, but diligent hands bring wealth

All things are difficult before they are easy

By hard labor, a man will succeed

On the other hand, they dislike being idle and consider being idle is a kind of social crime or even calamity.

The devil finds work for idle hands to do

⁸ “Britain is a welfare state with a wide benefit system meant to help people”, British culture, Duong Lam Anh, Nhà xuất bản Giáo dục, 2005, trang 94.

Idleness is the root of all evils

An idle man is the devil's booster

An idle person is the devil's play follow

If you don't work, you shan't eat

They think that “*he who works his land will have abundant food, but the one who chases fantasies will have his fill of poverty*”, and that “*a man without job will live in poverty*”. It should have been the poverty that gives them bad prospects to the future, so the words “poor”, “poverty” have regularly been reiterated the in their proverbs.

The ruin of the poor is their poverty."

Poor is he who works with a negligent hand

The poor is hated even by his neighbor

All the brothers of a poor man hate him

He who loves pleasure will become a poor man

Do not rob the poor because he is poor

Poverty and shame will come to him who neglects discipline

For the heavy drinker and the glutton will come to poverty

Poverty is the result of laziness

Loving riches and pleasure (greed) leads to poverty

The English people hate being poor, so they have a very hardworking style by first observing rule of punctuality, like that of “*Time and tide wait for no man*”, then saving time because “*Time is gold*”. Whenever they do something, they want to do it wholeheartedly and finish it quickly and properly.

Never put off till tomorrow what you can do today

First come first served

It's the early bird that catches the worm

One who has the reputation of an early riser may safely lie in bed until noon.

Regarding to particular jobs, the English people are known to have started their earliest occupations on castle raising, fishing and trading

respectively⁹. In the United Kingdom's history of nation birth, this country is originally formed by several peoples¹⁰, with the Celtic being a human group that led nomadic life to enjoy expanding land and traveling. In their proverbs, there appear many names of animals whose lives are closely connected to the nomadic living styles, such as “horse”, “camel”, “cow”, “ass”, “monkey”, “dog”, “bird”, and other elements belonging to the natural environment, including “tree”, “grass”, “water”, “land”. Here are the examples.

- Animals

A camel is a horse designed by a committee

All lay loads on a willing horse

Its too late to shut the stable door after the horse has bolted

Life is like a horse race there are winners and losers

Never look for a gift horse mouth.

The horses of hope gallop, but the asses of experience go slowly

Every Ass Loves to Hear Himself Bray

The Ass Loaded With Gold Still Eats Thistles

He who steals an egg will steal an ass.

It's the last straw that breaks the camel's back.

Barking dogs never bite

Let sleeping dogs lie

Every dog has his day

Take a hair of the dog that bites you.

If you lay down with dogs you will come up with fleas.

Only mad dogs and Englishmen go out in the midday sun

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History of Britain – time line and fact, Mandy Barrow, Woodland Junior School, Hunt Road, Ton Bridge Kent, UK

¹⁰ The English is the mixture of many people living in England over thousands of years ago. They are mainly of Anglo – Saxon descent...The Welsh, the Scots, and the native Irish are of Celtic origin.- Britain is a welfare state with a wide benefit system meant to help people”, British culture, Duong Lam Anh, Nhà xuất bản Giáo dục, 2005, trang 32.

A bird can sing with a broken wing, but you can't pluck feathers off a frog

A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush

Birds of a feather flock together.

Fine feathers make fine birds

God gives every bird its food, but does not always drop it into the nest

- Environment elements

The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence

Still waters run deep

A scalded cat fears cold water

Blood is thicker than water

No matter how long a log stays in the water it does not become a crocodile

Before enlightenment, I chopped wood and carried water; after enlightenment, I chopped wood and carried water.

A good tree brings forth good fruit

He that plants a tree plants for posterity

Plant the crab tree where you will, it will never bear pippins

The fruit does not fall far from the tree.

The higher the tree, the sweeter the plum

In the land of hope, there is never any winter

He who works his land will have abundant food, but the one who chases fantasies will have his fill of poverty

1.3 Typical characteristics of Vietnamese proverbs

1.3.1 Typical linguistic features

As defined by many linguists, one common but important feature of Vietnamese proverbs is the concrete structure, eg. they are well-structured with two prominent aspect.

13.1.1 Conciseness

Vietnamese proverbs are usually in simple composition, ranging from three words or longer but they are in general very short. In reality, some proverbs are quite short like

Tham thì thâm

Túng thì tính

Some are longer, ranging from eight or ten words. For example

- Rượu ngon bắt luận be sành

Áo rách khéo vá hơn lành vụng may

The most common structure of Vietnamese proverbs are of short ones, with the structure of four, six or eight words that come out in pairs of equal number.

Sớm nở tối tàn

Ăn vóc học hay

Cha nào con nấy

Bỏ thì thương, vương thì tội

Khôn ba năm, dại một giờ

Sống để bụng, chết mang theo

Giàu vì bạn, sang vì vợ

Đói ăn vụng, túng làm càn

Hùm chết để da người ta chết để tiếng

Một nghề cho chín còn hơn chín nghề

Bán anh em xa mua láng giềng gần

Sống gần nhà giàu đau răng cho ăn cơm

In a proverb itself, there is no redundant words and they altogether express a complete thought or idea.

1.3.1.2 *The symmetry*

The presence of symmetrical structure is one of the unique features of Vietnamese proverbs. The symmetry creates a balance between the phrases

within a proverb through equal number of words, ranging from two, three, four, five....to even seven words. Look at these examples

- *The symmetry of two words*

Máu chảy ruột mềm

Môi hở răng lạnh

Khác máu tanh lòng

Lớn thuyền lớn sóng

Khẩu Phật tâm xà

- *The symmetry of three words*

Chờ được vạ má đã sung

Sai con toán, bán con trâu

Sông có khúc, người có lúc

Đói ăn vụng túng làm càn

- *The symmetry of four words*

Ba ông thợ da bằng Gia Cát Lượng

Chó cậy gần nhà, gà cậy gần vườn

Hùm chết để da người ta chết để tiếng

Có chí làm quan có gan làm giàu

- *The symmetry of five words*

Nuôi lợn ăn cơm nằm nuôi tằm ăn cơm đứng

Đánh kẻ chạy đi ai đánh người chạy lại

Mèo lớn bắt chuột to, mèo con bắt chuột nhỏ

- *The symmetry of six words*

Thua kiện mười bốn quan năm, được kiện mười lăm quan chẵn

Của làm ra để trên gác, của cò bạc để trên cây

- *The symmetry of seven words*

Giàu không hà tiện khó liền tay, khó không hà tiện khó ăn mày

The symmetrical structure in proverbs may help the readers learn, remember and use proverbs better. As the two phrases contain the same

numbers of words, the readers can probably find out if they have read the correct proverbs. This feature also gives rise to another feature in Vietnamese proverb, which is paralleled structure.

1.3.1.3 *Paralleled structures*

In his book, Nguyen Nha Ban¹¹ asserted that “*Proverbs are the condensed statements and thus they can be distinguished from the other normal statements by their presence of paralleled structures*”. Parallelism is the repetition of grammatical units within the linguistic components that make up the proverbs. In term of composition, parallelism is created thanks to the coincidence of the same grammatical units, including parts of speech, phrases, and clauses.

<i>Bá nhân bá tính</i>	(phrases)
<i>Ăn ốc nói mò</i>	(phrases)
<i>Cốc mò, cò xơi</i>	(clauses)
<i>Hoa có thời, người có lứa</i>	(clauses)
<i>Còn da lông mọc, còn chồi nên cây</i>	(clauses)

However, in Vietnamese proverbs, parallelism is not simply the repetition of the same grammatical units. Actually, in paralleled structures, different means of linguistic functions are used, including contrast of tone, ideas. Take these proverbs as examples

<i>Cầu được, ước thấy</i>	(được – ước)
<i>Có tiền mua tiên cũng được</i>	(tiền – tiên)
<i>Kẻ tám lạng, người nửa cân</i>	(kẻ # người, tám lạng # nửa cân)
<i>Đất có Thổ Công, sông có Hà Bá</i>	(đất # sông, Thổ Công # Hà Bá)
<i>Hết cơn bão cực đến hồi thối lai</i>	(hết # đến, bão cực # thối lai)

1.3. 2 Typical culture features

3.3.2.1 *Proverbs reflecting agriculture production*

¹¹ Nguyễn Nhã Bản, Đặc trưng cấu trúc ngữ nghĩa của thành ngữ tục ngữ trong ca dao, Nhà xuất bản Văn hóa thông tin, 2004 p 202, 203

Vietnam is now still a country of agriculture-based economy with more than fifty percent of people living on agriculture production or agriculture related occupations¹². In his renowned book entitled “Cơ sở văn hóa Việt Nam” (fundamental basics of Vietnamese culture), Tran Ngoc Them reiterates that Vietnamese culture is imbued with agriculture by saying that “*Việt Nam do ở góc tận cùng của phía đông nam nên thuộc loại văn hóa gốc nông nghiệp điển hình*” (Them, 1998, p 22), “*sông nước đã để lại dấu ấn rất quan trọng trong tinh thần văn hóa khu vực này. Đây là một hằng số địa lý rất quan trọng, chính nó tạo nên nét độc đáo của nền văn hóa nông nghiệp lúa nước*” (Them, 1999, p 28,29), “*thành tựu (văn hóa) lớn nhất ở giai đoạn văn hóa tiền sử của người dân Nam Á là hình thành nghề nông nghiệp lúa nước*” (Them, 1999, p 38).

In Vietnamese proverbs, the major topic is about agriculture production including the ones honoring this occupation and those relating to the necessities for agriculture production such as plots of farming land, weather conditions, resources of water, buffaloes, and several other working tools.

Nhất nông nhì sỹ

Tắc đắc tác vàng

Con trâu là đầu cơ nghiệp

Trật con toán bán con trâu

Ruộng sâu trâu nái không bằng con gái đầu lòng

Trâu chậm uống nước đục

Trâu đồng nào ăn cỏ đồng nấy

Mây xanh thì nắng, mây trắng thì mưa

Tháng bảy heo may chuồn chuồn bay thì bão

¹² 1. Năm 2011 lại là năm thắng lợi trên lĩnh vực sản xuất lúa, mang lại niềm vui lớn cho người nông dân. Diện tích gieo trồng lúa cả nước cả năm 2011 đạt hơn 7,6 triệu ha, tăng hơn 140 nghìn ha so với năm 2010, năng suất bình quân đạt khoảng 55 tạ/ha, sản lượng đạt 42,2 triệu tấn, cao nhất từ trước đến nay và cao hơn 2,2 triệu tấn so với năm 2010, vượt hơn một triệu tấn so với chỉ đạo của Chính phủ.

Đạt được mốc kỷ lục mới với hơn 7,1 triệu tấn gạo xuất khẩu và quan trọng là người nông dân có lãi từ nghề trồng lúa, năm 2011 tiếp tục trở thành năm thành công đối với công tác xuất khẩu gạo của Việt Nam

- Vũ Thành, Nhìn lại năm 2011: Sản xuất lúa đạt thắng lợi lớn, <http://www.na.gov.vn/htx/vietnamese/>

2. Theo số liệu tổng điều tra dân số năm 2009, 70% dân số nước ta đang sống ở khu vực nông thôn, lao động nông thôn hiện chiếm 75% tổng lực lượng lao động cả nước. Tính đến cuối năm 2010 lao động nông nghiệp chiếm đến 48,2% lao động cả nước, nhưng chỉ chiếm 20,6% GDP, trong khi đó lao động các ngành phi nông nghiệp chiếm chỉ 51,8% nhưng đã tạo ra đến gần 80% GDP [Nguồn: Văn kiện Đại hội đại biểu toàn quốc lần thứ XI].

*Nước đến chân mới nhảy
 Nước đọng là nước độc
 Nhất nước nhì phân tam cần tứ giống
 Năng tốt dưa mưa tốt lúa*

Vietnamese agriculture is under developed, especially in the past when people had to do their farming jobs by hands but not technology. Worse still, farmers had to rely almost totally on weather conditions and were unhappy if they could not enjoy the favorable conditions.

*Buồn về một nổi tháng giêng,
 Con chim cái cú nằm nghiêng thở dài.
 Buồn về một nổi tháng hai,
 Đêm ngắn ngày dài, thua thiệt người ta.
 Buồn về một nổi tháng ba,
 Mưa dầm, nắng lửa, người ta lờ đờ.
 Buồn về một nổi tháng tư,
 Con mắt lờ đờ, cơm chẳng muốn ăn.
 Buồn về một nổi tháng năm,
 Chửa đặt mình nằm, gà gáy chim kêu*

However, unlike the English people who complain all the time about the disadvantageous weather, Vietnamese would first have confidence on the nature or supernatural force, like “*ơn trời mưa nắng phải thì*”, “*trời sinh voi sinh cỏ*”, and then try to overcome difficulties thinking that “*trời cao có mắt*”, “*trời sẽ giúp kẻ nào tự giúp lấy mình*”. As time passed, they have proved to be much experienced in weather changes and event adapted themselves very well to the environment as what the people in the Mekong delta provinces have “lived with flood” for a long time.

*Móng đông vòng tây, chẳng mưa dây cũng bão giạt
 Mau sao thì nắng, vắng sao thì mưa
 Éch kêu uôm uôm, ao chuôm đầy nước
 Gió bắc hiu hiu, sếu kêu thì rét*

*Đêm tháng năm chưa nằm đã sáng
 Ngày tháng mười chưa cười đã tối
 Qua giêng hết năm, qua rằm hết tháng
 Nắng chóng trưa, mưa chóng tối*

Because they are accustomed to weather changes, they know how to choose the suitable crops or breeds of fish and poultries and other species of domestic animals.

*Cấy thưa thừa thóc
 Đông chết se, hè chết nước
 Đom đóm bay ra, trồng cà tra đỗ,
 Đất thiếu trồng dừa, đất thừa trồng cau
 Thừa ao tốt cá
 Tháng giêng trồng trúc, tháng lục trồng tiêu
 Giàu nuôi lợn nái, lụi bại nuôi bò câu
 Làm ruộng có năm, nuôi tầm có lúa
 Muốn giàu nuôi cá muốn khá nuôi heo
 Nhờ trời mưa gió thuận hoà.
 Nào cây nào cấy, trẻ già đua nhau.
 Chim, gà, cá, lợn, cày cấy,
 Mùa nào thức nấy giữ màu nhà quê

 Tháng giêng là tháng ăn chơi,
 Tháng hai trồng đậu, trồng khoai, trồng cà
 Tháng ba thì đậu đã già
 Ta đi ta hái về nhà phơi khô
 Tháng tư đi tậu trâu bò
 Để ta sắm sửa làm mùa tháng năm...*

1.3.2.2 Proverbs reflecting morality and lifestyle

For centuries, Vietnamese people have been, by their awareness and self-esteem as well as reputation, proud of being in a country rich in culture

especially in intangible values with the so-called family tradition being a distinguished feature. These values consist of sets of long lasting and well-founded system of behavior patterns, which is based on the background of village organization, or to a deeper extent, agriculture production. People in agriculture economy live on the principle of respecting each other as sentiment is concerned (*Một bồ cái lí không bằng một tí cái tình*). This principles has given rise to the true attitude of respecting morality, education and even women. (Thêm, 1999, p22,23). Concerning the role of proverbs in giving moral advice, Bùi Ngọc Sơn illustrated that “*nhân dân ta cũng đã từng coi tục ngữ ca dao như là những Luật tục, những khuôn phép nề nếp, những thuần phong mỹ tục, ca ngợi cái tốt cái thiện, phê phán cái xấu, cái ác, để hướng hành động cho cộng đồng. Những tình cảm đạo đức này được mô tả chân thực vì được rút ra từ chính cuộc sống của những người sáng tạo. Vì vậy nó trở thành chân lý vĩnh cửu, được nhân dân yêu mến thuộc lòng, tâm niệm, phấn đấu vươn tới, cũng có khi còn dùng nói xen vào cả trong khi đàm luận để khẳng định điều hay lẽ dở. Ca dao, tục ngữ đã gần gũi thân thiết như máu thịt, như hơi thở, nếp nghĩ của người dân ta vậy*” (Sơn, 1999, p 6). Therefore, proverbs are the guidance which every one should observe in his or her moral life. These systems include the advice for people’s code of behavior in their relations and interactions with the country, the community (1), friends (2), relatives and neighbors (3), family members (4)

(1)

Ăn quả nhớ kẻ trồng cây

Uống nước nhớ nguồn

Cây có cội người có tông

Ta về ta tắm ao ta

Ăn oản của chùa phải lo cúng Phật

(2)

Tứ hải giai huynh đệ

Gian nan mới biết bạn hiền

(3)

Bán anh em xa mua láng giềng gần

Thông gia hai nhà như một

Kính lão đắc thọ

(4)

Con không cha như nhà không nóc

Có nuôi con mới biết lòng cha mẹ

Dâu hiền hơn gái rể hiền hơn trai

Bên cha cũng kính bên mẹ cũng vái

Con hơn cha, là nhà có phúc.

Con cái khôn ngoan, vẻ vang cha mẹ.

CHAPTER II

SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE PROVERBS

Based on the analysis and demonstration in the previous chapter, it is evident to claim that both English proverbs and Vietnamese ones share many similar things. The similarities include the linguistic techniques of different kinds, structures, forms and their denotations. In this chapter, due partly to the study aims, already set at the first chapter, we discuss some typical similarities between the two countries' proverbs.

2.1. Similarities in linguistic aspects

Although Vietnamese and English are not grammatically identical, they have yet some certain similarities. They can be words because Vietnamese people have borrowed some from Englishmen and vice versa.In this section, we discuss the similarities between the two nations' proverbs in term of higher linguistic elements, e.g. phrases.

2.1.1 Usage of phrases

Because most definitions of proverbs emphasize the point, “proverbs are short sentences”, we can, therefore, conclude that the proverbs being in short phrases are obviously accurate. One of the most popular phrases to be used is verbal phrases. Let look at these examples.

Xa mắt, cách lòng.

Seldom seen, soon forgotten.

Kết bạn trước thề ước sau.

First make friend, then make love.

In general, verbs are preferred in Vietnamese language use, not in English where nouns are favoured but in both proverbs, verbs are used because they themselves denote actions or feelings. Proverbs summarize something, but not usually deal with concepts, which can be described by single nouns or noun phrases. Proverbs, instead, summarize principles of action or codes of behavior.

2.1.2 Similarities in clauses and sentences

It is found that in most of the proverbs, both in English and in Vietnamese, the common structures are simple clauses of one subject and one predicate or consecutive sets of these components. In Vietnamese, proverbs are structured in one single clause or sentence with only one combination of subject plus predicate. Look at these examples below

Thất bại là mẹ thành công

Con trâu là đầu cơ nghiệp

Làm ruộng thì ra, làm nhà thì tốn

In this structure, as indicated by linguist Diep Quang Ban, the two words “thì”, “là” outclass the others in term of introducing the predicates. The others include “có”,

Nước có vua, nhà có chủ

In English, almost all proverbs are in simple clauses or sentences. There are two popular structures:

(a) **subject + verb + complement**

(b) **subject + verb + object**

In the first structure, the verbs are “to be” or sometimes linking verbs while in the second one, the verbs are ordinary ones. Here are examples.

Promise is debt

A good wife is a good prize

Friends are the thieves of time

Deeds are fruits, words are leaves

Failure teaches success

A clean hand wants no washing

Many dishes make many diseases

One more favored structure that one can identify in the two collections of proverbs is “nếuthì”, “hễ...thì” (Vietnamese) or “if...then” (English) although the conjunction is usually elipsed or implicitly understood.

Có tật giết mình

*Lắm mới, tối nằm không
 Xay lúa khỏi bông em
 Bụng đói, gói bò
 Hay ở, dở đi
 Cao lễ, dễ thừa
 Đói ăn vụng, túng làm càn*

Tiếng Anh

*If you won't work, you shan't eat.
 If you run to two hares, you will catch none.
 If you agree to carry a calf, they will make you to carry a cow.
 If you can't have the best, make the best of what you have.
 If you sell the cow, you sell her milk too*

2.1.3 Impersonal structures

This structure appears at the highest rate in proverbs. This may be because the fact that proverbs are folklore linguistic products, which means they are for all the people in the society, not a single person alone. Impersonal subjects or nominal subject sentences are commonly used.

In Vietnamese proverbs, the elipsed form is used with the subjects being omitted or explicitly understood. For examples

*Mất bò mới lo làm chuồng
 Nắng tốt dưa, mưa tốt lúa
 Sáng giữa trưa, trưa mãi đục
 Mưu con đĩ, trí học trò
 Túc nước vỡ bờ
 Giàu vẻ vang, sang lịch sự
 Cơm đâu no chó, thóc đâu no gà*

Pairs of impersonal pronouns, especially those relating to cause – effect relations, are also used:

Ghét của nào trời trao của ấy (nào, ấy)

Kẻ nào gieo gió, kẻ ấy gặt bão

Tiền nào của ấy, tiền nào của nấy

In English, the most common impersonal subjects are the two pronouns “it” and “one” and “he”. “He” is a third singular personal pronoun, indicating a male individual but it can be used to express a person in general.....When “he” is used, it is utilized with a relative pronoun “who”.

It's the first step that count

It's no use crying over the spilt milk.

It's a long hand that has no turning

One can not blow and swallow at the same time

One beats the bush, another catches the birds.

He who has drunk will drink again

He that travels far knows much

2.1.4 Reiteration

One linguistic characteristics of proverbs is the manipulation of reiteration, eg the repetition of a single word or phrase. In Vietnamese, the repetition of verbs may be the most popular phenomenon, like those in the following examples.

Có gan ăn cướp có gan chịu đòn (có)

Ra đường hỏi bà già, về nhà hỏi con nít (hỏi)

Hùm chết để da, người ta chết để tiếng (chết)

Hòn bác ném đi, hòn chì mém lại (ném)

As we have already pointed out in the previous section that verbs are among the parts of speech of high frequency in term of appearing in proverbs, the repetition of verbs here can be regarded as a natural thing.

In English, there is also the repetition of words and this reiteration is also on verbs:

He who steals an egg will steal an ass. (steal - verbs)

He who laughs last, laughs best (laugh - verbs)

First make friend, then make love (make - verbs)

Another part of speech that is used in reiteration is nouns, in which they usually come with an indefinite article “a” or “an”. Here are the examples

Justice delayed is justice denied (nouns)

A young idler an old beggar (articles)

A friend in need is a friend indeed (indefinite articles and nouns)

A friend to all is a friend to none (indefinite articles and nouns)

A problems share is a problem halved (indefinite articles and nouns)

Other parts of speech that is used in reiteration are adjectives, pronouns, adverbs, prepositions

No pain no gain (adjectives)

No bee no honey (adjectives)

Easy come, easy go (adjectives)

So many man so many ideas (adjectives)

Grasp all, lose all (pronouns)

As you sow, you must reap (pronouns)

It never rains but it pours (pronouns)

Nothing ventured nothing gained (pronouns)

Early to bed and early to rise make a man healthy, weathy and wise.
(adverbs)

Like father like son (adverbs)

After dinner work a while, after supper walk a mile (prepositions)

In for a penny, in for a pound (prepositions)

Out of sight, out of mind (prepositions)

2.1.5. Contrast

Like reiteration, contrast is usually seen in English proverbs and Vietnamese ones. As Vietnamese is a language, whose vocabulary is in mono syllabled form, one can find that the opposites are popular in ideas, meanings,

and tones. In Vietnamese proverbs, opposites can appear in one, two or even three words, which create rhymes and special effect of contrast.

Opposites of one word

<i>Tham thì thâm</i>	tham # thâm
<i>Có làm mới có ăn</i>	làm # ăn
<i>Không ai giàu ba họ, không ai khó ba đời</i>	giàu # khó

Opposites of two words

<i>Trước lạ sau quen</i>	trước # sau, lạ # quen
<i>Chết vinh còn hơn sống nhục</i>	chết # sống, vinh # nhục
<i>Mất lòng trước, được lòng sau</i>	mất # được, trước # sau

In English, there is a similar phenomenon.

Opposites of one word

<i>Soon got, soon spent</i>	got # spent
<i>Waste not, want not</i>	waste # want
<i>When wine is in, wit is out</i>	in # out
<i>A good beginning is a good ending</i>	beginning # ending
<i>Easier said than done</i>	said # done

Opposites of two words

<i>When all men speak, no man hear</i>	all # no, speak # hear
<i>Venture nothing, lose anything</i>	venture # lose, nothing # anything

In the larger extent, the use of similar structure is also worth mentioning here. In this kind of opposite, two phrases/clauses of the same grammatical structure or function is used. They are named “parallelism”¹³ in English.

<i>Dưa Ca, cà Láng, nem Báng, tương Bần</i>
<i>Thứ nhất đom đóm vào nhà, thứ nhì chuột rúc, thứ ba hoa đèn</i>
<i>Tầm nuôi ba lúa, ruộng cày ba năm</i>
<i>Nồi đồng dễ nấu, chồng xấu dễ sai</i>

Tiếng Anh

¹³ Parallelism

Ill gotten, ill spent

First come, first served

It's as broad as it's long

Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure nineteen nineteen and six, result happiness.

Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure twenty pounds ought and six, result misery.

2.1.6. Similes

In both English proverbs and Vietnamese ones, comparison is also used and the most common forms are the comparatives and superlatives. In Vietnamese, such words or phrases as “như”, “như là”, “như thể”, “giống”, “giống như”, “tựa”, “tợ” are usually found in similes. Here are examples.

Anh em như thể tay chân

Nam thực như hổ, nữ thực như miêu

Chưa đánh được người mặt đỏ như vang

Đánh được người rồi mặt vàng như nghệ

In English, similes is used in a wider ranges of forms, like these below

“as.....as”;

“like”;

“better ...than” adj + er;

“the best + nouns”;

the + adj/adv+est; and

the most + adj/adv

Examples:

A miss is as bad as a mile.

Jack is as good as his master

A good name is better than riches

Better live in your feet than live in your knees

He who laughs last laughs best

Stolen kisses are the sweetest.

2.1.7 Rhyme¹⁴

One of the most important linguistic features of proverbs is the presence of rhyme. As defined by Hoang Tien Tuu¹⁵, “Tục ngữ là thể loại VHDG nhằm đúc kết kinh nghiệm, tri thức, nêu lên những nhận xét, phán đoán, lời khuyên răn của nhân dân dưới hình thức những câu nói ngắn gọn, giản dị súc tích, có nhịp điệu, dễ nhớ, dễ truyền”. (*“Proverbs, a kind of folklore literature, are those summarizing human’s experience, knowledge, remarks, speculations, recommendations under short sentences which are rhymatic, easy to remember and to be remembered”*) (translated). Being an indispensable characteristics of proverbs, rhyme enables the proverbs to be more easily receptive and at the same time creates the musical tone, which sounds fine to listeners’ ears.

Ăn nên đọi, nói nên lời

Đất lành, quê thói

Con nhà tông không giống lông cũng giống cánh.

As far as the length of Vietnamese proverbs are concerned, proverbs are of different composition: some are quite short while others are long. The rhyme is, therefore, very complicated. According to Nguyen Nha Ban¹⁶, rhyme in Vietnamese proverbs is categorized into three groups, which is similar to these in poems.

First is the rhyme of progressive sounds, in which rhyme happens within the scope of neighboring words, with the right ones coming to sound similar or identical to the left ones.

Ăn vóc học hay

(vóc – học : oc)

Có mới nói cũ trò

(mới – nói : oi)

¹⁴ - Âm tiết không kể phụ âm đầu, dù là bằng hay trắc đọc giống nhau trong những câu đặt gần nhau của một bài thơ hay một quyển thơ. Trong hai câu đầu Truyện Kiều: "Trăm năm trong cõi người ta, chữ tài, chữ phận khéo là ghét nhau" ta và là cùng một vần; ở bài thơ Đêm mùa hạ của Nguyễn Khuyến, trong hai câu đầu "tháng tư đầu mùa hạ, tiết trời thực ỏi ả" hạ và ả cùng một vần. – Từ điển tiếng Việt

- Correspondence of sound between words or the endings of words, especially when these are used at the ends of lines of poetry- **Oxford dictionary**

¹⁵ Hoang Tien Tuu, Văn học dân gian, Hà Nội, 2008, book 2

¹⁶

<i>Mưu con dĩ, trí học</i>	(<i>dĩ – trí : i</i>)
<i>Mạnh vì gạo, bạo vì tiền</i>	(<i>gạo – bạo : ao</i>)
<i>Buôn có bạn, bán có phường</i>	(<i>bạn – bán : ban</i>)

The elements listed above (oc, oi, i, ao, ban) are either single vowel sounds or the combination of a vowel and consonants. Under linguistic analysis, these combinations are called “vần” (syllables) in Vietnamese and in English¹⁷. “Vần” is the element that makes words sound rhymatic.

In English, rhyme appears in the words of similar sounds or those containing similar syllables.

<i>As you sow, so shall you reap</i>	(<i>sow – so</i>)
<i>Saying is one thing, doing is another</i>	(<i>ing – ing</i>)

The second kind of rhyme is “vần lưng”, in which words of the similar sounds come after one or more words from the previous ones.

Vietnamese proverbs

<i>Hùm chết để da, người ta chết để tiếng</i>	(<i>da – ta : a</i>)
<i>Gần mực thì đen gần đèn thì sáng</i>	(<i>đen – đèn : đen</i>)
<i>Xem bói ra ma, quét nhà ra rác</i>	(<i>ma – nhà : a</i>)
<i>Cá không ăn muối cá ươn</i>	(<i>ươn – đường : ươn</i>)
<i>Con cãi cha mẹ trăm đường con hư</i>	
<i>Cười người chứ có cười lâu</i>	(<i>người – cười : uoi</i>)
<i>Cười người hôm trước hôm sau người cười</i>	

English proverbs

<i>Haste makes waste</i>	(<i>haste – waste : eist</i>)
<i>Health is better than wealth.</i>	(<i>health – wealth : elə</i>)
<i>An apple a day keeps the doctor away</i>	(<i>day – away : ei</i>)
<i>April showers will bring May flowers</i>	(<i>showers – flowers : auə</i>)
<i>A switch in time saves nine</i>	(<i>time – nine : ai</i>)

¹⁷ Syllable: a unit of pronunciation having one vowel sound, with or without surrounding consonants, forming the whole or a part of a word (Oxford Dictionary)

Cleanliness is next to godliness.

(*cleanliness – godliness :*

lines)

The third type of rhyme is “vần chân”. That happens to the words at the end of each phrase/sentence, which come in paralleled structure.

Tránh vỏ dưa, gặp vỏ dừa

(*dưa – dừa : dua*)

Sông có khúc, người có lúc

(*khúc – lúc: uc*)

Clear moon, frost soon.

(*moon – soon : sun*)

A fault confessed is half redressed

(*confessed –redressed:*

est)

After dinner rest a while, after supper walk a mile.

(*while –mile : ail*)

Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise.

(*rise – wise : aiz*)

2.2. Similarities in cultural aspects

2.2.1 Proverbs are the mirrors of real life

Proverbs are special linguistic units and thus they bear the characteristics of the language from which they are generated. A language is popularly known as the product that human beings of a certain group/nation, in their reality of daily life, and with effortless brainstorming, introduced a kind of sign for communication. Therefore, proverbs always reflect human’s work-related areas including accumulated work experience, concepts of science, natural phenomena, and even philosophy. Each tribe or nation has its own language and thus has his own stock of proverbs. However, the proverbs in each language are not always different but they actually share many similarities in either those aspects or the others. The similarities come from the process of word borrowing, which have taken place in the context of diplomatic relations, economic cooperation and cultural exchange. The similarities also come from identical political situations, geographical features, and historical development. Talking about the similarity between different cultures, Trần Ngọc Thêm insisted that in the comparison of different cultures, one could find that they are

so diversified and rich. However, people have recognized that these cultures have many similarities.(translated)¹⁸

No matter how rich proverbs are, they probably reflect almost all fields in the society, they are usually divided into several categories, including proverbs about work, social relations, family, friend, behavior... In term of work, the proverbs in both languages have some common features, eg the proverb express people's points of view on (1) the importance of having a job, (2) the choice of jobs, (3) their attitude to a certain job, and also (4) the way on how to do something effectively. Look at these examples.

(1) *Tay làm hàm nhai, tay quay miệng trề.*

Có làm thì mới có ăn, không đừng ai dễ đem phần đến cho

No bee no honey

No pains no gains

(2) *Một nghề cho chín còn hơn chín nghề.*

Đứng núi này trông núi nọ

Jack of all trades, master of none

Grass is greener on the other side of the fence.

(4) *Học không chơi hao mòn sức khỏe.*

Việc hôm nay chớ để ngày mai.

All work and no play will make Jack a dull boy.

Never put off till tomorrow what you can do today.

Regardless of geographical differences and social structure of jobs¹⁹, Vietnamese people and English ones have general points of view on what they have to do for their daily living and income. In other fields, both English and Vietnamese proverbs seem to have surprising similarities. Take the proverbs about man's attitudes to the nature for our examples. In Vietnam, man is

¹⁸ “So sánh các nền văn hóa trên thế giới, người ta thấy chúng vô cùng đa dạng và phong phú. Song, cũng đã từ lâu, người ta nhận thấy giữa các nền văn hóa có không ít nét tương đồng”.
Trần Ngọc Thêm, Cơ sở văn hóa Việt Nam, Nhà xuất bản Giáo dục, Hà Nội, 1998, p 20,21

¹⁹ Today, Vietnam is still a country of agriculture while England (the UK) is a country of industry. Tran Ngoc Them stated that Vietnamese culture is base on water agriculture production and most of the western countries, with the UK being a representative, are based on castle raising and trading.

advised that “*khéo ăn thì no, khéo co thì ấm*” as he may face difficulties in life. In England, people may observe the proverb of “*the busiest man finds the most leisure*” as guideline for their path to stable life and maybe in some extent to prosperity. One more example is that, in Vietnamese culture, the belief on some supernatural forces, which was prevailing in the past, still exists today so they seem to rely much on these forces whenever they succeed or fail by saying “*mưu sự tại nhân, thành sự tại thiên*”. The English people, who usually claim “It is the man who...himself”, admit that “*man proposes, god disposes*”.

In short, the first way English proverbs and Vietnamese proverbs are similar is that they all reflect people’s wisdom of life. Whatever jobs they may do, they all mean to escape them from being idle, to earn for their livings and to reach prosperity. Because man live in a society with its own mutual interactions among individuals, with its own social rules and last but not least within the natural environment, man has to prepare himself with essential knowledge and proverbs are considered an essential orientation and guideline to better survival and success.

2.2.3 Similarities in thinking styles

As indicated by the culture researcher Tran Ngoc Them²⁰, Vietnamese people’s thinking styles are of synthetical mode as Vietnamese culture is strongly influenced by Eastern culture and it bears the characteristics of a agriculture production based culture. It is generated from their long history of coexistence with the nature, which is changeable to the weather cycles and the rhythm of seasons. However, the English people led a nomadic life, which was based on raising castle and traveling for the new grassland. Accordingly, their thinking styles belong to these of analytical fashion. The surprising thing is that the former’s thinking styles and the latter’s one have shared many common points, namely their flexibility and generalization in thinking that we name the “correlativeness in awareness”

²⁰ Trần Ngọc Thêm, *Cơ sở văn hóa Việt Nam*, Nhà xuất bản Giáo dục, Hà Nội, 1998, p 20,21

Within a Vietnamese family, a person is, by different extents, normally influenced by either his mother or father in the ways he is or he does and is usually said to have inherited his/her parents' characteristics or appearance. "*Cha nào con nấy*" is the typical proverb to best describe this phenomenon or in some other cases, where the similarities have been less in quantity, the proverbs "*con nhà tông không giống lông cũng giống cánh*" is used. Likewise, the English people have two proverbs that may probably demonstrate these above phenomena respectively: "*like father, like son*" and "*what's bred on the bone will come out in the flesh*". If some bad conducts were ever committed by the son or daughter, like "*cha làm thầy, con đốt sách*" or "*cha hà tiện, con hoang phí*", which is similar to "*a miserly father makes a prodigal son*", then some such excuses as "*cha mẹ sinh con trời sinh tính*" (*Not all men follow the footsteps of their forebears*) would be taken as explanation, defence.

In people – people relation, the philosophy of "*làm ơn không bao giờ bị thiệt*" ("*a good deed is never lost*"), is much observed as they both may think that "*ở hiền gặp lành*" ("*a good turn deserves another*") or at least "*làm ác gặp ác*" ("*as the call, so the echo*"). There is, however, a must to set a limit to one's kindness as Vietnamese and Englishmen realize that "*làm phước quá tay, ăn mày không kịp*" ("*be just before you are generous*"). From this, they have a more practical living philosophy "*có qua, ắt có lại*" ("*claw me and then I'll claw you*"), or even a more extreme philosophy of "*hồn ai nấy giữ*" (*everyone for himself*)

In deeper extent, when relations are considered to a specific individual, both English and Vietnamese share a flexible point of view in judging a person "*nhìn cây biết rừng, nhìn người biết việc*" ("*a tree is known by its fruit*"). This is, however, done in a very extremely cautious manner because both believe that "*đừng bao giờ đánh giá người khác bằng vẻ bề ngoài*" ("*do not judge people by their appearance*"). It is concluded that "*tri nhân tri diện bất tri tâm*"

(*“we know the man’s face but not his mind”*) as they are aware that *“người đẹp vì lụa”* (*“fine feathers make fine birds”*) but that *“áo đẹp không làm nên thầy tu”* (*“it’s not the gay coat that makes a gentleman”*)

In social relations, the similarities in thinking styles reach to their climax as both Englishmen and Vietnamese closely observe a minute code of behavior, which is full of flexibility. First, from the angle of individual’s approach, a man, not anyone else, must ultimately bear all responsibility and consequences for what he has performed *“có gan ăn cướp, có gan chịu đòn”, “bụng làm dạ chịu chó trách ai”* (*who breaks must pay, as you brew, you must drink, as the man makes his bed he must lie*). It is a normal thing to see that each individual, in England²¹, is a notable cell in the society and his or her conduct will contributorily paints the society’s rich dimensional picture. In Vietnam, the society is not typically the best land for individualism to develop as collectivism has been in its prevailing state, with the presence as well as values of family tradition, communal culture and national patriotism. The similarity in personal behavior is, therefore, a remarkable thing as these above-mentioned social natures are taken into account.

More surprisingly, there exist collectivism in English as they admit that *“many hands make the work light”, “four eyes see better than two”, “union is strength”*. However, the collective – oriented behavior seems not to take its stable state, both in English and Vietnamese’s proverbs because collectivism, as complicated as it has been, is not always preferred in one’s daily activities. This comes from the seamy side of the collectivism²², which are *“cốc mò cò xơi”, “kẻ ăn ốc người đổ vỏ”* (*one beats the bush and another catches the birds*), *“quýt làm cam chịu”* (*January commits the faults and May bears the blames*). It is the collectivism that causes the communal affairs to be delayed or put off like *“nhiều sỏi không ai đóng cửa chùa”, “cha chung không ai khóc”* (*everyone’s*

²¹ Nguyễn Hải Hoàn, Vài nét tính cách Mỹ, 21/08/2011, <http://htx.dongtak.net/spip.php?article900>

²² “In the case, the whole community has to face to big difficulties or challenges which even though threaten its existence the solidarity and the collectiveness will be highly called forth. But when these difficulties no longer exist, the privateness and partial faction may rise”, Vietnamese cultural village, p 12

business is nobody's business) so the Englishmen and Vietnamese all appreciate the proverb “*lắm thầy thói ma, nhiều cha con gái khó lấy chồng*” (*many cooks spoil the broth*)

2.2.3 Similarities in humoristics

The last similarity between proverbs in the two languages is that they contain humoristics in which the adaptation represents as the most important phenomenon. The vocabulary stock of a language will surely increase, probably at a tellingly high speed when the society has reached to its higher steps of the development ladder. Beside that, many social aspects, values, assumptions have continuously undergone dramatical changes and thus speculations, experiences accumulated in the past become inaccurate or even unsuitable. As a result of that, the appearance of adapted proverbs in each language has been notably recorded although official research on this phenomenon has not yet been announced. The adapted proverbs, as concluded by Le Cong Tuan, do not have anything to do with the so-called “*dị bản*” (variant) but with the changes of the proverbs, both in structure and meaning, they can best describe the changes in the modern society. Based on the available proverbs, one phrase or the whole proverbs will be replaced (on the principle of preserving the original structure, rhyme, tone). This helps create many proverbs of high sense of humoristics or joking. Below are some adapted proverbs.

Vietnamese traditional proverbs	Vietnamese adapted proverbs
- <i>Đồng vợ đồng chồng tác biển Đông cũng cạn.</i>	- <i>Đồng vợ đồng chồng đông con một lắm.</i>
- <i>Việc hôm nay chớ để ngày mai.</i>	- <i>Việc hôm nay hãy để ngày mai.</i> <i>Lương hôm nay chớ để ngày mai</i>
- <i>Lá lành đùm lá rách.</i>	- <i>Lá rách đùm lá nát.</i>
- <i>Bầu ơi thương lấy bí cùng</i> <i>Tuy rằng khác giống nhưng chung một giàn.</i>	- <i>Bầu ơi hãy nhớ bí cùng</i> <i>Tuy rằng khác giầy nhưng chung một đề.</i>

English traditional proverbs	English adapted proverbs
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>Money is the root of evil</i>- <i>Many cooks spoil the broth.</i>- <i>He who laughs last laughs best.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>The love of evil is the root of money.</i>- <i>Many clicks spoil the browser.</i>- <i>He who laughs last thinks slowest</i>

CHAPTER 3

DIFFERENCES IN BETWEEN THE PROVERBS

3.1 Difference in linguistic feature

3.1.1 Uses of proper nouns

In the Vietnamese language, each proverb is a mirror of life that gives a comprehensive and three-dimensional picture. However, the message denoted by each proverb is mainly about the general thing, not specific individual. That means the appearance of proper nouns indicating people's names makes up the lowest rate. For example:

Thứ nhất Ba Giai, thứ hai Tú Xuất

Hai mươi một Lê Lai, hai mươi hai Lê Lợi

Similarly, in English, proper nouns are rarely used whenever individual is mentioned but personal pronouns, typically being “he“, “one“ , “they“ are preferred instead. These pronouns, once again, just show things in general. Take these proverbs below as our examples

Every Jack has his Jill

Do not rob Peter to pay Paul

To give a Roland for an Oliver

All work and no play will make Jack a dull boy

Render to Caesar what's Caesar's

If the mountain will not go to Mohammed, then Mohammed must go to the mountain.

The difference is that proper nouns of geography are usually found in Vietnamese proverbs while these of geography are seldom seen in English counterparts.

Examples

Vietnamese proverbs	English proverbs
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Thứ nhất Kinh kỳ, thứ nhì phố Hiến</i> - <i>Làm trai cho đáng thân trai</i> - <i>Phú Xuân đã trải, Đồng Nai cũng từng</i> - <i>Vải Quang, húng Láng, ngổ Đầm</i> - <i>Cá rô đầm Sắt, sâm cầm Hồ Tây.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>When you are in Rome, do as the Romans do.</i> - <i>Carry coal to Newcastle</i>
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3.1.2. *The topics*

The first difference in topics between English and Vietnamese proverbs is about eating and drinking, the most essential and indispensable thing in life. Bearing in the mind the philosophy that “*có thực mới vực được đạo*”, “*khi dạ dày no thì mọi việc đều ổn cả*” (literally translated as *everything will be alright provided that the stomach is full*), one will attach great importance in eating and drinking as well as the related matters and these things have been showed in proverbs. While the Vietnamese think “*ăn theo thuở, ở theo thời*”, the English men propose “*one must live according to one’s means*”. However, the difference lies in the fact that, as culture is concerned, Vietnamese don’t just eat and drink for existence. The Vietnamese care not only the food they consume, namely a variety of dishes in each meal, the abundance of foodstuff (quality and quantity) like “*đói ăn rau, đau uống thuốc*”, or “*đói lòng ăn hột chà là*” but also other aspects relating to the meals, which include the complicated etiquette in eating. For Vietnamese, eating is one way a person expresses his manner, a criterium to measure one cultural background and knowledge and it is so important that “ăn” has hundreds of meanings. Take these proverbs for examples

Ăn xem nôi, ngồi xem hướng

Một miếng giữa làng bằng một sàng trong bếp

Mạnh vì gạo, bạo vì tiền

Ăn ít no lâu, ăn nhiều mau đói

Miếng ăn là miếng nhục

Ăn nên đọi, nói nên lời

*Ăn cơm cháy thì ngáy kho kho, ăn cơm với thịt bò thì lo ngay ngái
 Ăn thì lựa những miếng ngon, làm thì chọn việc cón con mà làm
 Có làm thì mới có ăn, không đừng ai để đem phần đến cho*

Trần Ngọc Thêm²³ indicated that, beside the above-mentioned aspects, the difference in eating quality is clearly demonstrated in proverbs. The main ingredients in Vietnamese meals, which come from a country of agriculture, are rice being in the first choice (*ăn cơm, bữa cơm*), and then vegetables of different kinds, aquatic creatures, and meat (chicken included) respectively. In the meals of Englishmen, bread, cheese, egg and beef are the most favored ingredients. Look at these examples below.

- Vietnamese proverbs

*Cơm tẻ, mẹ ruột
 Thiếu gạo cạo thêm khoai
 Ăn cá nhả xương ăn đường nuốt chậm
 Cơm chín tới, cải ngồng non, gái một con, gà nại ổ
 Dầu gà, má lợn
 Thứ nhất phao câu, thứ nhì đầu cánh
 Éch tháng ba, gà tháng bảy
 Dói thì thềm thịt thềm xôi*

- English proverbs

*Eaten bread is soon forgotten
 Better an egg today than a hen tomorrow.
 Do not put all your eggs in one basket.*

Another difference in proverbs' theme is jobs and professions. "*Hàng thịt nguyết hàng cá*", "*Kẻ cắp gặp bà già*", "*Ăn mày đòi xôi gấc*", "*Làm đi chín phương chùa một phương lấy chồng*"... (Vietnamese) or "*Friends are the thieves of time*", "*An apple a day keeps the doctor away*", "*A good lawyer must be a great liar*", "*Money is a good servant but a bad master*"...are the

²³ Trần Ngọc Thêm, Cơ sở Văn hóa Việt Nam, Nhà xuất bản Giáo dục, Hà Nội, 1998, trang 187,188

common ones that jobs are generalized. However, labor distribution and job structure are not the same in the two countries, Vietnam and England, because of their clear differences in socio-economic development. In Vietnamese proverbs, doctors/physicians and teachers are used at the highest rate.

Thầy nào trò nấy

Không thầy đố mày làm nên

Nét na con gái, tiếng tăm thầy đồ

Thầy chạy bác sỹ chê

Thầy khoe thầy cứu được người...

Lắm thầy thói ma, lắm cha con gái khó lấy chồng.

Hòn đất mà biết nói năng,

Thì thầy địa lý hàm răng chẳng còn

By contrast, beggars, thieves are used at the highest rate in English proverbs.

A young idler, an old beggar.

Beggar's bag is bottomless.

Better die a beggar than live a beggar.

If wishes were horses, then beggars would ride.

Once a thief, always a thief.

Friend is the thief of time .

A thief knows a thief as a wolf knows a wolf.

It's interesting to put the question if there is any discrimination in the two societies as far as jobs are concerned. If proverbs are mirrors to reflect the panorama of the society, then they are about any social aspects. Surprisingly, most proverbs in Vietnamese, once they are about jobs, are about doctors/physicians, teachers (those are considered, both in the past and the today society, as the noblest jobs). In English proverbs, everything is different as jobs like beggar, thief (those are not favored at all) are used. It is true that

Vietnamese have a finer sense than Englishmen in choosing the social symbols to express their experience and wisdom? In Vietnamese legal environment²⁴ and even in culture framework, beggar and thief are not really classified as jobs because they are not honest means to earn one's living. In England, it says in Section 4 of the Vagrancy Act, 1824 that begging is illegal. It is also asserted that *"to sleep on the streets or to beg subsistence became a crime, whatever reason an individual might have had for being in such a predicament. That provision still pertains today."*²⁵ As a matter of fact, the English people are said to be very polite and subtle in communication but why is it that these images, which are not good at all, are used in proverbs. Based on what Nadim has proposed²⁶, we suggest that it is the Englishmen's sense of humor that creates such phenomenon.

The last difference in theme between English proverbs and Vietnamese proverbs is the use of animal image. The Vietnamese people usually use the images of chickens, dogs, pigs, which are the most popular domestic animals being the familiar ones in the lives of people. For examples

Chó cậy nhà gà cậy vườn

Văng chủ nhà gà vọc niêu tôm

Chuồng gà hướng đông sơi lông chẳng còn

Chó sủa cho cắn ai

Chó giữ nhà, gà gáy trống canh

Nuôi lợn ăn cơm nằm, nuôi tằm ăn cơm đứng

Chuồng lợn hướng đông, thỏ công hướng bắc

These animals or poultries are raised in the family scale for practical uses with dogs being a wise animal species used for setting a security guard in one's

²⁴ Điểm 1, Điều 9, chương II Bộ Luật Lao động Việt Nam quy định "Việc làm là hoạt động lao động tạo ra nguồn thu nhập, không bị pháp luật cấm."

²⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vagrancy_Act_1824

²⁶ "the English one has kept a philosophical melancholy, a smiling darkness, a taste for self-mockery which are characteristic of it. "The sense of humour is the politeness of despair": if this sentence of Chris Marker should define only one sense of humour, it would be the English one"- **English humor, first part: theoretical analysis** by Nadim El Ghezal and Frederic Sztrakos

house, as a companion in his loneliness and the rest being the family's source of foodstuff. In addition to the domestic animals, cattle are also raised for agriculture production-related purposes, eg for soil plowing, loading and even making food in communal feasts.

Con trâu là đầu cơ nghiệp

Ruộng sâu trâu nái không bằng con gái đầu lòng

Muốn giàu nuôi trâu nái, muốn lụn bại nuôi bò cày

Tậu trâu, cưới vợ, làm nhà

Trong ba việc ấy thật là khó thay

In English proverbs, the images of animals are also found but the difference is that these animals are those that people raise or keep as pets rather than foodstuff sources. England is not the country of agriculture and animals are raised for the industry purposes. Asses, sheep, horses are kept in large farms as people use these animals to provide materials to manufacturing section, loading fleet to long distant traders, and even to sports.

Love me love my dog

Every dog has his day

Dogs of the same street bark alike

You can't teach an old dog new tricks.

He who steals an egg will steal an ass

Every ass likes to hear himself bray

All lay loads on a willing horse

If Wishes Were Horses, Beggars Would Ride

It's too late to shut the stable door after the horse has bolted

Life is like a horse race there are winners and losers

Once a word leaves your mouth, you cannot chase it back even with the swiftest horse

The horses of hope gallop, but the asses of experience go slowly

Regarding to wild animals, both Englishmen and Vietnamese use the image of birds. For examples.

*Chim trời ai dễ đếm lông
Nuôi con ai dễ kể công tháng ngày
Chim không hót tiếng rảnh rang
Người khôn nói tiếng dịu dàng dễ nghe
Chim rùng gà rú chó nuôi
Bò hoe lỗ trăn cọc đuôi thì dưng
Tìm em như thể tìm chim
Chim bay biển Bắc, anh tìm biển Đông*

Tiếng Anh

*It's the early bird that catches the worm
Birds of the same feather flock together
Fair feathers make fair birds
Crows do not pick crow's eyes*

3.2 Differences in culture features

3.2.1 Agriculture based culture versus non-agriculture based culture

The first difference in culture features between English proverbs and Vietnamese ones may probably be the Vietnamese people's preference of a stable life. Because they live on agriculture, they have to settle down in one fixed area “*an cư lạc nghiệp*” and never wish to travel far away but “*stay within the village's thick hedge of bamboos*” no matter what reasons will be.

*Đất lành chim đậu
Ta về ta tắm ao ta, dù trong dù đục ao nhà vẫn hơn
Ba lần dời nhà bằng một lần nhà cháy
Cáo chết ba năm vẫn quay đầu về núi*

By contrast, the English people like traveling very much. As the history goes, at first people in England had to move from place to place looking for

new land for their castle and then when they engaged in trading they had to travel farther for new market and raw materials. They consider traveling is the essential part in their life, both for earning living and enriching personal knowledge.

Traveling makes a man

Happiness is not a state of mind, but a manner of travelling

He travels fast who travel alone

He who travel far know much

It's better to travel hopefully than arrive

Never judge anyone until you have traveled a mile in their shoes

The second difference is that Vietnamese people prefer a simple and frugal lifestyle and are soon content with what they have while the English people have much ambition and seem never be pleased with their achievements.

Vietnamese proverbs

Biết đủ là đủ

Càng trèo cao càng ngã đau

Càng cao danh vọng càng dày gian nan

Tham thì thâm

Tiệc tùng hôm nay ngày mai nhịn đói

Làm khi lành để dành khi đau

English proverbs

No thing ventured no thing have

Half a loaf is better than no bread

Half an egg is better than an empty roll

He who would catch fish must not mind getting wet

He that hesitates is lost

He that fears every bush must never go a birding

The third thing that English proverbs and Vietnamese ones are different is that unity is fully summoned in Vietnamese people. This characteristics is

born in the demand of agriculture production which need much labor force. In the past, Vietnamese people had to rely one each other so that they could help each other in performing the heavy farming tasks as well as protect their crops and properties from the destructive natural disasters like flood, inundation, and even robbery. People will automatically unite and may give each other a helping hand no matter who they are and how they are related to each other.

*Đoàn kết là sống, chia rẽ là chết
Hàng xóm tắt lửa tốt đèn có nhau
Bán anh em xa mua láng giềng gần
Một con ngựa đau cả tàu bỏ cỏ
Lá lành đùm lá rách*

The English people have a sense of unity like “*united we stand, divided we fall*”, “*unity is strength*” but that spirit of solidarity does not express their true point of view on communal life. They attach great importance to individuals and dislike gathering because they think “*many cooks spoil the broth*”, “*many dishes many diseases*”, or “*many men many minds*”. Individulalism is clearly shown in English proverbs as more than a hundred of them begin with the third singular pronouns “he”. Take these following proverbs for examples.

*He who knows better has never tried it
He who laughs last laughs longest
He who laughs last, thinks the slowest!
He who lives by the sword shall die by the sword
He who makes no mistakes, makes nothing
He who pays the piper calls the tune
He who plays with fire will get burnt
He who rides a tiger is afraid to dismount
He who sups with the devil should have a long spoon*

However, as Vietnamese highly appreciate the collectivism, they still have some weakness that is the sense of dependence. Vietnamese may be quite eager to give out a helping hand in some cases, but they are sometimes quite selfish, so much that they will behave like “*hồn ai nấy giữ*”, “*đèn nhà ai nấy sáng*”, “*cháy nhà hàng xóm bình chân như vại*”. Consequently, they may neglect the community’s affairs with which each member in a community is supposed to deal and they also show hesitation or unwillingness whenever the sense of responsibility is needed.

Việc nhà thì nhác việc chú bác thì siêng

Thần khẩu hại xác phàm

Nhiều sãi không ai đóng cửa chùa

Cha chung không ai khóc

Ách giữa đàng chứ mang vào cớ

3.2.2 The English language versus the Vietnamese language

Language and culture are two essential elements whenever we talk about a person, a community or a nation because culture is expressed in language and the way a person uses language indicates his culture. “*For many people, language is not just the medium of culture but also is a part of culture. It is quite common for immigrants to a new country to retain their old customs and to speak their first language amid fellow immigrants, even if all present are comfortable in their new language. This occurs because the immigrants are eager to preserve their own heritage, which includes not only customs and traditions but also language*” (Yule G. 1996, p2). In term of the nature of language, Vietnamese and English are not the same so their cultural values are not the same, either. Again, this difference is showed in their proverbs.

Take personal pronouns as an example to make clear that English and Vietnamese are completely different. For the first person and the second person (both singular and plural), there are remarkable dissimilarities because “I”/ “we” and “you” are always used in English no matter who the speakers are, and how they are related to one another. This relation can be that of a father and a

child, an old man and a baby, a leader and an employee. In Vietnamese, everything is different as the personal pronouns of the first and second person are not these of two words but they actually consist of several words depending on the certain speakers and these “contextual” personal pronouns will be changed so as to best fit the communication circumstances. The first person “I” in English can be “tôi”, “mình”, “ta”, “tớ”, “tao”, “anh”, “em”, “con”, “cháu”, “đi”, “dượng”, “bác”, “thím”, “cô”, “cậu” in accordance with the speaker’s age, social position, and his/her relation to the listener. Respectively, the second person “you” in English may be “tôi”, “cậu”, “anh”, “em”, “con”, “cháu”, “đi”, “dượng”, “bác”, “thím”, “cô”, “ông”, “bà”....They are very complicated in addressing and the English may be confused as one pronoun can denote two speakers. “Cậu” is the pronoun that one person will use to address to his mother’s brother (cậu lớn), and that a female person calls someone who is younger than her (cậu em).

The difference here is that personal pronouns of the first and the second person are rarely (if not never) found in Vietnamese proverbs while they are popularly used in English proverbs as these in the examples below

Walk before you can run

Look before you leap

As you make a bed you must lie on it

You can not judge a tree by its bark

You can not ride two horses at once

You can not wash charcoal white.

In this sense, the possessive adjective (your) and reflective pronoun (yourself) derived from “you” are also used, something that is extremely different from Vietnamese proverbs.

Give a clown a finger and he will take your hand

Home is where you hang your hat

It’s in vain to cast your net where there is no fish

Keep your friends close but your enemies closer

Lend your money and lose your friend.

Do not praise yourself while going into battle; praise yourself coming out of battle

Teachers open the door, but you must enter by yourself

To handle yourself, use your head; to handle others, use your heart

This phenomenon can be explained that in Vietnamese culture, individualism is still impractical and is dominated by collectivism. By contrast, in English culture, individualism is much preferred.

CONCLUSION

Being one of important elements in language, proverbs are of high frequency in daily communication. Beside serving for the communication purposes, proverbs are considered as a rich source of wisdom for a community in particular and for a nation in general. Each proverb contains a certain ideology which are imbued with national and philosophical features. The birth of proverbs is closely connected with other socio-economic conditions and thus bears the sense of cultural features and of class. The Vietnamese people have their own ways of thinkings and so do the English people but we do believe that Vietnamese proverbs and English proverbs have many things in common.

In teaching and learning foreign languages, we have met with many textual situations or communicative contexts, especially in translation, in which we are supposed to deal with proverbs. It's, therefore, necessary and interesting for us to find out the similarities and differences in the two languages' stock of proverbs. We are aware that it is really a hard job (or sometimes unexpected) to find these linguistic and culture features but we are convinced that by doing so, we could be able to learn foreign languages better.

There are some similarities between English proverbs and Vietnamese ones regarding to linguistic and cultural aspects. The former include the similarities in (1) the use of phrases, (2) the use of clauses/sentences, (3) the use of non-subject sentences, (4) the use of reiteration, (5) the use of contrast, (6) the use of similes, (7) the use of rhyme while the latter is about (1) thinking styles and (2) humoristics.

Regarding the differences between the two proverbs (English and Vietnamese ones), we find that there are not many differences although we have been instructed that English and Vietnamese are obviously different in term of the language's nature and origin. However, the linguistic features used in

proverbs are not far different because proverbs are special linguistic elements demonstrated by refined words and structures. Leaving aside the linguistic natures of the two languages, we are persuaded that (1) the use of pronouns and (2) the topics of the proverbs are not the same. The differences, as we strongly believe, come from the private features of the two nations that are formed and developed in different geographical traits, socio-economic backgrounds and historical contexts.

As far as culture features are taken into account, despite several similarities, English proverbs and Vietnamese ones have telling differences once the matter of national culture identity is examined. English culture is imbued with prominent characteristics of a nation whose people live on raising castles, trading, and industry production. Vietnamese culture is, by contrast, formed and closely influenced by those who live mainly on agriculture production. Further more, it is the language itself that creates distinguished features in culture because language is an essential factor in one national culture and in turn, one nation's culture could be best demonstrated by the language.

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