

LANGUAGES AND CULTURE

**EXPLORING ĐỒN CA TÀI TỬ SONGS THROUGH
THE LENS OF CULTURAL COGNITION THEORY****TRAN THI PHUONG LY* - NGUYEN LAM PHUONG UYEN****

ABSTRACT: Cultural linguistics represents a transformative shift in the field of linguistics, offering an innovative theoretical framework for understanding the intricate relationship between language, culture, and artistic expression (Palmer, 1996; Sharifian, 2011, 2017). This multidisciplinary approach addresses the growing demand for a deeper exploration of cultural conceptualizations and their interplay with linguistic systems. Recognized by UNESCO as an intangible cultural heritage, Southern Đờn Ca Tài Tử holds a significant position in preserving Vietnamese cultural identity and fostering community connections. Its lyrical content not only reflects the values of festivals and oral traditions but also serves as a rich medium for examining national and cultural perceptions. This study employs ethnographic fieldwork, statistical classification, and discourse analysis to explore the cultural and cognitive dimensions expressed in the lyrics of 50 Đờn Ca Tài Tử compositions and 80 Vọng Cổ songs. The findings provide a nuanced understanding of how this art form encapsulates cultural and conceptual values, positioning Đờn Ca Tài Tử as a dynamic expression of Vietnam's intangible heritage in a contemporary global context.

KEY WORDS: Southern Đờn ca tài tử; intangible cultural heritage; cultural conceptualisations; cultural linguistics.

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1. Introduction

The emergence of cultural linguistics marks a new phase in the development of linguistics, aligning with global progress and the increasing demand for language learning across cultures, as well as a deeper understanding of the relationship between culture, language, and artistic thought. This multidisciplinary field offers a robust theoretical framework for analyzing cultural concepts as they interrelate with language, drawing on anthropology, cognitive psychology, and complexity science. Cultural linguistics not only investigates the interplay between linguistic structures—such as morphology, syntax, semantics, and discourse—and cultural conceptualizations but also emphasizes the bidirectional role of language. On one hand, linguistic interactions facilitate the construction and co-construction of cultural ideas, while on the other, language use and structure inherently reflect these ideas. Beyond language, cultural cognition finds expression in art, literature, rituals, cultural events, and emotions, making this field integral to interdisciplinary research across anthropology, psychology, sociology, and aesthetics.

A prime example of cultural cognition in practice is Đờn ca tài tử, a traditional Vietnamese art form that emerged in the late 19th century from ceremonial music, Hue court music, and folk literature. This genre, emblematic of Southern Vietnam, embodies the industrious, liberal, and courageous spirit of its people. Recognized by UNESCO as an intangible cultural heritage in 2013, Đờn ca tài tử serves not only as a cultural identifier but also as a medium for preserving community traditions, such as festivals and oral culture. Its linguistic system reflects cultural categories that encapsulate the thoughts, emotions, and worldview of Southern Vietnamese society.

This paper employs the theoretical framework of cultural linguistics to analyze the cultural conceptualizations embedded within the expressive language of Đờn ca tài tử. By doing so, it highlights the practical application of cultural linguistics in exploring Vietnamese language and culture, offering valuable insights into how cultural cognition manifests in traditional art forms and

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their broader societal impacts.

2. Regarding the cultural cognition

According to Sharifian (2011), the central focus of the theoretical framework of cultural linguistics is cultural conceptualisations. These conceptualisations are highly dynamic as they are continuously interact each other and redefined through intergenerational and intercommunity interactions. Cultural linguistics examines cultural cognition as a complex adaptive system that emerges through the interactions of agents (members of a linguistic community) over time and space. Frank (2015, p.497) argues that adopting a cultural cognitive approach opens up the possibility of a rich dialogue between scholars in the humanities and investigators working in the subfields of cognitive science. It represents a form of effective perception (see Stewart, Gapenne, & Di Paolo, 2011), shaped by social and linguistic interactions among individuals across space and time (Cowley & Vallée-Tourangeau, 2013). Importantly, elements of a speech community's cultural cognition are not equally shared among its members. Thus, cultural cognition can also be understood as a form of distributed (heterogeneous) cognition (Hutchins, 1994). Communicating individuals exhibit diversity and variation in their ability to access and assimilate the cultural cognition of their community. Moreover, cultural cognition is dynamic, continually negotiated and renewed across generations and through interactions with other speech communities. This conceptualization of cultural cognition contrasts sharply with the notion of "culture" often associated with linguistic relativism. This perspective on cognition aligns with earlier views expressed by several cognitive scientists (e.g., Clark & Chalmers, 1998; Sutton, 2005, 2006; Wilson, 2005).

The concept of "cultural cognition" in Cultural Linguistics emphasizes "culturally constructed conceptualizations" specific to speech communities, which are expressed through "cultural schemas," "cultural categories," and "cultural metaphors" (Sharifian, 2015, pp.476-478). Cultural cognition emerges from the interactions within a system's components. It is dynamic, constantly negotiated and renegotiated across generations within the cultural group, and further shaped by interactions between group members and other cultures. Accordingly, language serves as a repository of collective memory, encapsulating the cultural conceptualisations of a community. Various aspects of language are shaped by dominant cultural conceptualisations that have prevailed at different historical periods and influenced subsequent practices. As Sharifian (2011) posited that language can be regarded as a primary mechanism for storing and communicating cultural conceptualisations, functioning as a memory bank and a flexible medium for transmitting and retransmitting cultural conceptualisations or cultural concept formation, a term Sharifian uses to refer collectively to conceptual structures such as "cultural schemas," "cultural categories" (including "cultural archetypes"), and "cultural metaphors" (Sharifian, 2011), is central to cultural cognition. Cultural concepts and their linguistic expressions are at the core of cultural cognition.

As Sharifian suggests, the theoretical framework of Cultural Linguistics is illustrated in Figure 2.1, offering a structured approach to analyzing these complex dynamics.

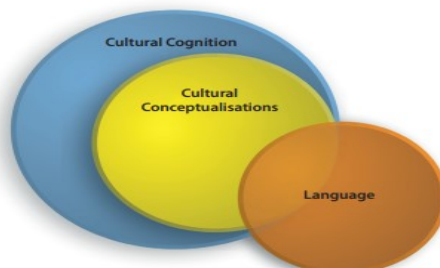


Figure 2.1. *The theoretical framework of cultural linguistics by Sharifian*
(Source: Sharifian, 2011)

The first figure illustrates the crucial role of cultural conceptualisations. These conceptualizations govern the entire process by which humans conceptualise the world around them, giving rise to cultural schemas, cultural categories, and cultural metaphors. Cultural conceptualisations emerge from human experiences shaped by cultural influences. Individuals use their worldview to perceive and interact with life, forming cultural parameters in their minds. Through language, these cultural parameters are projected and encoded, enabling individuals to store and operationalise cultural values and their ways of thinking.

3. Research methods and data sources

This study employs ethnographic fieldwork to collect data through direct observation of *Đờn ca tài tử* performances. The dataset comprises 50 *Đờn ca tài tử* pieces and 80 *Vọng cổ* songs. The *Đờn ca tài tử* repertoire includes six Northern songs, representing the Norther (*Lưu Thủy Trường*, *Phú Lục Chấn*, *Bình Bán Chấn*, *Cổ Bản Vắn*, *Xuân Tinh Chấn* and *Tây Thi Vắn*); three Southern songs, representing the Souther (*Nam Xuân*, *Nam Ai*, and *Nam Đảo*); seven ceremonial music songs, also known as seven *Cô* songs representing the *Hạ* melody (*Xàng Xê*, *Ngũ Đối Thượng*, *Ngũ Đối Hạ*, *Long Đăng*, *Long Ngâm*, *Vạn Giá* and *Tiểu Khúc*), and four *Oán* pieces, representing the *Oán* melody (*Tứ Đại Oán*, *Phụng Hoàng Cầu*, *Cửu Khúc Giang Nam*, and *Phụng Cầu Hoàng Duyên*). In addition, statistical classification techniques were employed to categorise and analyse linguistic expressions reflecting the cultural conceptualisations of Southern Vietnamese people, based on the 130 pieces of collected data. Discourse analysis was also applied to reconstruct cultural conceptualizations embodied in the lyrics of *Đờn ca tài tử*.

4. Research findings and discussion

The linguistic data analysis reveals that the cultural conceptualizations of Southern Vietnamese people, as expressed in the 130 songs, encompass perceptions of life, human existence, and emotions.

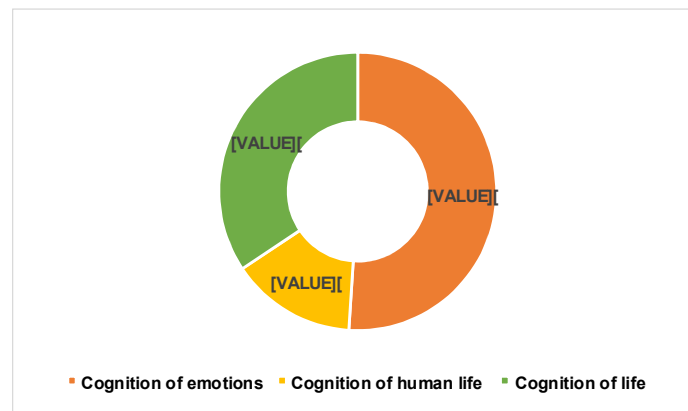


Figure 4.1. Proportion of appearance of words reflecting the cognition of the Southern Vietnamese people in *Đờn ca tài tử* Songs

As shown in the figure 4.1, proportion of appearance of words which the *Đờn ca tài tử* artists express their cognition and thoughts about emotions is the highest, accounting for 51.04%. This is followed by cognition related to life (34.38%), with cognition about human existence having the lowest percentage (14.58%). To explain this, it is necessary to consider the origins of the Southern region. This area, which was officially established in 1698, was previously an uninhabited, barren land. According to the "*Gia Định Thành Thông Chí*" by *Trịnh Hoài Đức*, the land, which was initially devoid of people, began to be inhabited after *Nguyễn Hữu Cảnh* (the Marquis of Ideal Ritual Observation) explored the southern territories. The settlers, primarily from *Thanh-Nghệ*, *Quảng Nam-Đà Nẵng*, and *Quảng Ngãi* provinces, were strangers to one another. Therefore, they needed to

rely on each other to survive, developing trust, affection, and setting aside doubts and conflicts to bond. In order to have the strength to resist stronger forces, the key was for them to unite into a community, share common views, and work towards collective interests. Over time, what began as a necessity evolved into the essence of the Southern people's character. Today, any individual or community wishing to live in this land must open their hearts to survive. Thus, the inherent trust, unity, and solidarity became deeply ingrained in the cognition of the Southern Vietnamese people.

4.1. Cognition of emotions

Love, longing, sadness, and happiness are crucial emotions in human life. Through surveys and statistics, it is found that in *Đờn ca tài tử* and *Vọng cổ* performances, the people of Southern Vietnam express their emotions regarding love, friendship, family, and homeland and since then the feeling of longing is also formed. The following schemas illustrates this emotional connection clearly.

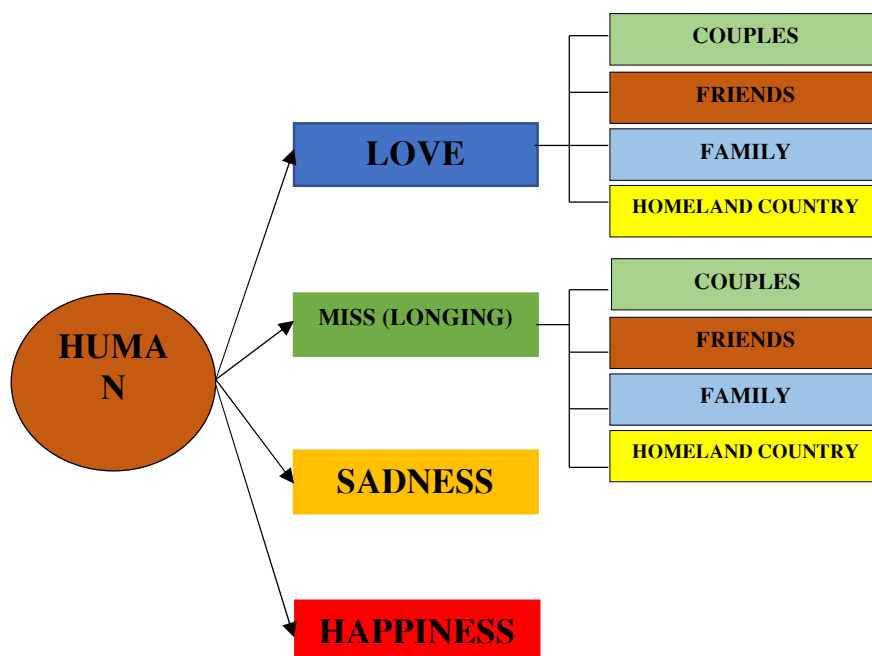


Figure 4.2. Emotion schema in *Đờn ca tài tử* Songs

From the figure 4.2, it can be seen that the Southern Vietnamese people's cognition of emotions is expressed through *Đờn ca tài tử* and *Vọng cổ* performances, which include four categories as listed in Table 4.1 as follows:

Table 4.1. Classification of emotional cognition of Southern people in *Đờn ca tài tử* Songs

Number	Content	Quantity	Proportion
1	Romantic love	19	38,77%
2	Friendship	5	10,21%
3	Family emotions	8	16,33%
4	Love for homeland	17	34,69%
Total		49	100%

The Southern Vietnamese people's cognition of romantic love is expressed through the words *duyên càng nồng tình càng thấm đượm nghĩa keo sơn gắn bó không rời; dây tơ duyên bền chặt ân tình đôi bạn hòa mình cuộc sống yêu thương; đồng một lòng sát cánh bên nhau sớm bắt tay gây dựng gia đình...* This cognition is clearly reflected in the lyrics.

*Ai xui chi, khiến anh em kết thành duyên nợ.
Anh là chồng còn em là vợ, cảnh gia đình hạnh phúc ấm êm.*

(Source: *Lớp III, Hòn vọng phu - Điệu Lưu Thủy Trường*)

Love transcends geographical distance, and time is no longer an obstacle. If two people cannot be together in this life, they can promise to reunite in the next.

Khách đau đớn cuối đầu quay bước, em nhìn theo rạo rạt chưa cay. Khách ngoảnh lại nhìn em mờ lệ, em lắc đầu buông tiếng thở dài. Kỷ niệm năm xưa vùng sóng dậy, em muốn theo người để tỏ tác lòng em. Nhưng ai xui con em cất tiếng kêu “mẹ”, em dừng chân nhìn nó mà lệ tuôn trào. Con em là chiến tuyến của long. Ngăn không cho em theo người tình cũ. Bóng người vừa khuất xa xăm. Nhưng vẫn sống mãi đời đời trong em. (Source: *Cô bán đèn hoa giấy*)

Love is about overcoming the hardships and dangers of life together.

Em ơi! tình nghĩa vợ chồng no đôi có nhau, dù vất vả gian lao, dù tay lấm chân bùn. Nhưng có đôi nghèo mới thấm thía nghĩa yêu đương, có gian nan mới rõ lòng chung thủy.

(Source: *Đau xót lý con cua*)

In the Southern Vietnamese perception, friendship is viewed as a bond between true companions, where individuals regard each other as family, offering love and mutual support. This cognition is expressed in *Đòn ca tài tử* and *Vọng cổ* performances through the lyrics.

*Ngoảnh lại ta với bạn ở hai phương trời.
Thôi ta cũng cạn lời, nén hương lòng này tặng bạn tri âm.
Mai một ngày hội ngộ đâu có xa xăm.
Hai mái tóc hoa râm, ta mãi là tri kỷ tri âm.*

(Source: *Lớp I, Bà Nha - Từ Kỳ - Điệu Phú Lục Chấn*)

Gắn bó keo sơn, thiêng liêng tình đồng đội.

...

Bè bạn yêu thương chia bớt rảnh nặng trên vai.

(Source: *Lớp II, Tình khúc tháng tư - Điệu Bình Bán Chấn*)

Family emotions are sacred, representing the bond that unites members within a family. Through the survey process, the Southern Vietnamese people's cognition of family emotions, especially the love between parents and their children, as well as the reciprocal affection is discovered.

*Vu Lan ngày Lễ Báo Ân/ Ân đức cao thâm đáng mẫu từ
Tình mẹ bao la như biển cả/ Như ánh trắng vàng tỏa khắp nơi.*

(Source: *Cảm nghĩa vu lan*)

*Lòng mẹ bao la như biển Thái Bình dạt dào/ Tình mẹ tha thiết như dòng sữa hiền ngọt ngào
Lời mẹ êm ái như đồng lúa chiều rì rào/ Tiếng ru bên thềm trăng tà soi bóng mẹ yêu
Lòng mẹ thương con như vàng trắng tròn mùa thu/ Tình mẹ yêu mến như làn gió đùa mặt hồ
Lời ru man mác êm như sáo diều dập dờn/Nắng mưa sớm chiều vui cùng tiếng hát trẻ...thơ*

(Source: *Lòng mẹ*)

Love for the homeland and country, as perceived by the people of this newly settled land, is expressed through longing, loyalty, and a readiness to sacrifice for the nation.

*Chàng hy sinh một bản thân cho hồn nước sống mãi ngàn thu.
Cho non sông tổ quốc bừng sáng ánh vinh quang
Cái chết vẻ vang cho lý tưởng thanh cao, nét son vàng còn ghi đậm.*

(Source: *Lớp I, Nhị nữ anh hùng - Điệu Giang Nam*)

*Quê hương trong nỗi nhớ niềm thương diệu vợi.
Có ai về quê ngoại, xin cho được nhắn vài đôi câu.
Nhớ cầu tre bắc ngang con rạch, dừa xanh trái nặng oằn.
Hàng cau đón trăng lên muện, tàu chuối hột nặng trĩu sương đêm.*

(Source: *Lớp II, Vọng tri âm - Điệu Phú Lục Chấn*)

4.2. Cognition of life

Through a survey of 50 *Đờn ca tài tử* pieces and 80 *Vọng cổ* songs, *Đờn ca tài tử* is considered as a medium through which the Southern Vietnamese people express their concepts of life, misfortune, and life's pleasures through words, phrases, and lyrics. These are specifically listed in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2. Classification of cognition of life of Southern people in *Đờn ca tài tử* Songs

Number	Content	Quantity	Proportion
1	Human life	4	12,12%
2	Misfortune	25	75,76%
3	Pleasures of life	4	12,12%
Total		49	100%

From the statistical table, it is clear that when reflecting on their lives, the Southern Vietnamese often think about human existence, misfortune, and, from that, turn to the pleasures of life. This way of thinking merges in the consciousness of the people and has become a cultural trait of the Southern residents.

The Southern region is a new land that, over several hundred years of formation and development, has created a wealth of both material and spiritual cultural values that are incredibly rich and unique compared to other regions. However, the lives of the Southern Vietnamese farmers have also been fraught with many difficulties and hardships. Therefore, their perception of life, as expressed in *Đờn ca tài tử* and *Vọng cổ*, largely reflects feelings of sadness, shame, and misfortune. For them, life is described as “*ngịch cảnh*” (adversity), “*khốn khổ gian nan*” (poverty and hardship) or “*đời lận đận*” (a life full of struggles), “*thân bụi đời gió sương*” (A drifter's life), “*phú mặc cho lượn sóng đời dồn dập đẩy đưa*” (Cast adrift on the tides of life), “*phận hèn*” (a humble fate), “*nước chảy hoa trôi*” (Drifting like petals on a stream), “*tay bùn chân lấm*” (Working one's fingers to the bone), and so on.

The *Đờn ca tài tử* and *Vọng cổ* performances also reflect the perception of pitiable human lives, such as the life of drifting along the river in the song “*Bông Lục Bình*” by Hồng Phụng “*Anh ơi! Thân em khác thể lục bình, sóng xô gió dập linh đình giữa dòng. Bao giờ hết kiếp long đong, bao giờ hết kiếp trôi sông hồi lục bình. Bao giờ hết kẻ đa tình. Để bông lục bình không tui phận một đời hoa*” or the drifting lục bình life in the *Vọng cổ* “*Cây Dừa Nước Mồ Côi*” by Trần Việt Liêm “*Ôi! mười năm, xa cách nơi quê nhà/ Nhớ hoài trong tôi tuổi thơ ngọc ngà/ Bóng hình thân yêu của cha mẹ già/ Ba Hồ ơi! làng quê yêu dấu nuôi lớn đời tôi/ Dòng sông xanh con nước chảy xuôi/ Man mác buồn thương kiếp lục bình trôi...*” This is a life that is wandering, drifting, aimless, uncertain where it will go. Through these lyrics, which are deeply rooted in the national culture, audiences can understand the hardship and struggles of the Southern people's lives.

The typical time when the Southern Vietnamese gather to perform *Đờn ca tài tử* is after work hours, which is why moonlight often appears in these performances. Under the golden moonlight, the sound of the instrument echoes like a lament, expressing the sorrow and sympathy for one's fate, reflecting the perception of the “*tay bùn chân lấm*” (Working one's fingers to the bone) life of the Southern farmers.

Along with the perception of misfortune and wandering lives, the people of the South also associate their cognition with the art of *Đờn ca tài tử*. This is also one of the pleasures of their life. They use the sound of the music and the lyrics to express and relieve their emotions.

Vài năm sau khi tôi vừa biết đọc, nhờ mẹ cha cho đến trường ăn học.

Cũng tập hát tuồng nên tôi mau biết chữ, đến một ngày anh tôi tập guitar.

3 Nam, 6 Bắc, 4 Oán, 7 Bài. 6 câu Vọng Cổ nằm lòng để mê.

Từ đây tôi đã biết ghiền, quên ăn quên uống cũng chỉ vì đờn ca.

(Source: *Lớp I, Đờn ca cổ nhạc - Diệu Xuân Tình*)

In addition to the perception of a painful life, in the lyrics of *Đờn ca tài tử* and *Vọng cổ*, it is not rarely find incredibly beautiful and noble concepts. These include optimistic views, as illustrated in the following example.

*Mặc ai quyền chức với công hầu.?
Ngựa xe nhộn nhịp rộn ràng, riêng ta danh lợi nào màng.
Vui thú chốn lâm sàng, một bầu rượu một túi thơ.
Toại lòng ước mơ, không bị buộc ràng trong lợi danh.
Bản thân thông dong tự tại, không mãi mãi gì vướng bận.*

(Source: *Lớp I, Kiếp sống thanh bần - Điệu Chiết Tử Vĩ*)

4.3. Cognition of human life

Đờn ca tài tử is not merely a platform for artists to express their sentiments about life but also a medium through which they contemplate origins, the impermanence and finitude of human existence, or the notion that life is but a fleeting dream. This is specifically illustrated in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3. Classification of Southern Vietnamese cognition of human life

Number	Content	Quantity	Proportion
1	Origins	2	14,29%
2	Life as a gamble	6	42,86%
3	Life as a dream	4	28,57%
4	Artistic life	1	7,14%
5	Human lifespan	1	7,14%
Total		14	100%

The legend of Lạc Long Quân and Âu Cơ has become a original myth for the Vietnamese people. Analyzing 130 songs reveals a consistent belief among Southern Vietnamese that regardless of era, region, or family background, all humans share a common origin as descendants of the Hùng Kings - “*con rồng cháu tiên*” (children of dragons and fairies). This perspective is vividly expressed in the lyrics of *Đờn ca tài tử*.

Ta đi ngọn lửa niềm tin cháy bỏng./ Lửa của tình sâu nghĩa nặng, ngọn lửa từ Âu Lạc Văn Lang.

(Source: *Lớp III, Tình khúc tháng tư - Điệu Bình Bán Chấn*)

Or

*Năm mươi ra biển rộng, năm mươi đến non ngàn./
Thành trăm họ tràn lan, khắp cùng một dãy gian san.
Hồn nước mãi âm vang, trở thành câu hát nhân gian.
Từ thuở ban sơ, lời hát ru là tiếng mẹ Âu Cơ.*

(Source: *Lớp I, Hồn thiên sông núi - Điệu Long Đăng*)

Such awareness of a shared origin underscores the profound sense of kinship and solidarity inherent in the Vietnamese people, particularly Southerners. They believe that all Vietnamese are siblings united by a common lineage.

Đờn ca tài tử artists also express their feelings about the finiteness of human life through their songs.

*Thôi rồi còn đâu một đấng anh hùng.
Kính Kha trút hơi thở cuối cùng, chấm dứt đời oanh liệt vẫy vùng.
Cũng vì muốn đem than bảo vệ sơn hà.
Lo cho nước nhà khỏi bị lũ quân Tần xâm lăng.
Nhưng ý chí kia không thành tựu, đã phôi rôi theo giấc tàn mơ.
Bao công trình bây giờ còn đâu, còn chẳng những gì sâu hận.*

(Source: *Lớp III, Hồn vong quốc - Điệu Xàng Xê*)

This perspective enables individuals to let go of hatred and live a peaceful life. It also sheds light on the characteristics of Southern Vietnamese people such as being generous, open-minded, and unconcerned with saving for future. For instance, in the Southern region, the tale of the wealthy Bạc Liêu dandy-famous for burning money to boil eggs merely to flaunt his riches-is often recounted. Southern people are known for their carefree lifestyle, epitomized by the saying “chơi xả láng, sáng dậy sớm” (live life to the fullest today and get up early to work tomorrow). They are unconcerned about what they will eat or how they will survive the next day. This mindset is humorously reflected in a verse “Sáng ăn cơm sườn/ Chiều ăn nước tương/ Tối leo lên giường/ Nằm nghe cái lương”.

For the Southern Vietnamese in general, and *đờn ca tài tử* artists in particular, life is often perceived as a gamble, a journey of “rủi may” (fortunes and misfortunes) as “biển dâu vô tận”, “nước chảy xuôi dòng”, “cánh phù du”.

Rồi ta tình giấc mê đời, tuổi già bóng xế chơi vơi.

Chưa thoát vòng tử sanh, nợ đời cơm áo vầy quanh.

Nhân thế dưới trời xanh, mệt nhọc phù quý công danh.

Toan tính, đua tranh, khi cuộc đời thật quá mong manh.

(Source: *Lớp III, Hồn thiên sông núi - Điệu Long Đăng*)

Beyond their general reflections on human life, *đờn ca tài tử* artists also contemplate their own lives as poor artists-“kiếp cầm ca”.

Mấy ai hiểu người nghệ sĩ như kiếp con tằm.

Làm ông à những đường tơ để dệt đẹp cho đời.

Một kiếp tằm vươm trái mấy đau thương.

Những lúc quá phù phàng như thân phận hồng nhan.

Làm vui cho những tiếng cười mà người đời khen chê.

Lại có kẻ nhún trẻ, người hết mực say mê.

Nhân thế vạn trạng muôn hình, cũng có người thâm tình.

Cay đắng lẫn vui buồn đều có bạn tri âm.

(Source: *Lớp I, Tâm sự người nghệ sĩ - Điệu Nam Ai*)

They liken themselves to “*kiếp con tằm*” (silkworms) tasked with beautifying life, weaving fine threads to create exquisite silk that adorns others. These silkworms endure much suffering; when they produce abundant, beautiful silk, they are praised by society, but when they can no longer spin or contribute, they are ridiculed and discarded. The splendor of luxurious gowns is but an external facade. Behind the curtains of the stage, they are ordinary individuals burdened with the practical concerns of food, clothing, and daily life.

In brief, through composing lyrics for *Đờn ca tài tử* pieces and *Vọng cổ* songs, Southern Vietnamese people express their genuine reflections on human life. They affirm that all Vietnamese people are brothers and sisters, sharing a common origin, and should therefore love and support one another. Furthermore, life is transient, unpredictable, and fleeting, like a dream or a flowing river. Thus, one must cherish the present and strive to live a noble and meaningful life.

6. Conclusion

Applying the theory of cultural linguistics to analyze *Đờn ca tài tử* and *Vọng cổ* compositions provides profound insights into the soul and culture of Southern Vietnamese individuals. The findings reveal that these works embody the cultural cognition of Southern Vietnamese people, reflecting their collective understanding of psychology, society, customs, philosophy, and language. These works encompass cultural categories intricately intertwined with the artists' perceptions, offering insights into how cultural values, beliefs, and emotions are conveyed and preserved in the art form.

For example, the predominance of themes related to the human condition, especially in connection with rivers and water, reflects the historical and environmental context of the Southern region, where waterways have profoundly influenced livelihoods and daily life. This connection is echoed in the music

and cultural expressions of the region, representing profound cultural and spiritual values and showcasing the pinnacle of artistic expression in Vietnamese traditional music.

Furthermore, this research demonstrates the practical applicability of Cultural Linguistics in addressing broader societal issues, offering a promising approach for examining cultural phenomena through language. It represents a potential research direction, anticipated to yield feasible, highly applicable, and methodologically coherent results.

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Khám phá Đờn ca tài tử nhìn từ lý thuyết nhận thức văn hoá

Tóm tắt: Ngôn ngữ văn hóa đại diện cho sự chuyển đổi mang tính bước ngoặt trong sự phát triển lĩnh vực ngôn ngữ học, cung cấp một khung lý thuyết mới cho sự hiểu biết và những diễn giải sâu sắc về ngôn ngữ, văn hóa, đồng thời đáp ứng nhu cầu tìm hiểu chuyên sâu hơn về mối liên hệ giữa ngôn ngữ, văn hoá và tư tưởng nghệ thuật. (Palmer 1996; Sharifian 2011, 2017). Phương pháp tiếp cận đa ngành này giải quyết nhu cầu ngày càng tăng về việc khám phá sâu hơn các khái niệm hóa văn hóa và sự tương tác của chúng với các hệ thống ngôn ngữ. Là dòng nhạc dân tộc của Việt Nam đã được UNESCO vinh danh di sản văn hóa phi vật thể, đờn ca tài tử Nam Bộ giữ vị trí quan trọng trong việc cấu thành bản sắc văn hoá của dân tộc Việt Nam, có giá trị gắn kết cộng đồng. Nội dung trữ tình của đờn ca tài tử không chỉ phản ánh các giá trị của lễ hội và truyền thống truyền miệng mà còn đóng vai trò là phương tiện phong phú để xem xét các nhận thức quốc gia và văn hóa. Thông qua việc vận dụng tổng hợp các phương pháp nghiên cứu gồm điền dã dân tộc học, thống kê, phân loại và phân tích diễn ngôn, bài viết này tập trung vào việc khám phá các chiều hướng văn hoá và nhận thức văn hóa thông qua lớp ca từ trong các bản Đờn ca tài tử (gồm 50 bản đờn ca tài tử và 80 bài vọng cổ). Kết quả nghiên cứu của bài viết mang lại sự hiểu biết về các ý niệm nhận thức và văn hóa trong mối liên quan với ngôn ngữ cũng như các giá trị văn hoá của di sản phi vật thể Đờn ca tài tử trong bối cảnh đương đại.

Từ khoá: đờn ca tài tử Nam Bộ; di sản văn hóa phi vật thể; nhận thức văn hoá; Ngôn ngữ học văn hoá.