

**VIETNAMESE CULTURAL CONCEPTUALIZATION OF INTERNAL BODY  
ORGANS IN SOUTH EAST ASIAN LINGUISTICS (SEALS)****LE, Van Thi Kieu, PhD**

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**ABSTRACT:** *In the worldwide development of modern linguistics, ‘cognitivism’ tendency is a good example with the findings of the theory and applications. One of those is an attempt of linguistic scholars from various backgrounds to continue the tradition from W. von Humboldt in Europe, E. Sapir and B. Whorf in America, who emphasize the relationship among language, thought and culture. The evidence for that are the theoretical concepts such as ‘ethno-syntax’, ‘ethno-linguistics’, ‘ethno-psycho-linguistics’ ‘cultural linguistics’, ‘human factor in language’, ‘linguistic picture of the world’, ‘linguistic consciousness’. In light of cognitive perspective, linguists often use the terms and expressions ‘different views of the world’ or ‘worldviews’, and ‘the ways in which speakers of different languages think differently’, that is to say they conceptualize or categorize experience in different ways. This view has been supported by many empirical studies within the paradigm of cognitive linguistics in the past two decades. In this area of research, from the point of cognitive view a very interesting tendency is to understand how such conceptualizations are grounded in bodily cognition. In cultural perspective, an interest in studying those conceptualizations is to explore how they have their roots in culture and how they can be different from language to another. A good evidence is linguistic data referring the different ways of conceptualizing inner body parts which function as ‘container’, ‘seat’ or ‘locus’ for human emotional and mental states or spiritual activities. In this paper, the chosen concepts related to what they are denoted in English by HEART and MIND. Particularly, conceptualizations of Heart, Belly/Abdomen, Stomach, Liver, Bowels/Intestines will be taken into consideration with cross-cultural perspective and with examples from different languages families and groups (as well as within these families and groups) in Southeast Asia which have their representatives in Vietnam as Austro-Asiatic, Austronesian, Sino-Tibertan, Hmong-Mien(Miao-Dao), Tai-Kadai. This paper denotes the evidence from following languages: (i) Austro-Asiatic: Khmer, Vietnamese, Muong; (ii) Austronesian: Cham, Ede; (iii) Sino-Tibertan: Chinese; (iv) Hmong-Mien (Miao-Dao), Hmong; (v) Tai-Kadai: Tay-Nung. For showing clearer cultural and cognitive specificity these ‘Oriental’ linguistic data are compared with a ‘Western’ one - English. It demonstrates that if English maintains a Western cultural ‘dualism’ between rationalities (MIND/HEAD) and emotions (HEART), SEA languages tend to reveal an Oriental ‘monism’: BELLY, or STOMACH, or BOWELS, or LIVER primarily uses in locating human feelings and thoughts. The difference within SEA languages in which inner organ is chosen as the locus of emotional and mental life: Vietnamese people, for example, first of all, think of the ‘inside abdomen’, but Hmong ethnic group the ‘liver’. The results of cognitive and cultural comparisons of the way of conceptualizing such inner body parts in SEA languages can make two relationships much clearer: (i) one between the ways of conceptualization and genetic features of those language families and groups; (ii) and another between the cognitively universal of human conceptualization and the culturally specific of a language community.*

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**KEYWORDS:** Cross-Cultural, Internal Body Organs, Mental State, Cognitive, Perspective, Conceptualization, Spiritual Activity

## INTRODUCTION

During the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there is an attempt of linguistic scholars to continue the tradition from W. von Humboldt in Europe, E. Sapir and B. Whorf in America, who emphasize the relationship between language, thought and culture. Evidences for that are the theoretical notions and concepts such as: 'ethno-syntax', 'ethno-linguistics', 'ethno-psycho-linguistics', 'cultural linguistics'; 'human factor in language', 'linguistic picture of the world', 'linguistic consciousness' etc., (Apresjan 1995; Enfield 2004; Leontev 1997; Ly Toan Thang 1993, 2006, 2008, 2010; Sharifian 2011; Underhill 2009, 2012).

In the worldwide development of modern linguistics, 'cognitivism' tendency is a good example with the findings of the theory and applications to study that relationship.

In this area of research, linguists often use the terms and expressions such as 'different *views* of the world' or '*worldviews*', and 'the *ways* in which speakers of different languages *think* differently', that is to say they *conceptualize* or *categorize* experience in different ways. From the point of cognitive view of the relationship between language, thought and culture, a very interesting recent tendency is to understand how such *conceptualizations* are grounded in *bodily* cognition. Moreover, in light of cultural perspective, an interest in studying those conceptualizations is to explore how they have their roots in culture and how they can be different from language to language. Much recent evidence suggests linguistic data referring to the different ways of conceptualizing inner body parts which function as 'container' or 'locus' for human emotional and mental states and activities. (Ly Toan Thang 2011; Maalej, Ning Yu 2011; Ning Yu 2009; Sharifian, Driven, Zlatev, Frank 2007).

From the perspective adopted here, in this paper, the chosen concepts are related to what are denoted in English by HEART and MIND. Particularly, conceptualizations of such as HEART, BELLY/ABDOMEN, STOMACH, LIVER, and BOWEL/INTESTINE will be taken into consideration with cross-cultural perspective and with examples from different languages families and groups (as well as within these families and groups) in Southeast Asia which have their representatives in Vietnam.

In Vietnam, according to the statistical official figures from the government list there are 54 ethnic groups, including the Kinh and 53 other ethnicities (or minority groups), and each group has its own language beside Kinh of the dominant one. Seen this way, the number of languages is definitely more than 54 (probably up to 100 since the final figures haven't been announced until now). Particularly, among these ethnic minority languages, only Chinese and Khmer have official status (in China and Cambodia, respectively). Moreover, classification of SEA languages is acknowledged by many scholars from different points of views (e.g. Diffloth 2005; Peiros 2004; Sidwell 2009). Due to its view of taxonomic categorization, there are a variety of language families, subfamilies or groups to which Vietnam has the representatives, as follows:

- (i) Austro-Asiatic languages (includes Mon-Khmer with the nuclear consisting Vieto-Katuic and Khmero-Bahnaric languages);
- (ii) Austronesian/Malayo-Polynesian languages (perhaps includes Tai-Kadai);
- (iii) Hmong-Mien/Miao-Yao languages;
- (iv) Sino-Tibetan languages;

## (v) Tai-Kadai languages (part of the Austro-Tai proposal).

An ideal way to implement a full cross-cultural study of the different ways of conceptualizing internal body organs in SEA languages being presented in Vietnam is that it is necessary to collect data from all 54 languages. However, due to time and manpower shortage, in the hope that in this paper we attempt to show evidence from a number of languages that we try to find out at least one language family or representative from five language groups mentioned above. Consequently, in the total of SEA languages, eight in Vietnam have been found, as follows:

- (i) Austro-Asiatic languages: *Vietnamese, Muong and Khmer*;
- (ii) Austronesian: *Cham, Ede*;
- (iii) Hmong-Mien: *Hmong*;
- (iv) Sino-Tibetan languages: *Chinese*;
- (v) Tai-Kadai: *Tay (or Tay-Nung)*

### Linguistic Evidence

From the perspective adopted above, to imagine the diversity and complexity of the linguistic data of the eight languages in Vietnam, on the one hand, our research results are not reported in order of five language groups, but followed the different way. On the other hand, to compare with the languages of the SEA should be one language considered as “standard” with ‘universal/ key’ concepts or ‘universal/ key’ words (Wierzbicka 1992, 1997). In fact, there is not such a language, therefore firstly English is chosen as the ‘source’ which is mapped itself onto SEA languages as ‘target’. In this view, this is also useful because it highlights the differences in ethno-language, ethno-culture among ‘Western’, ‘Non-Western’, and ‘Oriental’ languages.

#### (a) English vs. Vietnamese

In English language and culture, there are an anatomical and functional dichotomy between ‘heart’ and ‘mind’:

- (i) heart is an inner body part (or organ), and metaphorically plays a role of ‘locus’(or ‘seat’ or ‘container’) for person’s feelings (or capacity for love and compassion), that is for human emotional life;
- (ii) while ‘mind’ is not body part, it is only a person’s ability to think and reason, and it can be seen as the place, the ‘locus’ for thoughts, for human mental life.

In the Vietnamese cultural tradition there is not the opposition conceptualized in language such as in the Western (and English) cultural one between the ‘heart’ and the ‘mind’. There are two ways of ‘world view’ in our thinking of localizing human thought and feelings at inner body organs: ‘Dualistic cultural construct’ in English versus ‘Monistic cultural construct’ in Vietnamese (as they are observed in Thai and Japanese - Berendit, Tanita 2011).

To better understand this opposition expressed in Vietnamese language, and to compare other Southeast Asian languages in Vietnam, it is necessary to give an overview of Vietnamese lexical items in association with our research topic. Obviously, in Vietnamese, the ‘monistic

culture tradition' is cognitively expressed in language by two ways including the localization of feelings and thoughts which can be at an inner body organ (like 'heart' or 'head' in English) or at a non-physical, non-anatomical part or place (like 'mind' in English).

The first case takes the *inner body organs* into examination:

(i) **bụng 'belly'** is a body part seen as a seat for confident thoughts and emotions or characters of person:

(1) *Trong lòng nó đầy ấp những yêu thương.* .

in - place of abdomen - be full of - love      'Her heart is full of love'.

(2) *Nó nghĩ thầm trong bụng*

he - think - confidently - in - his **belly**      'He thought to himself'

(3) *Tính nó có gì nói ngay, không để bụng*

his character - says pointblank what he thinks - leave nothing in - his **belly**

'He is very straightforward/frankly in expressing things'

(4) *Nó rất tốt bụng*

he - very - good **belly**      'He is very kind-**hearted**'

(ii) **ruột 'intestine'** is a body part seen as a seat for the endurance of human emotions:

(5) *Nỗi đau xé ruột*

pain - break - **intestine**      '**Heart**-rending pain/ pangs'

(6) *Anh ta tức lộn ruột*

he - being angry - reversing **intestine**

'He was furious with anger/ he was puffed up with anger; furious'

(7) *Tiếc đứt ruột*

regret - break - **intestine**      'Feel deeply pained'

(iii) **gan 'liver'** is a body part seen as a seat for a symbol for human spirit or strong will to confront with difficulty or danger as in the example:

(8) *Nó bé người mà to gan*

he - small body - but - big - **liver**)

'Though he is young, but he is courageous enough'

In a series of examples, the Vietnamese cultural tradition is not 'similar' with Chinese in this aspect: it is not the **heart**, but the **belly** to be chosen as an important inner organ for 'containing' human emotional and mental life.

The second case looks into the *non-anatomical parts, non-physical places*. There are two very special Vietnamese words that do not have identically equivalent in English or Chinese, namely:

(iv) **lòng** is considered as the synonym of **bụng** ‘belly’, and can temporarily be translated as ‘*place of abdomen*’. This word does not denote any body part (it is not included in the anatomical list of human body) but symbolizes a place for localizing emotion and mental/psychological aspects, spirit, will, character, moral nature of humans as well. For instance:

(9) *Tôi đắm chìm vào những suy nghĩ trong lòng.*

I - immerse myself - thoughts - in - **place of abdomen**)

‘I was immersed in thought of my heart’

(10) *Nghe tin bà mất, nó rất đau lòng*

hear - grandmother - die - she - very pain - at her **place of abdomen** ‘Hearing on the grandmother’s death, her **heart** is almost broken’

(11) *Tấm lòng vàng*

**place of abdomen** – gold ‘A **heart** of gold’

(12) *Tự đáy lòng*

from the bottom - **place of abdomen**

‘From the bottom of one’s **heart**’

(13) *Học thuộc lòng*

learn - know by **place of abdomen** ‘Learn by **heart**’

Some compound words or phrases show the functions of **lòng** ‘place of abdomen’ which are relevant to the states or the processes of human emotions or mentality such as:

(14) *Lòng tin*

**place of abdomen** - believe ‘The faith’

(15) *Lòng thương*

**place of abdomen** – love ‘The love’

(16) *Ăn ở hai lòng*

live - with two - **places of abdomen**

‘To be double-faced in one's behaviour’

(v) **đạ** is a synonym of ‘stomach’, and can temporarily be translated as ‘*place of stomach*’, which is considered as **lồng** ‘place of abdomen’, and symbolizes a place for localizing human awareness and memory, but does not denote any body part:

(17) *Nó rất sáng đạ, học cái gì cũng nhanh.*

he - very bright - **place of stomach** - learn - everything – quickly

‘He is so intelligent that he could learn everything quickly’

(18) *Nó đã thay lòng đổi đạ*

he - did - substituted – **abdomen** - changed – **stomach**

‘He has changed his heart/feeling’

(19) *Mặt người, đạ thú*

face - man - **place of stomach** - beast) ‘Wicked person’

(b) **Within Mon-Khmer nuclear consisting Vieto-Katuic and Khmero-Bahnaric languages**

(i) **Vieto-Katuic languages: Vietnamese and Muong**

The Vietnamese mode of conceptualizing internal body organs was described above can be compared with Vietnamese, while Muong language is also reflected and embodied the same ‘monistic culture tradition’ and the similar way of perceiving and conceiving **roit/ roach** ‘intestine’, **lồng/ trộng** ‘belly’, **lồng/lòm** ‘place of abdomen’ and **đạ** ‘place of stomach’ in playing the role of ‘locus’ for human emotional and mental life. It should be noted that Muong are believed to be most closely related to the ethnic Vietnamese (some ethnologists propose that the Muong remained in the mountains and developed independently while the Vietnamese moved to the low country and became influenced by Chinese culture). It is special that through linguistic date it seems that in contrast to Vietnamese, in the Muong language the belly and intestine are used more frequently than the ‘place of abdomen’ (and ‘place of stomach’). Some examples are shown below:

(20) *Mãng thiêng nã pắt, ho đâu roit lằm*

hear - information – he/she/it - died, die - I - pain - **intestine** - very

‘Hearing on the his/het/its death, I am very heart-broken’

(21) *Sừ troong trộng ho, ho mắt ơn từa*

live – inside – **belly** – I, I – know – thankfulness – him

‘Let me thank you from the bottom of my heart’

(22) *Ngợi thầm trong lộng*

think - silent – in – **belly** ‘He thought himself’



(23) *Êt mọii cõ cãy tlõng thõit như nã*

few - people – have – a - **belly** - good – like – him/her

‘Few people have good hearts like him/her’

(24) *Nã thõit cãy rõiit*

he - good – a - **intestine**

‘He is very kind-hearted’

(25) *Kha mặth hây i kha troong trõõng*

far – face – also – far – in – **belly**

‘Out of sight is out of mind’

(26) *Xay lòng tõi rõiit/đạ*

substitute – **abdomen** – change – **place of stomach**

‘He has changed his heart/feeling’

(ii) **Khmero-Bahnaric languages: Khmer**

like the Vietnamese, the Khmer language in the South of Viet Nam, there is the similar ‘monistic culture tradition’. The crucial feature of this similarity is that the ‘place of abdomen’ is seen as the central locus for emotions and rationalities of humans. For example:

(27) *lõp so-rõ-lanh co-nõng chấit*

secret - love - in – **place of abdomen** ‘loving secretly’

(28) *chur chấit*

pain - **place of abdomen** ‘being broken-hearted’

(29) *cấit co-nõng ch’...’ấit*

think – in - **place of abdomen** ‘thinking to oneself’

(30) *nừc co-nõng chấit*

remember - in - **place of abdomen**

‘remembering somebody secretly’

(31) *chấit lỏ-o*

**place of abdomen** - good ‘kind-hearted’

(c) **Within Austronesian languages: Cham, Ede**

In both two languages Cham and Ede, the similar ‘monistic culture tradition’ have shown clearly. The idea is that in Cham and Ede the concepts of ‘heart’ and ‘liver’ are denoted by a polysemy: Cham *hatai* and Ede (a) *tiê*. The specific feature of Cham is that both the ‘heart’(or/and the ‘liver’), and both ‘belly’ and ‘place of abdomen’ can play the role of ‘container’ for human feelings and thoughts; while in Ede it is prior only to the ‘heart; liver’. Let us show some examples:

➤ In the case of Cham language:

(32) *Kau pandik hatai/ tian*

I – pain – **heart/ liver/ belly** ‘It breaks my heart’

(33) *Di dalam hatian kau*

from - in – **heart/ liver** – I ‘From the bottom of my heart’

(34) *Nyu saneng dalam tian/tung/hatai*

he - thinks - in – **belly/ place of abdomen/ heart/ liver**

‘He thought to himself’

(35) *Mboh tung mboh tian*

see - **place of abdomen** - see – **belly** ‘Falling in love’

(36) *Atah palei karei tian*

far - village - different - **belly** ‘Far insight far mind’

(37) *Adei saai ha tian*

older brother – younger brother – one **belly** ‘full brothers’

(38) *Tung/tian/hatai siam*

**place of abdomen/belly/ heart/ liver** – good

‘good-hearted; kind-hearted’

➤ In case of Ede language:

(39) *Kâo ênguôt ai tiê êdi*

I - pain sad - **heart/ liver** - very ‘It breaks my heart very much’

(40) *Hlăm ai tiê kâo*

in – **heart/ liver** - I ‘From the bottom of the heart’

(41) *~u min hla\m ai tiê*

I - think - in – **heart/liver** ‘He thought to himself’



(42) ~u jak **ai tiê** edi

he - good – **heart/ liver - much – very** ‘He is kind-hearted’

**(d) Within Tai-Kadai languages: Tay or Tay-Nung**

In terms of Tay (Tay-Nung) language there is the similarity in ‘monistic culture tradition’, and many similar personality traits of the Vietnamese language in the way of conceptualizing human inner body parts in connection to the relationship between language, cognition and culture. In Tay human emotional and mental life are seen to be mainly located at the **mốc** ‘belly’, **slim** ‘place of abdomen’, and **rây** ‘intestine’. This can be seen from the following examples:

(43) *Te nẳm trang* **mốc/shim**

he – thought – in - **belly/ place of abdomen**

‘He thought to himself’

(44) *Từ* **slim/ móc/ rây** *khỏi, khỏi* **chắc** *ơn* *trài*

from – **heart/ belly/ intestine** – I, I – thankfulness - you

‘Let me thank you from the bottom of my heart’

(45) *Quây nả* *căn* *lẻ* *quây* **slim**

far – face – far – **place of abdomen** ‘Out of sight out of mind’

It is interesting to observe that some Tay-Nung compound words show the crucial role of **mốc** ‘belly’ and **slây** ‘intestine’ which are seen as the ‘containers’ for states or processes of human emotions or mentation. Following expressions are illustrations:

➤ In the case of **mốc** ‘belly’

(46) **mốc** *slôm*

**belly** – fraught with ‘Ineffably and unspeakably melancholy’

(47) **mốc** *bá*

**belly** - spill ‘panic-stricken’

(48) **mốc** *pè*

**belly** - full of

‘full of pent-up anger/full of pent-up resentment, dissatisfied’

(49) **mốc** *quảng*

**belly** – large/big ‘generous’

(50) **mốc** *rủng*

**belly** - bright      ‘having a swift wit’

➤ In the case of *slây* ‘intestine’

(51) *slây khát*

**intestine** - breaks      ‘heart-broken’

(52) *slây kho*

**intestine** - bends      ‘prissy/ being fastidious’

(53) *slây cặp*

**intestine** – narrow      ‘narrow-minded/ mean’

(54) *slây khôn*

**intestine** – being hairy      ‘wicked’

It should be demonstrated that although the Tay language is of the Tai-Kadai, there are some differences in both language and culture between Tay and Thai ethnic groups in the Northwest of Vietnam as well as of the Thai people in Thailand and Lao people. The interesting idea that there are saliently specific features of the Tay in comparison with Thai languages in conceptualizing the body part ‘heart’ can be observed in both Tay and Thai in the compound word of *hua chau* ‘heart’ included *hua* ‘head’ and *chau* ‘breath’. If Tay language is rarely used *chau* ‘breath’ in the role of ‘locus’ of the emotion and character, there are only two or three compounds, as follows:

(55) *chau nắc*

**breath** – heavy      ‘hard-headed/ less sensitive’

(56) *chau nắu*

**breath** - light      ‘sensitive/ emotional’

(57) *chau fù*

**breath** - floating      ‘being superficial in disposition’

In contrast, in Thai language *chau* as ‘heart’, and ‘central place’ can be appreciated from the following examples:

(58) *chau on*

**heart** - soft      ‘soft-hearted’

(59) *chau bau*

**heart** - light      ‘pure-hearted’

(60) *chau nọi*

**heart** - small                    ‘somewhat chicken-hearted/ feeble’

(61) *chau hĩ*

**heart** - long    ‘generous/ big-hearted’

(62) *chau họn*

**heart** - hot    ‘Hot-tempered’

(63) *chau lỏng*

**heart** - clever                    ‘having a swift wit’

(64) *chau pháur*

**heart** – hope/expect    ‘wish, expect’

(e) **Within Sino-Tibetan languages: Hoa/Chinese**

Hoa people (Vietnamese: *người Hoa*) refers to a minority living in Vietnam consisting of persons considered to be ethnic Chinese who are often referred to as either Chinese Vietnamese, Vietnamese Chinese or ethnic Chinese. In Vietnam, five different dialects of Chinese are recognized within the Hoa community, with the Cantonese forming the largest group; however in many schools students are taught Chinese writing and Chinese language.

Aside from providing the similarity of ‘monistic culture tradition’ in Han Chinese thinking mode, the Chinese body part *xin* ( 心 ) ‘heart’ is the locus for not only the affective state and activity but also the cognitive counterparts (see also: Ning Yu 2006). Here are some compounds shown the ‘heart’ is conceptualized as a ‘container’ or a ‘location’, as the instances:

(65) *xin-fang*

heart-house/room                    ‘heart; interior of heart’

(66) *xin-tian*

heart-field    ‘heart; intention’

(67) *xin-di*

heart-land                    ‘heart; mind; character; moral nature’

And some Chinese compound words show the ways to imagine the functions of *xin* ‘heart’ which are relevant to the states or the processes of human emotions or mentality such as “thought”, “hope”, “wish”, “desire”, “wait”, “reminiscence”, “study”, etc.:

(68) *xin-si*

heart-think/thought    ‘thought; idea; thinking; state of mind; mood’

(69) *xin-yuan*

heart-hope/wish/desire    ‘cherished desire; aspiration; wish; dream’

(70) *xin-de*

heart-obtain                    ‘what one has learned from work, study’

**(f) Within Hmong-Mien languages: Hmong**

To compare with the SEA languages, in Vietnam, Hmong (or Mong, or Meo) language is very ethno-specific in linguistic, cognitive and cultural aspects. In Hmong’s mode of thinking the center of human emotions and rationalities is the ‘liver’. Here are some Hmong compound words or idioms with *saz* ‘liver’ which are embodied the affective states, processes and activities or cognitive counterparts. For instance:

(71) *hmaor nhav haaur saz*

love - in - **liver**                    ‘to love in the **heart**’

(72) *txix kangz cuz saz*

from - bottom - my **liver**                    ‘from the bottom of my **heart**’

(73) *saz đuz*

**liver** - black                    ‘cheating, wicked’

(74) *saz đu*

**liver** - smooth                    ‘good-natured, indulgent’

(75) *saz jông*

**liver** – good                    ‘content, satisfied’

(76) *saz njê*

**liver** – sharp                    ‘acute, smart’

(77) *saz ndăngx*

**liver** - straight                    ‘honesty’

(78) *saz ntêz*

**liver** - long                    ‘patient, forgive’

(79) *saz zâu*

**liver** – small                    ‘modest, gentle’

**CONCLUSION**

In the studying the ways of localizing human emotional and mental life, feelings and thoughts, affective states, processes and activities or cognitive counterparts, there exists a crucial and

typical difference between 'Western' and 'Oriental' languages: if English maintains a cultural tradition of 'dualism' linguistically denoted by the terms *Heart* and *Mind*, SEA languages tend to reveal the cultural 'monism'. Within SEA languages this 'monistic cultural tradition' is expressed in languages by different ways, namely:

(i) There are some languages which preferred only one body part or place as the locus for feelings and thoughts, such as Chinese and Hmong; whereas the languages used two of three organs or places, as the examples seen in Vietnamese, Tay, and Cham. It can be called this difference like 'mono-centered thinking mode' and 'multi-centered thinking mode';

(ii) The sequence of the point is that the function rate of a body part or place in the role of locus for emotions and rationalities is different. For instance, in the Vietnamese the inner body organ 'liver' has only one function but Hmong has some.

It is very interesting in 'cognitive style' that from Chinese to Vietnamese and other SEA languages in Vietnam, the thinking mode of localizing feelings and thoughts seems to *move down* along vertical axes of the body: Chinese people think mainly about the 'heart' which is contained in the upper body part – the chest or the thorax, while in Vietnamese people's way of conceptualization, those are 'belly' and 'place of abdomen' which belong to lower part of body.

Theoretically, a new 'typology' of our ways of viewing and thinking about the world can probably be to establish, and in particular, of different conceptualizations for human inner body organs or places. Our collected data from different language families and groups in Vietnam show that they seem to be divided into two 'cultural linguistic' groups:

(i) a group of languages as Chinese which has a 'CHEST/THORAX- cognitively oriented strategy' or 'CHEST/THORAX- cognitively oriented style', that is it chooses the heart as the central locus for locating human emotional and mental life;

(ii) a group of languages as Vietnamese, Muong, Khmer, Tay, Cham, Ede and Hmong which have 'ABDOMEN- oriented strategy' or 'ABDOMEN- cognitively oriented style', that is another inner body part or place (as BELLY, INTESTINE, LIVER, PLACE OF ABDOMEN) chosen for central 'locus' function.

Our investigations let us to guess, in one hand, that there is really a certain relationship between the ways of conceptualization and genetic features of languages within a family or a group in question. However, in the other hand, we have found some examples which seem to contrast our assumption: for instance, one African language as Dogon (Plugyan 1991) located very far from Vietnam is very different from Hmong language (above-mentioned) but two languages in question have the similar way of thinking about the central place of human mental and emotional life: not 'heart', not abdomen, not stomach, but just liver is 'chosen' for this role.

In present situation of study, it is difficult to reply the question: 'What is *priory* in the relationship between language, cognition and culture' - linguistic, or cultural, or cognitive 'determination'.

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Nhung and Hoang Van Ma (Tay), Nguyen Ngoc Thanh and Giang A Pao (Hmong), Phu Van Han (Cham).

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