

## **Orientational Metaphors and Spatial Cognition in Vietnamese Idioms**

**Le Vien Lan Huong**

Vietnam Military Medical University, Hanoi, Vietnam

**Nguyen Thi Bich Hanh**

Vietnam Military Medical University, Hanoi, Vietnam

### **Abstract**

Idioms represent the crystallization of a nation's linguistic and intellectual heritage, crafted and transmitted across generations by the Vietnamese people. As a distinctive linguistic unit, idioms not only embody the intrinsic relationship between language and national culture but also metaphorically reflect a worldview and human philosophy deeply embedded in the cultural cognition of native speakers. Research has demonstrated that orientational metaphors serve as a universal cognitive mechanism and play a crucial role in shaping the meaning of Vietnamese idioms. Spatial orientations such as up/down, above/below, and sink/float are employed by Vietnamese speakers to articulate abstract concepts, including emotional states, life conditions, and social status. Findings reveal that, in Vietnamese conceptual thought, positive emotions, favorable life circumstances, elevated social status, and power are consistently conceptualized as up. In contrast, negative emotions, suffering, and inferior social positions are conceptualized as down. These orientational metaphors not only illustrate how Vietnamese speakers perceive the world through embodied experiences but also reflect collective cultural values and social ideologies that are profoundly shaped by the legacy of a wet-rice agricultural civilization.

### **Keywords**

Cultural-cognitive features, idioms, orientational metaphors, position, state.

