

The Phenomenon of Semantic Field Transfer of the Human Field in Nguyen Duy¹'s Luc Bat² Poetry

Thi Thanh Hoa Huynh

Viet Nam National University Ho Chi Minh City, University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

Email: [htthoa97\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:htthoa97[at]gmail.com)

Abstract: *This study investigates semantic field transfer in 135 luc bat poems by Nguyen Duy, focusing on the transfer of lexical items from the human semantic field to the semantic fields of plants, objects, animals, time, and natural phenomena. Using Do Huu Chau's theory of lexical semantics, the study qualitatively analyzes how these transfers operate through metaphor, personification, and other rhetorical devices. The findings show that temporary semantic field transfer is the dominant mechanism, enriching poetic imagery, strengthening expressive meaning, and contributing significantly to Nguyen Duy's distinctive poetic style. The study also demonstrates the value of semantic field analysis for literary interpretation and the teaching of Vietnamese poetry.*

Keywords: Semantic field transfer; Lexical semantics; Vietnamese poetry; Nguyen Duy; Luc bat poetry; Personification; Metaphor

1. Introduction

In linguistics, a semantic field is a set of vocabulary grouped according to meaning to denote a particular subject, as defined by Howard Jackson and Etienne Zé Amvela in *Words, Meaning and Vocabulary* (2007) [5]. Words and their meanings cannot be separated from one another; they are linked together in thought and, independently of our awareness, form into definite groups. Assembling such groups must be based on an identity or a direct opposition between them in meaning. Such words resemble, or run parallel to, one another in the changes of their meaning.

The concept of "field" and field theory began to be studied in the 1920s - 1930s, through the linguistic theories of W. Humboldt and F. de Saussure, built on the argument: *Language is a system in which every element is tightly bound to the others, and in which the value of any one element is merely a consequence of the existence of, and is simultaneously dependent on, the other elements* [4]. On this foundation, later researchers gained grounds for establishing semantic fields through systematic lexical surveys.

The question of semantic fields began to be studied in Vietnam around the 1970s. Vietnamese linguists applied the theory in practice to the study of poetry and prose, as in *The Semantic Field of "Love" in Xuan Dieu's Poetry* by Vu Thi An (2003) [6]; *The Lexical Field of Space in Huy Can's Poetry Collection "Sacred Fire"* by Tran Thi Mai (2010) [7]; etc.

In this paper, we study the phenomenon of field transfer across 135 luc bat poems by Nguyen Duy. Chu Van Son once remarked: *Duy's luc bat melody carries both the classical and the folk. Duy boldly commands his troops, bringing modern everyday speech and expressions to invade the luc bat structure, forcing it to stretch itself out, rearrange itself, and seek new forms of harmony likewise in a modern manner* [1,

282]. This is indeed so: the innovation does not erase the traditional, folk quality inherent to luc bat. Nguyen Duy wrote a great deal, but it is perhaps luc bat that he valued most highly - one of the verse forms that is easy to write but very difficult to write well. Under his pen, each luc bat line appears laden with compassion, at once wild and singularly strange. Approaching Nguyen Duy's luc bat poetry, readers can observe the phenomenon of shifting from one semantic field to another within his poems, a shift that has lent his poetic imagery charm and appeal.

2. Semantic Field and the Phenomenon of Semantic Field Transfer

Semantic field is the shortened form of lexical-semantic field. According to Do Huu Chau, in his textbook *Vietnamese Lexical Semantics* (1999), a lexical-semantic field is *a set of words and fixed phrases within the vocabulary of a language, grouped on the basis of some semantic identity* [3]. Example: the lexical field denoting parts of the human body includes words such as: head, body, leg, hand, eye, mouth, skin, tooth, tongue, heart, lung, throat, intestine, liver, stomach... In *Vietnamese Lexical Semantics*, Do Huu Chau divides Vietnamese semantic fields into the following types: referential (denotative) semantic fields, conceptual (significative) semantic fields, syntagmatic (linear) semantic fields, and associative semantic fields.

According to Do Huu Chau, the phenomenon of lexical field transfer is *a word belonging to one conceptual field being transferred for use with things belonging to a different conceptual field* [3, 68]. Semantic field transfer may be regarded as one of the factors giving rise to the polysemy of words. In this paper, we apply Do Huu Chau's theory to analyze the semantic fields, and their transfer, found in Nguyen Duy's poetry.

¹ Nguyễn Duy (born 1948), full name Nguyễn Duy Nhuệ, is one of the most important contemporary Vietnamese poets and a prominent representative of the generation of writers shaped by the Vietnam War (known in Vietnam as the American War). In 2007, he was awarded the State Prize for Literature and Arts. Literary critics regard him as a master of modernizing the traditional Vietnamese poetic form lục bát.

² Lục bát (literally "six-eight") is a traditional and indigenous Vietnamese poetic form based on the alternating pattern of six- and eight-syllable lines. It is characterized by strict rules governing rhyme, rhythm, and tonal harmony (level and oblique tones). Originating in Vietnamese folk poetry, this form constitutes one of the fundamental pillars of Vietnam's literary identity.

In most instances, words shift meaning through a "radiating" process - that is, new meanings all arise on the basis of the original meaning. Semantic shift is also a method for creating new words, alongside the methods of compounding and reduplication. As is well known, a word that initially carries only a referential (denotative) meaning will, after a period of use, acquire additional new referential meanings. This in turn leads the word to acquire new conceptual and expressive-emotive meanings, owing largely to this shift in meaning - and this shift is precisely the basis on which semantic field transfer is formed. The phenomenon of semantic field transfer can broaden or narrow a word's meaning. In addition, once a word is used strictly according to its proper meaning, its evocative, image-forming power diminishes, owing to the neutralizing effect of context. For this reason, in order to create distinctiveness in language and heighten the capacity to evoke image and emotion, writers and poets often transfer semantic fields so as to create difference and originality in the art of poetry.

Broadly speaking, semantic field transfer is a form of lexical borrowing across conceptual domains - borrowing the units of one field to name things and phenomena belonging to another field. This borrowing is not a mere additive process but a combination that carries generalized or symbolic semantic value. Moreover, once transferred from one field to another, words still carry with them the characteristics originally inherent to them in their initial field. This means that a word, in its new field, does not become strange or hard to understand; on the contrary, it becomes interesting and distinctive in use, and rich in connotation. For example: words commonly used in matters of love, such as *attack*, *besiege*, *win/conquer*, *retreat*, etc., are in fact words belonging to the field of war. Or words used in the fields of agriculture, education, and healthcare, such as *the production front*, *education soldiers*, *vaccination campaign*, etc.

There are two ways in which semantic field transfer takes place: lexical semantic shift and rhetorical semantic shift. The result of lexical semantic field transfer is the creation of a new word whose meaning is based on - or differs from - the original meaning, one that may become fixed within the language system and be entered into dictionaries. Rhetorical semantic field transfer (also called temporary, or occasional, semantic shift) is a shift in meaning achieved through rhetorical devices that transform the word (metaphor, metonymy, personification, etc.); the meaning thus created is temporary, and once removed from its context the word reverts to its original meaning. This paper will also rely on these two criteria to identify instances of semantic field transfer; however, the majority of cases occurring in the shift from the human semantic field to other fields are instances of temporary, occasional semantic shift.

3. The Phenomenon of Transfer of the Human Semantic Field to Other Semantic Fields, Based on Data from Nguyen Duy's Luc Bat Poetry

3.1 The HUMAN Semantic Field Transferred to the PLANT Semantic Field

Words belonging to the human semantic field that transfer to the plant field may denote parts of the human body, human belongings, clothing, standing posture, and so on. For instance, the group of human actions: "stand, swing, sing a lullaby, embrace, cling, wash one's hair, cook, grope about, walk, retreat, stagger, lull to sleep, dance, play, half-open..." are transferred to the plant-field group, such as the names of plants in general (corn, bamboo, grass, apricot tree, duckweed...), parts of plants (flower, leaf, branch, stem...), or the names of fruits (custard apple, tangerine, orange...). *Cây ngô đứng nắng vẹo hông* - **the corn plant stands in the sun**, its side bent (*Bát nước ngô của người mẹ Cam Lộ* / A Bowl of Corn Water from a Mother of Cam Lo); *Cây mơ đứng lẻ bên đồi* - the apricot tree **stands alone** on the hillside (*Nếm mơ* / Tasting Apricots); *Tre xanh không đứng khuất mình bóng râm... đã mang dáng thẳng thân tròn của tre* - the green bamboo **does not stand hidden** in the shade... has taken on **the upright stance**, the round trunk, of bamboo (*Tre Việt Nam* / Vietnamese Bamboo).

Through the phenomenon of temporary semantic field transfer, adjectives expressing human qualities are transferred onto trees. *Thân gầy guộc lá mong manh* / *Rễ siêng không ngại đất nghèo* / *Vườn mình trong gió tre đu* / *Cây kham khổ vẫn hát ru lá cành* - **Its body thin, its leaves fragile** / **Its roots diligent**, never minding poor soil / Stretching itself in the wind, **the bamboo swings** / **The hardship-enduring tree still lulls its branches and leaves to sleep** (*Tre Việt Nam* / Vietnamese Bamboo). The author skillfully employs personification to make his verses distinctive and unique. The movements of trees and flowers likewise make the author sensitive enough to imagine the tree as *dancing*, the bud performing its *dance*, the flower gently *half-opening*, and the leaves *at play* - or the *flickering*, *dim glow* of the kapok tree's blossoms. *Lá cành lão đảo ru cha* - **the leaves and branches stagger as they lull** their father to sleep (*Lời ru của bão* / Lullaby of the Storm); *Kìa trông vũ điệu của cây* / *Kìa trong vũ điệu của chồi* / *Kìa trong cành lá nõ đùa* - behold **the dance of the tree** / behold **the dance of the bud** / behold **the branches and leaves at play** (*Vũ điệu* / The Dance); *Lập lòe hoa gạo lờ mờ bóng cây* - flickering, **the kapok blossoms glow dimly** beneath the tree's shadow (*Buổi sáng sau chiến tranh* / Morning After the War); *Hoa khe khẽ hé nhẹ nhàng hương bay* - **the flower gently, softly half-opens**, its fragrance drifting lightly (*Dịu và nhẹ* / Gentle and Soft)...

Beyond actions and words describing human character, there is also the semantic field denoting parts of the human body, such as *body*, *hand*, *back*, *head*, *arm*, *hair and beard*, *flesh and skin*, *heart*, *blood*, *soul*, *sweat*, *cheek*, *eye*. Nguyen Duy's poetry draws on the full richness of the human semantic field, combining it with qualities that create a living entity capable of loving, of living together, of continuing its lineage, of wearing a short shirt so as to yield it to its child. *Giọt đen loang loãng rơi mềm xác hoa* - dark drops seep and spread, **softening the flower's corpse** (*Người đang yêu* / Someone in Love); *Cho râu tóc cô rối bù trong đêm* - let **the grass's disheveled hair and beard** tangle in the night (*Cỏ dại* / Wild Grass); *Nghe hồn cỏ dại linh thiêng quá chừng* - hearing **the wild grass's soul**, so sacred (*Vũ điệu* / The Dance). Or at times it is a transfer from the semantic field of human clothing to the plant field of the bamboo, with the affectionate term of address "child": *Có manh áo cộc tre nhường cho con* - there is **a short**,

worn shirt that the bamboo yields to its child (*Tre Việt Nam / Vietnamese Bamboo*).

3.2 The HUMAN Semantic Field Transferred to the OBJECT (THING) Semantic Field

An "object" (or "thing") is something that exists and is perceived as having clear boundaries, distinguishable from other existing things (*Vietnamese Dictionary*) [15]. Similar to the human field above, but here transferred to the object semantic field. This field includes words denoting the names of objects such as *poem, boat, yellow pomelo, sword, incense stick, stone, water pipe, dust, drum and cheo (traditional opera drum)*, etc.

At the opening of his collection of *luc bat* poetry, Nguyen Duy wrote the poem "Subsidized Poetry" as a foreword. In it appears the line: *mong thơ sinh hạ cho đôi ba giòng* - hoping the poem may give birth to a line or two. We see that "give birth" is a word belonging to the human field - we usually say "she has just given birth to a princess" or "she has just given birth to a baby boy" - yet we have never before heard the word "give birth" applied to a line or two of verse, as Nguyen Duy does here. The author shifts from the human field to the object field to affirm that composing poetry is akin to giving birth to one's own child.

Blade and *foot/base* are concrete objects denoting parts of the human body, but the author transfers them to the object field on the basis of a similarity in form, and of similarity in position between the objects. This may be regarded as an instance of lexical semantic field transfer: *Lưỡi gươm dẫm máu Liễu Thăng thuở nào* - the blade of the sword, drenched in the blood of Lieu Thang, of that bygone time (*Ái Chi Lăng / Chi Lang Pass*); *Lơ thơ trắng dưới chân đồi hoa mơ* - scattered white beneath the foot of the apricot-blossom hill (*Nhớ bạn / Remembering a Friend*); *Chân nhang lấm láp tro tàn* - the foot of the incense stick, smeared with the ash of burnt-out coals (*Ngồi buồn nhớ mẹ ta xưa / Sitting Sadly, Remembering My Mother of Old*); *Chân dề lảng vảng ít nhiều khói sương* - the foot of the dike, lingering in a little morning mist (*Hồ Tây / West Lake*).

The field of color is expressed by the author not through specific colors such as green, red, purple, or yellow, but through colors like "cheerful" and "pure" - colors that, in reality, no one ever speaks of as "cheerful" or "pure." This is simply the author's way of employing semantic field transfer. *Màu trong sạch đến khả nghi là thường* - a purity so pure as to arouse suspicion, as is customary (*Trắng... và trắng... / White... and White...*); *Tan mình trong mỗi sắc màu vui tươi* - dissolving itself into every cheerful hue (*Cỏ dại / Wild Grass*).

Human states such as *dazed/senseless, restless/fidgety, listless/limp, coy/flirtatious, faltering/gasping* are likewise transferred by the author onto the object field, turning trees, the colors of flowers, the cheo drum, and rivers and waters into things possessing a soul - half in earnest, half in jest, innocent, and full of the love of life. *Lối mòn đá cuội rong chơi* - the pebble-strewn path wanders idly (*Nhớ bạn / Remembering a Friend*); *Trên sông dậm dặt mạn thuyền* - upon the restless river, a boat's edge (*Sông duyên / River of Fate*); *Ngọn cây ngày đại cánh diều* - the treetop stands

dazed, senseless, beneath a kite (*Hồ Tây / West Lake*); *Trống chèo ngắc ngoải thùng thỉnh gọi ai* - the cheo drum gasps out, hollow and faltering, calling out to someone (*Mỗi / Everyone*)...

The phenomenon of semantic field transfer transforms meaning to create verses laden with unspoken feelings, a sorrow lingering somewhere about. For example: *Đá mồ côi đá vọng phụ với người* - the orphaned stone, the stone that waits forlornly for her husband, together with the person (*Vọng Tô Thị / Longing for Missus To*); *Nghênh ngang hiền triết diều cày thăng thiên* - swaggering, a sage-like figure, the water pipe ascends to heaven (*Thuốc lào / Tobacco*); *Linh hồn cát bụi ở miền trong veo* - the soul of dust and ashes, in a realm utterly clear (*Cơm bụi ca / Song of Instant Rice*); ...

3.3 The HUMAN Semantic Field Transferred to the ANIMAL Semantic Field

An animal is a living being possessed of sensation and capable of moving of its own accord. The animal semantic field may include the names of animals (cat, monkey, buffalo, cow, chicken, pig...), animal body parts (eye, nose, fur, snout, claw...), animal actions (jump, crawl, creep...), animal coat colors (jet-black, spotted, reddish-brown, yellow, grey...), animal size (big, small, long, short, giant...), and so forth.

Nguyen Duy's *luc bat* poetry mentions the leech, the cricket, the shrimp, the buffalo, the fish, the toad, frogs, the orangutan, birds, bees and butterflies. The author affectionately calls them "friend leech," or uses playful comparisons such as "teacher toad" and "gentleman singer," creating a sense of closeness and familiarity. *Ta mê mãi vượt núi non / Công theo bạn vất vả tròn no say* - I press onward, crossing mountains and hills / carrying on my back my round, well-fed friend leech (*Con vắt / The Leech*); *Thầy đồ cóc dạy yêu tinh học bài / Nằm nghe ếch nhái thi tài* - teacher toad teaches the demon its lessons / lying and listening to the frogs compete in talent (*Mỗi / Everyone*); *Giọng chàng ca sĩ dễ mèn du dương* - the voice of the cricket, gentleman singer, so melodious (*Cỏ dại / Wild Grass*). To express his frustration and his wish to break free from restraint, as with the buffalo and the fish, Nguyen Duy uses the verb "to insult/offend," giving the buffalo a human character: *Con trâu xúc phạm sỡ thừng cột trâu / Con cá xúc phạm sỡ lưới câu ao nhà* - the buffalo takes offense at the rope that tethers it / the fish takes offense at the fishing line in the home pond (*Xẩm ngơng / Stammering Xam Song*). In addition, adjectives such as *leisurely/unhurried, carefree/wandering, coquettish/swaying* - ordinarily used of people - are applied here to animals. The slowness and unhurried pace of the buffalo suit the word "leisurely"; the carefree, playful swimming of the fish is likened to "wandering"; and reproach is conveyed through the image of a swarm of bees and butterflies flying about, swaying coquettishly. *Trâu bò đủng đỉnh như ngàn năm nay* - buffaloes and cattle amble along, unhurried, as they have for a thousand years (*Về làng / Returning to the Village*); *Biết tầm con cá lóng không thuyền chài* - vanishing without a trace, the carefree, wandering fish, boats gone fishing (*Mỗi / Everyone*); *Phường ong bướm ông ẹo bay lòng thông* - a band of bees and butterflies, coquettish, fly about, dangling loosely (*Em ơi, gió... / Oh Wind, My Love...*).

3.4 The HUMAN Semantic Field Transferred to the TIME Semantic Field

Time is a basic form of the existence of matter (together with space), in which matter moves and develops continuously, without cease (*Vietnamese Dictionary*) [15]. The time field may include names for time (time, era, bygone days), periods of time (century, year, months and days, hour, second...), and characteristics of time (early, late, fast, slow...).

In Nguyen Duy's luc bat poetry collection, the words used mainly denote periods of time: *youth, early morning, out-of-season, the four seasons, day, night, spring, month, year, afternoon, dusk*. "Early morning" is the time just after dawn - pure, cool, and fresh: a truly beautiful moment, yet only just "hovering on the verge" (a verb ordinarily describing people, as in "hovering on the verge of eighty years old" or "standing hovering at the doorway"), used here to indicate how swiftly and hastily time passes - no sooner has it arrived than an entire human lifetime has slipped away. *Ban mai ngấp nghé chiều hôm kiếp người* - **early morning hovers on the verge of evening dusk** - a human lifetime (*Kính thưa / Respectfully...*). Nguyen Duy uses a good many distinctive words to speak of time, as though mourning a bygone era, which is why he reaches for such beautiful words to describe it. *Đừng hà tiện dáng thanh xuân* - do not be stingy with **the figure of youth** (*Nét và hình / Shape and Form*); *Vườn Thiên Thai rụng dấu chân trái mùa* - in the Garden of Paradise fall **the footprints of the out-of-season** (*Thật thà / Honestly*); *Thấy muôn năm cứ bốn mùa hồn nhiên* - seeing that, for a thousand years, **the four seasons remain innocent** as ever (*Vũ điệu / The Dance*); ... A feeling of waiting, of restless anticipation by day and by night; a feeling of owing debt to the months and years. *Những ngày thắc thom những đêm đợi chờ* - **restless days, nights of waiting** (*Xin đừng buồn em nhé / Please Don't Be Sad, My Dear*); *Bỏ qua tội tháng nợ năm* - setting aside **the debt owed to months and years** (*Dịu và nhẹ / Gentle and Soft*); ...

3.5 The HUMAN Semantic Field Transferred to the NATURAL PHENOMENA Semantic Field

Drawing on two definitions taken from Hoang Phe's *Vietnamese Dictionary* [15] - "phenomenon" and "natural" - we understand a natural phenomenon to be something occurring in space and time, perceivable by people, belonging to nature or possessing a natural character, not caused by or intervened in by human beings. Examples include rain, sunshine, wind, storm, dusk, etc.

In Nguyen Duy's poetry, not all words belonging to the natural-phenomena field are transformed to take on the shape of the human field, but the author has selected beautiful, representative images through which to express this semantic field transfer with great subtlety. The natural phenomena appearing in Nguyen Duy's poetry are *sky, moon, cloud, wind, rain, sunshine, star, flood, storm, mist*, etc. Specifically, the image of the wind appears together with the moon through the action of lulling to sleep, just as a mother lulls her child - like the singing of grass and trees. *Mẹ ru con gió ru trăng sáng ngời / Ru trăng gió hát những lời cô cây* - mother lulls her child to sleep, **the wind lulls the shining moon / the wind lulls the moon**, singing the words of the grass and trees (*Lời ru mùa thu / Autumn Lullaby*)...

The wind, through metaphorical imagery, evokes in the reader associations with the love of a young soldier. The strong, turbulent wind mirrors the young soldier's own turbulent mood, and the moment the wind departs is also the moment he lies down forever, without having had time to speak his words of love. *Ruột gan gió vẫn còn cào / ... Gió chiều nào động trong tôi / ... Gió đi giắt cục bàng hoàng / Mây đỉnh núi chít khăn tang ngang trời* - **his very entrails are wrung and churned by the wind / ... the evening wind stirs restlessly within me / ... the wind departs, jerking away, stunned and reeling / clouds atop the mountain peak wear a mourning band** of white across the sky (*Người đang yêu / Someone in Love*).

Not only the wind, but rain too is a symbol that stirs up so much longing and sorrow. Words denoting human states - longing, persistent/drizzling, joyful, sad - are used by the author for the field of wind and rain: *Giọt thương nhớ nhỏ nhẹ rơi / Giọt mong và rich nhào lời tha hương / Giọt vui lấp bớp ô tuôn / Sau mưa bộp một giọt buồn vĩ thanh* - **drops of longing fall, gentle and soft / drops of persistent hope drizzle**, the words of the homesick grow soggy / **drops of joy patter and burst forth** / after the rain, one final **drop of sorrow**, its lingering echo (*Mưa / Rain*); *Hạt mưa ném thẳng có chừa ai đâu* - **the raindrops are hurled straight down**, sparing no one (*Mưa trong nắng - Nắng trong mưa / Rain in the Sunshine - Sunshine in the Rain*); ...

As for the moon, it is an image bright and beautiful, yet always solitary - *trăng cũng lẻ loi khuyết tròn* - beautiful as **the moon, likewise solitary**, waning and waxing round (*Ca dao vọng về / Folk Songs Echoing Back*) - used at other times mockingly: *Trăng ngồn ngồn trắng khỏa thân với người* - **the moon, plump and white, bares itself naked** before people (*Kính thưa / Respectfully...*); *Lao xao gió kể chuyện đêm / Trăng non nghe ghé nhìn nghiêng xuống rừng / Lấp ló sau lớp lá rung / Thấy trăng mắc võng lưng chùng cành cây* - rustling, **the wind recounts its tale of the night / the young crescent moon peers sideways**, looking down into the forest / flickering behind trembling leaves / **the moon is seen hanging in a hammock**, midway along a tree branch (*Võng Trăng / Hammock of the Moon*)...

In addition, there are also images of wind, cloud, star, storm, flood, sky, sun, and nature in general. As for the qualities and activities proper to the natural-phenomena field itself, none appear as such; rather, the author borrows the human field both to emphasize and to lend a distinctive quality to the field of nature. Instead of describing the process or quality of a natural phenomenon as "strong, weak, big, small...", the author uses words from the human-field group, such as "hurled straight," "breathe," "languid/melancholy," "turbulent," "churning," and so on, to convey the qualities of natural phenomena.

4. The Value of the Phenomenon of Human Semantic Field Transfer in Nguyen Duy's Poetry

The phenomenon of human semantic field transfer in Nguyen Duy's poetry brings valuable contributions to both the content and the artistry of his verse. Through his skillful, ingenious, and flexible use of rhetorical devices, Nguyen Duy transforms

inanimate, senseless objects into things animated, activity, and emotion, like a human entity. Through this transfer of the human field, the author has created unique, meaning-rich combinations. These may be words from other semantic fields combined with nouns from the human field: *xác hoa* - **the corpse of a flower** (*Người đang yêu* / Someone in Love); *râu tóc cỏ* - **the beard-and-hair of grass** (*Cỏ dại* / Wild Grass); *chân đê* - **the foot of the dike** (*Hồ Tây* / West Lake); *bạn vắt* - **friend leech** (*Con vắt* / The Leech); *linh hồn cát bụi* - **the soul of dust and ashes** (*Cơm bụi ca* / Song of Instant Rice); *hồn sim* - **the soul of the myrtle** (*Hồn sim* / The Myrtle's Soul)... Or they may be words from other fields combined with adjectives from the human field: *cây kham khổ*, *thân gầy guộc*, *lá mong manh* - **the hardship-enduring tree, the thin-bodied trunk, the fragile leaves** (*Tre Việt Nam* / Vietnamese Bamboo); *sắc màu vui tươi* - **the cheerful hue** (*Cỏ dại* / Wild Grass); *cây ngây dại* - **the innocent, dazed tree** (*Hồ Tây* / West Lake); *màu trong sạch* - **the pure color** (*Trắng... và trắng... / White... and White...*), etc. Or again, words from other fields combined with verbs from the human field: *cây quờ quạng* - **the tree gropes about** (*Sao* / Star); *bèo đi, bèo lui* - **the duckweed goes, the duckweed retreats**, *lá cành lao đảo* - **the leaves and branches stagger** (*Lời ru của bão* / Lullaby of the Storm); *vũ điệu của cây* - **the dance of the tree** (*Vũ điệu* / The Dance); *bom đào đất* - **bombs dig into the earth** (*Đất đỏ – nước xanh* / Red Earth – Green Water); *điếu cây thăng thiên* - **the water pipe ascends to heaven** (*Thuốc Lào* / Tobacco), etc. Words used in this semantic field transfer, beyond their newly expressed value, also retain the semantic impressions inherent to their original field, giving them expressive value that far exceeds that of combinations formed between words of the same field.

Furthermore, a preliminary survey of the transfer of the human field to other fields in Nguyen Duy's poetry shows that he makes considerable use of temporary, occasional semantic field transfer throughout his poems, wielding it with increasing mastery - a fact that helps affirm Nguyen Duy's distinctive poetic style. From this, in approaching any of his poems, we may view it from many different angles, building for ourselves a personal imaginative space in creating and appreciating his works, and opening up a new way of remembering poetic texts through the phenomenon of semantic field transfer.

The phenomenon of semantic field transfer takes place in many different forms, such as metaphor, simile, and personification, and the boundaries between these forms of semantic shift are not always clear; sometimes it is a fixed semantic shift, and at other times - more commonly - a temporary, occasional one. Whichever the case, this semantic shift allows readers and learners to perceive the world around them, and themselves, in a fresh, multidimensional way. This may be regarded as one of the means of creating new words, on the one hand making content more distinctive, and on the other making artistry more unique. It thereby helps generate interest in receiving a literary work, enriches one's vocabulary, and builds up one's understanding of reality and life, thereby fostering the creation of what is novel and unique in both language and literature.

5. Conclusion

Drawing on 135 luc bat poems by Nguyen Duy, this paper has identified and described five directions in which the human semantic field is transferred onto other semantic fields in his poetry: the plant field, the object (thing) field, the animal field, the time field, and the natural-phenomena field. In each direction, words denoting human actions, body parts, clothing, states, and qualities are borrowed to name and characterize non-human entities, chiefly through the rhetorical devices of personification, metaphor, and simile, and predominantly by way of temporary, occasional semantic shift rather than fixed, lexical shift.

These findings are nonetheless limited in two respects. First, the study is confined to 135 luc bat poems by a single author, so its conclusions describe a pattern within this particular body of work and this particular verse form, and cannot, without further study, be assumed to hold for Nguyen Duy's writing in other genres or for luc bat poetry by other authors. Second, the paper is descriptive and qualitative in nature, drawing on illustrative examples from the poems rather than on an exhaustive statistical count of how often each target field is used relative to the others.

These limitations in turn suggest several directions in which the research could be extended. The survey could be carried into Nguyen Duy's poems in verse forms other than luc bat, or set alongside the luc bat poetry of other authors, so as to determine whether this transfer of the human semantic field is a distinctive feature of Nguyen Duy's individual style or a broader tendency within modern Vietnamese luc bat poetry. A further direction would be a quantitative study of the corpus, establishing the relative frequency and productivity of transfer toward each of the five target fields identified here. Finally, these results may also serve as reference material for the teaching and appreciation of modern Vietnamese poetry, helping learners recognize concretely how personification and metaphor operate through the mechanism of semantic field transfer.

In short, Nguyen Duy transcends conventional modes of poetic thinking through his remarkable linguistic creativity. Rather than merely enriching the Vietnamese lexicon, he constructs novel poetic images that embody deeply human emotional perceptions of the world, moving beyond the simple imitation or representation of external reality. This innovative poetic practice not only demonstrates the originality and aesthetic distinctiveness that Nguyen Duy contributes to modern Vietnamese poetry, but also invites readers to experience profound emotional resonance and philosophical reflection embedded within every carefully chosen word.

References

- [1] Chu Van Son, *Bearing an Unsettled Heart: Essays, Literary Criticism, and Portraits*, Writers' Association Publishing House, Hanoi, 2010.
- [2] Do Huu Chau, *Foundations of Lexical Semantics*, Education Publishing House, Hanoi, 2009.
- [3] Do Huu Chau, *Vietnamese Lexical Semantics*, Education Publishing House, Hanoi, 1999.

- [4] Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics* (translated from the French by Cao Xuan Hao), Social Sciences Publishing House, Hanoi, 2005.
- [5] Howard Jackson and Etienne Zé Amvela, *Words, Meaning and Vocabulary*, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2007.
- [6] Vu Thi An, "The Semantic Field of the Word 'Love' in Xuan Dieu's Poetry (In Comparison with Nguyen Binh's Poetry)," *Journal of Linguistics*, No. 9, 2003.
- [7] Tran Thi Mai, "The Lexical Field of Space in Huy Can's Poetry Collection 'Sacred Fire'," *Journal of Language & Life*, No. 1+2, 2010.
- [8] Mai Ngoc Chu – Vu Duc Nghieu – Hoang Trong Phien, *Foundations of Linguistics and Vietnamese*, University & Professional Secondary Education Publishing House, Hanoi, 1992.
- [9] Luu Van Din, "The Semantic Field of Water-Related Linguistic Elements in Vietnamese Folk Songs and Proverbs," *Journal of Language & Life*, No. 9, 2010.
- [10] Nguyen Duy, *Selected Luc Bat Poems*, Ho Chi Minh City Culture – Literature and Arts Publishing House, 2016.
- [11] Nguyen Thien Giap, *Vietnamese Lexicology*, Education Publishing House, Hanoi, 2003.
- [12] Phan Ngoc, *Explaining Literature through Language*, Youth Publishing House, Ho Chi Minh City, 1995.
- [13] Ha Quang Nang, *The Phenomenon of Category Conversion of Lexical Units in Vietnamese*, Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, Institute of Linguistics, Hanoi, 2005.
- [14] Tran Dinh Su, *Artistic Worlds of Poetry*, Education Publishing House, 1995.
- [15] Hoang Phe (ed.), *Vietnamese Dictionary*, Da Nang Publishing House – Lexicography Center, 2005.