

THAI NGUYEN UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION

LE THI NHU NGUYET

LINGUISTIC FEATURES IN THE TAY FOLK SONGS

Major: Vietnamese Linguistics

Code: 9220102

DISSERTATION SUMMARY

THAI NGUYEN - 2022

The dissertation was finished at:
University of Education - Thai Nguyen University

Supervisors:

- 1. Assoc. Prof. Dr Ta Van Thong**
- 2. Assoc. Prof. Dr Nguyen Van Loc**

Reviewer 1:

Reviewer 2:

Reviewer 3:

The dissertation will be defended in the university committee:

University of Education - Thai Nguyen University

Time: Date:

The dissertation can be found at:

1. National Library of Vietnam.
2. Digital Center - Thai Nguyen University.
3. Library of University of Education.

**THE AUTHOR'S PUBLICATIONS
RELATED TO THE DISSERTATION TOPIC**

1. Le Thi Nhu Nguyet (2016), "Rhetoric comparison in the "lượn sluong " of the Tay people", Journal of Language and Life, No. 5 (247), pp. 61 - 65.
2. Le Thi Nhu Nguyet (2021), "Gerne, rhyme, rhythm in singing lượn, quan lang and then of Tay ethnic group", Scientific Journal of Tan Trao University, volume 7, no. 20, p. 77 - 86.
3. Le Thi Nhu Nguyet (2021), "Structure of the text of "lượn, "quan lang" and "then" Tay folk songs in Vietnam", Journal of Language and Life, No. 5A (311), p. . 95 - 101.
4. Le Thi Nhu Nguyet (2021), "Characteristics of the text of "quan lang" Tay folk songs", Journal of Science and Technology of Thai Nguyen University, vol. 226, No. 08, p. 102 - 111.

INTRODUCTION

1. Reason for choosing the research topic

1.1. In linguistics, the study of linguistic features in folklore works has been noticed for a long time and has produced many results. The study of linguistic features in folk songs (also known as "lyrics") of different ethnic groups aim to show the features of form, semantics, pragmatics, grammar and style, etc. has contributed to explain the special appeal and vitality of these folk songs.

Language in folk songs of Tay ethnic group has also become an object of study, from a linguistic point of view.

1.2. Vietnam is a multi-ethnic country; in addition to the Kinh ethnic group, there are 53 ethnic minorities. Each ethnic group has a treasure of traditional cultural heritages (including their mother tongue) bearing their own identity. The diversity and richness in the cultures of these ethnic groups have created a colorful brocade of Vietnamese culture. The preservation and promotion of ethnic cultural identities, especially for ethnic minorities, are considered important and urgent for many countries, including Vietnam, in the global trend of modernization. The risk of extinction is threatening most ethnic minority languages, including the Tay language.

The language used in Tay folk songs is artistic, has rhyme (musical features), and at the same time has figurative features. Studying the language of Tay folk songs, first of all, is to show the beauty of Tay artistic language, hence creating a basis for preserving and developing the language of this ethnic group.

1.3. The Tay ethnic group has a rich, diverse and unique folklore. They have their own script, so they have preserved many works up to now, which are: *phong shư, lượn, quan lang and then, phuối pác, phuối rọi, vén noọng nòn, etc.* As a part of folklore, these folk songs reflect the spirit, lifestyle and sentiments of the Tay people. Tay folk songs not only show how language is organized in artistic texts, but we can also see some traditional cultural features of the Tay people reflected in language.

Tay folk songs can be studied from many different perspectives: culture, literature, music, etc. including linguistics. Studying the language of Tay folklore works from the perspective of linguistics helps to understand the beauty in the Tay language, and at the same time discover a part of the intangible cultural source, contributing to the introduction and respect of the enthusiasm and talent of Tay folk artists in art creation, preservation and promotion of the invaluable traditional cultural values of the Tay people.

For the above reasons, "*Linguistic features in the Tay folk songs*" has been selected as the research topic for this thesis.

2. Research aims

By studying the features of form and semantics of Tay folk songs, the thesis aims to point out the unique and specific values of language in Tay folk songs, thereby contributing to preserving and developing the traditional culture of the Tay people.

3. Research tasks

- Collect and present an overview of the related research works, find out and establish the theoretical basis related to the research topic.
- Describe the formal features of the investigated Tay folk song texts.
- Describe the semantic features of the investigated Tay folk song texts.

4. Research subject

The research subject of the thesis is the linguistic features in Tay folk songs, specifically three types of folk songs: *hưn*, *quan lang* and *then*.

These are just case studies, initially learning about the languages of three traditional literary genres in the vast folklore source of the Tay.

5. Research scope and survey materials

5.1. Research scope

The thesis focuses on studying linguistic features in the above-mentioned types of documents in two main aspects:

- Features of language form in Tay folk songs. Specifically, the thesis explores the formal aspects of the survey units: session, stage, section, genre, rhyme, rhythm, types of structure, etc.

- Semantic features in Tay folk songs. Specifically, the thesis delves into semantic aspects: theme, semantic field, symbols, etc.

5.2. Survey materials

Within the framework of the thesis and the actual inventory of the properties of the existing corpus (with relatively complete and clear bilingual translation), the thesis determines that only Tay folk songs will be surveyed in three sub-categories: *lượn*, *quan lang* and then, in the rich folk song source with a large number of texts of this ethnic group.

(Note: In 2019, the Then Practice heritage of the Tay, Nung, and Thai people in Vietnam was officially inscribed by UNESCO on *the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity*).

Selected Tay folk songs for survey include:

- Trieu An - editor (2000), *Then Tay songs*, National Culture Publishing House.

- Nguyen Duy Bac (2001), *Folk poetry of Lạng land*, National Culture Publishing House.

- Hoang Tuan Cu (2018), *Lượn, phong shư lyrical folk song of the Tay people in Lạng land*, Writers' Association Publishing House.

- Nguyen Thien Tu (2008), *Quan Lang Poetry*, National Culture Publishing House.

These are representatives of the Tay people's *lượn*, *quan lang*, and *then*, collected in two provinces of Cao Bang and Lang Son.

The above-mentioned Tay folk songs have been collected and compiled by the authors, presented in two language forms: the original Tay language (written in latin script) and the literary translation (written in Quoc Ngu script).

(Note: In the works of collection and translation, the composers often use the words "songs", "poems", "folk poetry", etc. to refer to the lyrics in Tay folk songs).

6. Research methods

6.1. Descriptive method

This method is used to conduct analysis and synthesis in order to draw out the common features of the language in Tay folk songs.

When performing the description, the thesis also uses the method of text analysis. This method is used to analyze the structure of Tay folk songs: session, stage, section, genre, rhyme, rhythm, etc. In some cases, in order to better understand Tay folk songs in terms of vocabulary - semantics, in addition to the original Tay text (written in Latinized Tay script) and literary translation (written in Quoc Ngu script), the author of the thesis also translated literally each "word".

The method of semantic analysis is used to understand Tay folk songs in terms of vocabulary - semantics, based on the context, the speaking purpose of the communication roles (performing and receiving), the meaning of the units under consideration, when analyzing the meaning of the text and its constituent elements, the types of meanings in folk songs: the original meaning and the symbolic meaning, etc. This technique also helps to group words according to semantic fields: groups (fields) of words that share a common meaning element.

Statistical and classification techniques in description were noticed when surveying in order to find out the rules of occurrence of some remarkable linguistic phenomena in Tay folk songs.

6.2. Interdisciplinary method

The research subjects and survey materials of the thesis are related to folk music works (the lyrics in folk songs), so in addition to linguistic knowledge as the foundation, the thesis used some interdisciplinary knowledge and techniques: folklore, folk music, cultology and poetry.

7. Contributions of the research

7.1. Theoretical contributions

- The thesis results contribute to clarifying some theoretical aspects of language in ethnic minority folk songs in terms of text form and semantics, in Stylistics and Textology.

- The results of the thesis provide orientations for the generalization of linguistic features in the folklore of ethnic groups from a linguistic point of view: common events in folk songs, genre and rhyme, theme, collection of words according to semantic fields, symbols, etc.

7.2. *Practical contributions*

- The research results contribute to preserving and developing the traditional artistic source of the Tay people, including folk songs, and at the same time contributing to the preservation and development of the ethnic language of this ethnic group. This can also be considered as the initial basis, suggesting the direction to continue to study other aspects in the language of the traditional cultural source of the Tay people.

- Through pointing out the features of the language in Tay folk songs, the thesis results help to enrich experience and methods to collect and analyze folk art documents, as well as help the translation of these texts more effectively and deeply. In particular, the collection of words used in Tay folk songs can help compile a dictionary of Tay folk songs or a dictionary of Tay traditional culture.

- The research results of the thesis can also be used in teaching about ethnic minority folk songs in general and Tay folk songs in particular, and can be considered as a reference for readers who have a need to learn about Tay culture in general, Tay folk songs as well as Tay language in particular.

8. Structure of the dissertation

In addition to the **Introduction**, **Conclusion** and **Appendixes**, the thesis consists of 3 chapters: Chapter 1: Literature Review, theoretical and practical basis; Chapter 2: Linguistic features of Tay folk songs in terms of text form; Chapter 3: Linguistic features of Tay folk songs in terms of semantics.

Chapter 1

LITERATURE REVIEW, THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL BASIS

1.1. Research overview

- The situation of collecting and researching Tay folk songs from the perspective of culture, literature and art shows that:

Research works by authors: Nong Minh Chau (1973), Lượn Van Thang (1974), Vi Hong (1979), Vo Quang Nhon (1983), Phuong Bang (1992), Trieu An (2000), Nong Thi Ninh (2000), Hoang Thi Quynh Nha (2003), Loc Bich Kiem (2004), Do Trong Quang (2005), Nguyen Thi Yen (2006), Nguyen Thien Tu (2008), To Ngoc Thanh (2012), Nguyen Thi Tuyet Nhung (2017), Nong Phuc Tuoc (2017), Hoang Tuan Cu (2018), etc. have deeply analyzed Tay folk songs from different angles: culture, belief, literature, art, music. These research works have pointed out the value, role and beauty of folk songs in the life of the Tay people; explained the name, origin, performance environment, music, performance art; and at the same time analyzed folk songs in order to point out the unique artistic and content values of this type of folk poetry. Collected and translated publications have provided a rich source of material on Tay folk songs. For Linguistics, this is an extremely valuable source of material to learn the Tay folk song language.

- Research works on Tay language, language in folk songs and Tay folk song language shows that:

Researchers Cung Van Luoc (1992), Hoang Van Ma (2002), Lượn Ben (2015), Ta Van Thong (2017), etc. have paid special attention to the Tay language, focusing on some aspects like historical origin, position of Tay - Nung language, relationship between Tay and Nung languages with each other and with Vietnamese, writing system, spelling rules and Tay - Nung grammar; problems with phonetics, vocabulary, grammar, and writing; language usage, etc.

Authors Duong Kim Boi (1975), Dam Thuy Linh (2009), Le Thi Phuong Thao (2011), Nong Thi Ngoc (2012), Dinh Thi Lien (2012),

Ngo Thi Thu Hang (2012), Trinh Thi Thao (2013), Nguyen Hang Phuong (2016), Hoang Thu Trang (2017), Le Thi Hong Tim (2018), Nguyen Thi Yen (2018), Nguyen Van Tuan (2019), etc. focused on studying folk music forms and values reflected from a cultural perspective. Up to now, there have not been many studies on the Tay folk song language, but mainly on the Kinh (Vietnamese) folk song language. The language of Tay folk songs has not been fully and deeply discussed in a monograph. The study of Tay folk song language is mostly mentioned (not the main subject) in the study of Literature or Culture.

1.2. Theoretical and practical basis

The thesis has mentioned the linguistic basis, including theory of texts, artistic texts; theory of semantics (semantic fields, text themes); theory of language in Poetics (language in artistic texts; the elements that make up the musicality (rhythmicity) of folk songs: genre, rhyme, rhythm); communication theory and conversation theory. Cultural basis includes theory of culture, cultural identity and symbolism; Tay ethnic group, Tay language and Tay folk song source.

1.3. Sub-conclusion of chapter 1

Tay folk songs have attracted the attention of many researchers approaching from many angles such as culture, literature, ethnography, history, music, etc. However, up to now, language in Tay folk songs have not been fully and separately studied in a monograph.

Tay folk songs are folk songs and verses in which both the lyrics and the melody play an important role in building the complete image of the work. On the theoretical and practical basis, the thesis has mentioned the following concepts: text, artistic text, structure; field meaning, theme; artistic language, rhythm, rhyme, genre; communication theory, conversation theory; culture, cultural identity, the relationship between language and culture, linguistic symbols; Tay folk songs, singing, singing stages, songs, lyrics, etc.

Chapter 2

LINGUISTIC FEATURES IN THE TAY FOLK SONGS IN TERMS OF TEXT FORM

2.1. Text structure of Tay folk songs

2.1.1. Structure of Tay folk song text by hierarchical relationship (inclusive)

A hierarchical relationship is an arrangement according to the inclusion relationship in the organization of folk songs, including a system of units (in theory, because the text can be long or short, simple or different) of upper and lower levels, from the singing session to the verse. That is the hierarchy: *singing session - singing stage - song - lyrics - singing section - verse*.

Level	Lượn	Quan Lang	Then
Level 1	Lượn singing session	Quan Lang singing session	Then singing session
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - welcome singing stage - love confession singing stage - ending singing stage - leaving. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - challenging singing stage - the singing stage to welcome the bride 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - stage = song = lyrics (often called “song”) - the song of <i>Rộng hương</i> - the song of <i>Vọng cánh</i> - the song of <i>Phóng lệ</i> - the song of <i>Lập binh</i> - the song of <i>Cống sứ</i> - the song of <i>Cái cầu hào quang</i>, etc.
Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the song of <i>Lượn nài</i> - the song of <i>Lượn khan</i> - the song of <i>Lượn slap</i> - the song of <i>Lượn xo mjàu</i> - the song of <i>Lượn hoa</i> - the song of <i>Lượn trắng</i> - the song of <i>Lượn phjác</i> - the song of <i>Lượn slắng</i>, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the song of <i>Khên lên</i> - the song of <i>Khìn đuây</i> - the song of <i>Thư tu</i> - the song of <i>Pjái fuc</i> - the song of <i>Tuộng xinh</i> - the song of <i>Tình tổ</i> - the song of <i>Lạy táng</i> - the song of <i>Rập lửa</i>, etc. 	
Level 4	Lượn lyrics	Quan Lang lyrics	
Level 5	Lượn singing section	Quan lang song	then song
Level 6	Lượn verse	Quan Lang verse	Then verse

2.1.2. Structure of Tay folk song text according to the successive relationship

The successive relationship is the arrangement according to the equal correlation (successive in time) in one level of the folk song organization. This relationship creates structures (as mentioned

above, hereafter, the thesis uses the term structure when referring to the relationship between adjacent pairs in various types of folk songs, mainly sections and speech turns).

Considering each level from the singing session to the verse, the textual structures according to the successive relations of the Tay folk songs are relatively diverse. Specifically, the singing session may include several singing stages; the singing stage may include several songs; The song may include several lyrics; The lyric may include several singing sections; The singing section may include several verses.

One or more lyrics can be expressed in units of different levels, or include these levels (for example, when the whole singing session is sung by only one person, i.e. one turn - then singing).

1/ Structure in the song:

In Tay folk songs, the most notable is the structure in the song (made up of the lyrics), because in addition to the meaning given, it is also related to the situation and purpose of the song, related to the reciprocal events or monologues. Examining the structure in a song is about showing how the words in the song are organized. Based on the nature of the speech turns, the structures are distinguished into three types: one-way structure, reciprocal structure, and intermediary structure.

Type of folk songs	Types of structures						Total number of songs	Ratio
	One-way		Reciprocal		Intermediary			
	Number of songs	Ratio	Number of songs	Ratio	Number of songs	Ratio		
Lượn	6	35,3	11	64,7	0	0	17	100
Quan lang	5	45,5	6	54,5	0	0	11	100
Then	10	62,5	0	0	6	37,5	16	100
otal	21	47,7	17	38,6	6	13,6	44	100

2/ Structure of the lyrics:

Examining the structure of the lyrics is to show how the sections of the song are organized. The lyrics in Tay folk songs usually consist of three forms: one section, two sections, three sections:

Type of folk songs	Types of structures						Total number	Ratio
	One section		Two sections		Three sections			
	Number of lyrics	Ratio	Number of lyrics	Ratio	Number of lyrics	Ratio		
Lượn	146	47,7	55	18,0	105	34,3	306	100
Quan lang	0	0	6	10,0	53	90,0	59	100
Then	0	0	0	0	16	100	16	100
Total	146	38,3	61	16,0	174	45,7	381	100

2.2. Genre, rhyme and rhythm in Tay folk songs

2.2.1. Genre

The genre is an important element of the art of words in folk songs. It governs other elements such as structure, rhyme, rhythm, etc. of the song. In Tay folk songs, there are two forms: rhyme and prose, but often rhyme.

Among the 381 folk songs, there are 1/381 lyrics composed entirely of prose (*Sắc cấp* in then), the remaining 380 lyrics are composed of rhyming words. The study of genre, rhyme, and rhythm is only for 380 lyrics in rhyme form. Tay folk songs fall into two categories: 7 syllables and mixed.

Type of folk song	Genre				Total number of lyrics - Rate
	7 syllables		Mixed		
	Number	Ratio %	Number	Ratio %	
Lượn	208	68,0	98	32,0	306 - 100
Quan lang	44	75,0	15	25,0	59 - 100
Then	3	20,0	12	80,0	15 - 100
Total	255	67,1	125	32,9	380 - 100

2.2.2. Rhyme

Rhyming in Tay folk songs has the following rules: The most commonly used rhymes are medial rhymes in both forms: 7 syllables and mixed; terminal rhymes are rarely used (only a few terminal rhymes are encountered in lượn). Usually the 7th syllable of the previous sentence rhymes with the 5th syllable in the following sentence (for the 7 syllable form); the 5th syllable in the previous sentence rhymes with the 3rd syllable of the following sentence (for the 5 syllable form). This is also a distinctive feature between Tay

folk poetry and Kinh folk poetry. Rhyming between genres has a very flexible transition, creating flexibility and lissomness suitable for the way of saying and expressing of each type of folk song. The rhyming phenomena have linked the sounds in the lyrics, the sentences in the lyrics, the lyrics and the lyrics together into a complete whole, creating a musical resonance for the lyrics, and at the same time bringing beauty to the art of words.

2.2.3. Rhythm

The rhythms in Tay folk songs are rich with characteristic pauses, have a short period, are repeated over and over again, showing the rhythmic rhythms in the line. The rhythms in odd sentences of 5 or 7 syllables, etc. are usually odd rhythms: 3-2 or 3-2-2, etc. Particularly, in 7-syllable sentences, two even rhythms can often be read together into a 4-syllable span (3-4), or odd rhythms are interspersed between two even rhythms (2-3-2). Occurrence of both even and odd pauses in a section, a song. The rhythms in sentences of 4, 6, 8 syllables, etc. are even rhythms: 2-2; 2-2-2; 4-4, 2-2-2-2.

The rhythm break in Tay folk songs mostly results in the separation of phrases, repetitions and pauses with the same number of words before and after it, creating a special rhythm of the lyrics, contributing to making folk songs always attractive to listeners.

2.3. Remarks on some values reflected in the language form of Tay folk song texts

2.3.1. Language form of Tay folk songs reflects the richness of folk songs and styles of expression in traditional Tay culture.

The language form of each type of Tay folk songs has similarities and differences related to the type. Each type has its own style, which can be called rules (or patterns). The Tay people often know what kind of folk song they are singing at first time of hearing. The form of Tay folk song (the language that contributes to this form as a means of expression and at the same time is the material of works) indirectly reflects the diversity in the ancient cultural source of a community.

2.3.2. The language form of Tay folk songs reflects some traditional communication rituals with lyrics in the Tay region

The language form of each type in Tay folk songs mainly follows the patterns (or forms) related to some traditional customs in the Tay region.

The form of dialogue in singing and quan lang firstly reflects the customs of male-female relations and marriage in the Tay traditional society. Among the love songs of the Tay people, in order for the dialogue to take place normally and achieve results, the "performers" must adhere to the rules of dialogue in different communication roles and towards different goals: the rule of alternating speech turns; rules that closely follow the topic of conversation and rules that ensure interpersonal relations - courtesy.

Then singing is a genre of religious folk song, bearing the characteristics of a long song (with a large capacity, often with a plot) with the color of reverence, recounting the long journey to heaven to pray for something for the owner. The language form of then corresponds to stages - journeys. Then artists often sing then in rituals (with different names) such as praying for rain, praying for sunshine, solving drought, praying for good luck, praying for good harvest, praying for peace, worshiping ancestors, or celebrating a new house, celebrating parents' or grandparents' longevity, etc.

From the aspect of language form of folk songs, it can be seen that the Tay attach great importance to etiquette and aim for empathy in communication. The singing session is about journeys and twists and turns, leisurely sections and responses, with structures aimed at different audiences when singing and expecting a response: *male - female; quan lang - pả mế; sorcerer (on behalf of the community) - then.*

2.3.3. Language form of Tay folk songs reflects common features with folk songs of many other ethnic groups in Vietnam

According to classification, lượn singing, quan lang singing and then singing of Tay people are types of daily folk songs and ritual folk songs. The language form of these folk songs is found in many other ethnic groups in Vietnam. It is cultural compatibility, possibly related to the common characteristics of the situation and perception of the peoples.

The form of reciprocity in Tay lượn and quan lang singing can be found in similar forms in *ví singing, đúm singing, trống quân singing, gheo singing, quan họ singing, giặm singing, etc.* of the Kinh people; *tampla, lah lòng, lah long lah gop singing* of the Co Ho people; *tampot* singing the *tambourine* of the Ma people; *The love exchange song* of the Dao people, etc.

The form of singing in the long-song way of then Tay singing can be found in the same form in the famous series of *Khan Đăm Săn* and *Khan Đăm Kteh Mlan* of the Ede people; in the famous epic *Đẻ đất đẻ nước* (*Tẻ tất tẻ rặc*) of the Muong, or similar to *Xoan singing* - the communal house singing style of the Kinh people in Phu Tho, etc.

2.4. Sub-conclusion of chapter 2

Considering the hierarchical (inclusive) relationship, in Tay folk songs, singing sessions, stages, songs, lyrics, singing sections and verses are conducted according to certain patterns. In *lượn*, a singing session is divided into 3 stages: *welcome singing*, *love confession singing*, *ending singing – leaving*. In *quan lang*, a singing session is divided into two stages: *challenge singing*, *welcome bride singing*. In then, each singing session is a stage (also a song and lyrics) corresponding to the stages in the journey of the then army, in accordance with the sequence in the structure of the festival.

In terms of successive relationship, the structure in the song ("song" level), which is made up of the lyrics, is related to the turns of the lyrics, and is divided into three forms: one-way, reciprocal, and intermediary. The one-way structure is most commonly used; in then this type of structure is preferred; less common is the reciprocal structure, used in *lượn* and *quan lang*; the least common of all is the intermediary structure, only used in then. The structure of the Tay folk song consists of lyrics with three structural forms: one section, two sections and three sections. The three-section structure is most commonly used in all three folk songs subtypes. The lyrics in ritual folk songs (then, *quan lang*) tend to be standard, mainly with three- section lyrics, more standard than the love exchange folk songs (*lượn*).

Tay folk songs are mainly composed in 2 forms: 7 syllables and mixed form. The 7 syllable form is most commonly used in *lượn* and *quan lang*; the mixed form is spread evenly in the singing stages of the folk songs. Then uses this form most often when being performed in ceremonies.

Rhymes in Tay folk songs are mainly medial rhymes, rarely terminal rhymes (only a few terminal rhymes are encountered in *lượn*). Pausing includes semantic and phonetic rhythms, even rhythms, and odd rhythms.

Chapter 3

LINGUISTIC FEATURES IN THE TAY FOLK SONGS IN TERMS OF SEMANTICS

3.1. Semantics of text of Tay folk songs

3.1.1. Themes in Tay folk songs

In the types of folk songs (lượn, quan lang and then), the theme in each type is associated with the situation and purpose of the performance of each type.

Themes in Tay folk songs

Unit	Lượn	Quan lang	Then
Singing session	love exchange	creating connexion relationship	making requests
Stage, song, lyrics (corresponding to sub-themes)	greeting response, nostalgic mood, nuances in love, sympathetic love state, love confession, leaving	greetings, challenges, fine customs and traditions, delicate and elegant manners, wishes and joys for cooperation	monologues about going to the fairyland, old stories, palaces of kings and lords, hundreds of birds, animals, flowers, etc. praying and giving thanks

3.1.2. Basic semantic fields in Tay folk songs

Through a survey of 5670 songs (lượn: 17 songs, 2469 sentences; quan lang: 11 songs, 753 sentences; festival then (cấp sắc then): 10 songs, 2448 sentences) - the case studies of three types, it can be basically seen that words belonging to 6 semantic fields: human beings and supernatural forces, animals and plants, inanimate things of the natural world, objects (household items and farm implements), time, other things and phenomena. Each semantic field can also be distinguished into very diverse sub fields. For example: words that refer to human beings and supernatural forces, including: social relations, calling words; things (body parts, interior, etc.); activities: physical activities, psychological activities; state properties: properties of state of matter, properties of state of content, etc.

Words belonging to the semantic fields in the surveyed texts

Type of folk song Semantic field	Lượn		Quan Lang		Then		Total number of words - Rate (Frequency - Rate)
	Words (frequency)	Ratio	Words (frequency)	Ratio	Words (frequency)	Ratio	
<i>Humans & supernatural forces</i>	2082 (4407)	62,4 (63,7)	785 (1540)	70,8 (71,0)	2455 (4148)	69,4 (71,1)	5322 - 66,7 (10095 - 67,6)
<i>Animals & Plants</i>	622 (1172)	18,7 (17,0)	82 (139)	7,4 (6,4)	263 (372)	7,4 (6,4)	967 - 12,1 (1683 - 11,3)
<i>Objects</i>	211 (348)	6,3 (5,0)	146 (293)	13,2 (13,5)	450 (742)	12,7 (12,7)	807 - 10,1 (1383 - 9,3)
<i>Inanimate things of the natural world</i>	249 (526)	7,5 (7,6)	48 (95)	4,3 (4,4)	204 (298)	5,8 (5,1)	501 - 6,3 (919 - 6,2)
<i>Time</i>	125 (394)	3,7 (5,7)	29 (77)	2,6 (3,5)	66 (129)	1,9 (2,2)	220 - 2,8 (600 - 4,0)
<i>Other phenomena</i>	45 (67)	1,4 (1,0)	19 (27)	1,7 (1,2)	100 (148)	2,8 (2,5)	164 - 2,0 (242 - 1,6)
Total - Ratio	3334 (6914)	100 (100)	1109 (2171)	100 (100)	3538 (5837)	100 (100)	7981 - 100 (14922 - 100)

3.2. Some common linguistic symbols in Tay folk songs

The common symbols in Tay folk songs can be summarized in the following table:

Symbol group		Symbolic meaning	Texts
Beauty, hope	<i>bjoóc</i> (flower)	- the beauty of nature and people - youth, spring, human life - longing for love and happiness	lượn, quan lang and then
	<i>fượng hoàng</i> and <i>nôc loan</i> (phoenix)	- noble status - Wishing for a happy marriage	lượn, quan lang and then
	<i>ên</i> (swallow)	- messenger of love - good omen, joy - wishing for a happy marriage and a happy life	lượn, quan lang and then
	<i>mjâu</i> (betel)	- dealings - the will to commit	lượn, quan lang and then
	<i>cầu</i> (bridge)	- connectivity	lượn, then

Symbol group		Symbolic meaning	Texts
		- wishing for good luck - wishing for happiness	
	ngoảng (cicadas)	- open words or express - wish to meet	lượn, then
	vạ/ bản (god)	- sacred realm - the request for favors	then
	phải rằm khẩu (wet and dry cloth)	- birth merits - vow to repay	quan lang
Difficulties and challenges	tàng (road)	- remoteness - the process of coming to a wish	lượn, then
	kéo (pass)	- difficulties, obstacles - separation	lượn, then
	nằm lặc (deep water), nằm noòng (flood)	- difficulties, obstacles - separation	lượn, then
	lân phải làn tàng (fabric rope blocking the road)	- challenge (custom) - "When in Rome, do as the Romans do"	quan lang, etc.

Among two groups of symbols of "beauty and aspiration" and symbols of "difficulties and challenges", the Tay people use more symbols of "beauty and aspiration". It can be explained by the characteristics of Tay folk songs that folk songs are often played on happy or sacred occasions, the lyrics often bring joy, have an optimistic meaning to encourage listeners and viewers to take action and keep hoping, rarely dissuade them from stopping. Obstacles are said to be overcome, not to discourage people.

Linguistic symbols can be used in all types of Tay folk songs, but they are most commonly used in lượn singing. It can be explained by the characteristics of this type of folk song, that lượn is a reciprocal singing style between boys and girls, rich in melody, words often hinted at. Lượn often borrows images of trees, flowers, things, events, and old stories to express the feelings and thoughts of young men and women at the initial meeting and express a promise.

3.3. Remarks on the value reflected in the semantics of Tay folk songs

3.3.1. The folk song theme reflects some fine customs and traditions of Tay people

The themes of the songs have their own characteristics of each type in Tay folk songs, which are creating connexion relationship, and making requests, expressed in the lyrics about the mood and the nuances of love in lượn; joy and attachment for the bride and groom in quan lang; the fairy world and the way to the fairy realm in then.

In general, the theme of all kinds of Tay folk songs is the reflection of wishes, through the promise in the lượn singing, the congratulation in quan lang in wedding ceremony, the pray in the then in the ritual.

In the spiritual and cultural life of the Tay people, there is a complex world of people among all things and gods and goddesses. The upholding of customs and belief in divine forces is the core that makes Tay folk song performance, especially then, become closely associated with people's life and spirituality over many generations.

Therefore, some cultural characteristics of the Tay community have been partly reflected through the themes of folk songs, namely beauty in behavioral culture, respectful lifestyle, and happy spirit looking forward to the future, be grateful for the roots, and expect favours from the gods.

3.3.2. Semantic fields reflect real life aspects of the Tay people

Semantic fields have reflected people's relationship with the village community, labor and production; divine forces that help people express their aspirations; colorful natural world; various objects associated with the working life in the ancient society, etc. All of these create their own characteristics in the cultural and ethnic life of the Tay people.

The semantic fields in the Tay folk songs show that the spiritual world in folk songs, especially in then, shows the spiritual life of the Tay people is extremely rich; the divine forces are visualized as real characters. The Tay's spiritual system originates from the polytheistic beliefs of the inhabitants of wet rice farming, but it is covered with the divine shell of the Three Religions. Through Tay folk songs, it can be seen that the imprints of such religions as Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, which are all present in the religious activities of the people.

3.3.3. Linguistic symbols reflect the perception and behavior of the Tay people

Each linguistic symbol in the Tay folk song is a unique creation, and the result of associations in traditional Tay culture.

In the symbolic system of quan lang singing, the custom of *Lần phải làn tàng* (fabric rope blocking the road) is a challenge posed by the bride's family, with high conditioning. The custom of *Lần phải làn tàng* is also a reminder of the difficulties and hardships that the bride's parents have gone through. The red rope is the link connecting love, connecting the bride's and bridegroom's families; the red color of the rope is the color of the couple's happiness. This is indeed a unique beauty in the cultural life of the Tay people.

In the symbolic system of Tay folk songs, when it comes to beauty, *bjoóc* (flowers), *nóc* (birds), etc. are always chosen to build this symbol.

Some symbols in Tay folk songs also show the mutual treatment and hospitality of the Tay people. According to the custom of the Tay people, when guests come to visit the house, a cup of *lầu* (wine) and a piece of *mjầu má* (betel and areca) are always accompanied by greetings and inquiries.

The symbol of *phải rằm khầu* (a wet dry cloth) about the merits of giving birth and vowing to repay is associated with the gifts the son-in-law offers to the bride's family. There are gifts dedicated to the bride's mother, recalling an emotional anecdote, in which a mother used her lap as diapers for her child. The hidden meaning of this symbol is a cultural feature that touches people's hearts.

Some of the above symbols are also found in the culture of the Kinh and possibly in many other ethnic groups: *bjoóc* (flower), *mjầu* (betel), *kéo* (pass), *nằm lặc* (deep water), etc.

3.4. Sub-conclusion of chapter 3

Studying the themes is the first step to deepen the understanding of the semantics of the language in the folklore text. The content of a singing session is distributed into the content of singing stages, sections, and lyrics, and is consistent with the theme of the singing session. The themes of Tay folk songs are always associated with the purpose and performance situation of each type. In *lượn* singing, it is a love exchange, quan lang singing is a means of creating connexion relationship, and then singing is for making requests.

Through surveying the case studies of Tay folk songs, including 5670 sentences (*lượn*: 17 songs, 2469 sentences; quan lang: 11 songs,

753 sentences; festival then (*cấp sắc* then): 10 songs, 2448 sentences), the words belonging to six basic semantic fields: human beings and supernatural forces, animals and plants, non-living things of the natural world, objects (household appliances and farm implements), time and other phenomena. The sub-categories of the 6 semantic fields are also very diverse, reflecting the ways of perception of the Tay people reflected in the Tay language.

The number of words belonging to the semantic field of human beings and supernatural forces is the biggest; The number of words belonging to the semantic field of animals and plants ranks the second, followed by words of the semantic field of objects. Less frequent are words in the field of "inanimate things of the natural world" and the least frequent are words in the field of "time", and words in the field of "other things and phenomena" in folk songs.

The linguistic symbols commonly encountered in Tay folk songs are divided into two groups: the group of symbols representing "beauty and aspiration" (*bjoóc* (flower), *fượng/ fượng hoàng* (phoenix), *nốc loan* (loan bird), *én* (swallow), *cầu* (bridge), *mjầu* (betel), *ngoảng* (cicadas), *vạ/ bản* (heaven), *phải rằm khầu* (wet dry cloth)); group of symbols representing "difficulties and challenges" (*tàng* (road), *kéo* (pass), *nằm lặc* (deep water), *nằm noòng* (flood water), *lần phải lần tàng* (fabric rope blocking the road)), etc. In these two groups of symbols, the Tay people use more symbols of "beauty, aspiration". Linguistic symbols are used in almost all types of Tay folk songs, but most commonly in *lượn*.

CONCLUSION

1. Tay folk songs can be studied from many different perspectives: culture, literature, writing, music, etc. including linguistics. Studying the language of Tay folklore works from the perspective of linguistics helps to understand the beauty in the Tay language, and at the same time discovers a part of the intangible cultural source. This contributes to introducing and honoring the enthusiasm and talents of Tay folk artists in art creation, conservation and promotion of invaluable traditional cultural values of the Tay people.

The thesis focuses on studying linguistic features in the above-mentioned types of texts in two main aspects. The first aspect is language form characteristics in Tay folk songs. Specifically, the thesis explores the formal aspects of the surveyed units: singing session, stage, section, lyrics, genre, rhyme, rhythm, structure types, etc. The second aspect is semantic features in Tay folk songs.

Specifically, the thesis delves into semantic aspects like themes, semantic fields and symbols, etc.

Within the framework of the thesis and the actual inventory of the properties of the existing corpus (with relatively complete and clear bilingual translation), the thesis determines to survey only Tay folk songs of three sub-categories: *lượn*, *quan lang* and then, in the rich folk song source with a large number of texts of this ethnic group. The above-mentioned Tay folk songs have been collected and compiled by the authors, expressed in two language forms: original Tay language (written in latin script) and literary translation (written in Quoc Ngu script).

These are representatives of Tay folk songs, collected in two provinces of Cao Bang and Lang Son.

2. Some notable language form features in the texts of Tay folk songs:

Through surveying and describing 44 songs, 381 lyrics, 6931 sentences (*lượn*: 17 songs, 306 lyrics, 2469 sentences; *quan lang*: 11 songs, 59 lyrics, 753 sentences; then: 16 songs, 16 lyrics, 3709 sentences (*kì yên then* and *wishing then*: 6 songs, 1261 sentences; festival then (*cấp sắc then*): 10 songs, 2448 sentences) as case studies, it can be seen that:

First, according to the hierarchical (inclusive) relationship, it can be seen that in Tay folk songs, the singing sessions, stages, songs, lyrics, sections and verses are arranged according to the *lang* class and are governed by certain patterns, related to the type of folk song. However, these patterns still leave room for the creative improvisation of the performer.

In *lượn*, the singing sessions starts from the moment the boy and girl meet and sing the song, until the end – leaving. The song is divided into 3 stages: *welcome singing*, *love confession singing*, *ending singing - leaving*. In *quan lang*, the *quan lang* singing session begins when the groom's family arrives in the village; it is time to ask for the bride's family's permission to receive the bride, associated with the ritual process of the Tay wedding. The song is divided into two stages: *challenge singing*, *welcome bride singing*. In then, each song is a stage (also a song and lyrics) corresponding to the journeys, from the beginning to the end of the then army's journey to the heaven - the fairy world.

Considering the successive relationship (arrangement according to the equal correlation, in turn over time in a level of the folk song text), it can be seen that in the Tay folk song text, the three-section structure prevails (45.7%), and it is used in all three types of then,

quan lang and lượn. Then only uses the three-section structure to build the text; the one-section structure is less common (38.3%) and it is used only in lượn; the least common is the two-segment structure (16.0%), used in lượn and quan lang. Tay folk songs use three types of verbal structures: one-way, reciprocal and intermediary. The one-way structure is the dominant (47.7%), followed by the reciprocal structure (38.6%), and the intermediary structure (13.6%). One-way structures are commonly used in then. Reciprocal structures are used in lượn and quan lang. The intermediary structure is only used in then, not found in lượn or quan lang.

Second, in Tay folk songs, there are two types: 7-syllable form and mixed form. The most dominant form is the 7-syllable form (67.1%), which is mainly used in lượn and quan lang. The second most common is the mixed form (32.9%), which is used a lot in then with a variety of combinations of different big or small number of syllables, at least 1 syllable, at most 11 syllables. In lượn and quan lang we could not see the combinations between sentences with a small number of syllables: 1, 2, 3 syllables and sentences with a big number of syllables: 10, 11 syllables.

Third, Tay folk songs mainly rhyme with medial rhymes in both forms: 7-syllable and mixed; terminal rhymes are rarely used (only a few rhymes are found in lượn). Rhyming between forms has a very flexible transition, creating a flexibility and lissomness suitable for music and with the way of saying and expressing of each type of folk song, sometimes smooth, sometimes succinct and implicit.

Fourth, the rhythm in Tay folk songs is quite rich with pauses between typical phrases. Pausing includes semantic and phonetic rhythms, even rhythms, and odd rhythms. The even rhythms in sentences of even number of syllables are usually 2-2; 2-2-2; 4-4, 2-2-2-2, etc. and the odd rhythms in sentences with odd number of syllables are usually 3-4, 3-2-2; 3-2, or odd rhythm is interspersed between two even rhythms (2-3-2), etc.

In terms of genre, rhyme, and rhythm, in the sub-categories of folk songs, the difference is not very significant, mainly in form and is the difference between then, lượn and quan lang. In terms of performance, this also corresponds to one type of singing by professional singers (then) in the context of ritual formality, with two types of singing by amateur singers (lượn, quan lang) in various contexts of improvisation. That is typical of the type of "recital melody (also known as "singing to tell") that is very common in then. The characteristics of genre,

rhyme, and rhythm play the role of creating harmony to link the text in form, and also contribute to expressing the content characteristics of the lyrics, creating a distinctive linguistic style for each type of Tay folk song.

3. Some notable semantic features in Tay folk songs:

First, the theme of the singing session is **love exchange** (with expressions of moods, nuances in love, prompting or aiming for a state of sympathy); The theme of quan lang songs is **creating connexion relationship** (with expressions of fine customs and traditions, refined and elegant manners, and finally the joy of attachment); the theme of then songs is **making requests** (with expressions of the fairy world and the road to the fairyland, pray and give thanks to the gods). These themes are the expressions of semantics, which speakers/singers and listeners need to aim for (and sympathize with) through the means of language in folk songs. In the types of folk songs (lượn, quan lang and then), the themes have many common points and many distinct points, associated with the circumstances and performance purposes of each type.

Second, through surveying 5670 songs (lượn: 17 songs, 2469 sentences; quan lang: 11 songs, 753 sentences; festival then (cấp sắc then): 10 songs, 2448 sentences) - case studies research of these three types, basically, it can be seen that words in Tay folk songs belong to 6 semantic fields, namely human beings and supernatural forces, animals and plants, inanimate things of the natural world, objects (household items and agricultural tools), time and other phenomena.

Words belonging to the field of human beings and supernatural forces have a very large number and very high frequency: 5322/7981 words (66.7%), with 10095/14992 times (67.6%). The largest number of words belongs to the sub-group of activities and state properties; the smaller is the sub-group of social relations and addressing words; the least frequent are the sub-group of words indicating body parts and the interior, etc. belonging to the human beings and supernatural forces.

Words belonging to the semantic field of animals and plants have the second highest number and frequency: 967/7981 words (12.1%), with 1683/14992 times (11.3%). Accounting for the highest number of words is the sub-group of activities and state properties, followed by the sub-group of how animals and plants are called; the least common is the sub- group of words indicating parts of animals and plants.

Words belonging to the semantic field of objects have the third highest number and frequency: 807/7981 words (10.1%), with 1383/14992 times (9.3%). Accounting for the highest number of words is the sub-group of how to name objects, followed by the sub-group of activities and the state properties of objects; the least common is of the sub-group of words that refer to parts of things.

Words belonging to the semantic field of "inanimate things of the natural world" have the fourth biggest number and frequency: 501/7981 words (6.3%), with 919/14992 times (6.2%). Accounting for the highest number is the sub-group of how to label inanimate things, followed by the sub-group of activities and the state properties of inanimate things; the least common is of the sub-group of words that refer to parts of inanimate things.

The words in the semantic field of "time" have the number and frequency of occurrence as follows: 220/7981 words (2.8%), and 600/14992 times (4.0%).

The words in the semantic field of "other phenomena" have the smallest number and lowest frequency of occurrence: 164/7981 words (2.0%), with 242/14992 times (1.6%). Accounting for the highest number is the sub-group of how to call other things and phenomena, followed by the sub-group of activities and the state properties of other things and phenomena. In this semantic field, there is no sub-group of words indicating part of other things and phenomena.

What do the number of words and their frequency of occurrence in the Tay folk songs imply? This is a question not easily answered. Maybe this is related to the perceptual characteristic of "anthropocentrism", and also consistent with a common law in folklore: in favor of description ("theory" about things and phenomena that are mentioned; in this case they are usually "people", "animals, plants" and "things").

Some common linguistic symbols in Tay folk songs are: *bjoóc* (flower), *fượng/ fượng hoàng* (phoenix), *nồc loan* (loan bird), *ẻn* (swallows), *cầu* (bridge), *mjầu* (betel), *ngoảng* (cicada), *vạ/ bản* (Heaven), *tàng* (road), *phải rằm khầu* (wet and dry cloth), *kéo* (pass), *nằm lặc* (deep water), *lần phải lần tàng* (fabric rope blocking the road), etc. In Tay folk songs, these symbols help to tell about the struggles to happiness and the aspirations of generations of Tay people.

4. In general, in terms of reflection, the Tay folk songs examined in the thesis are customary songs, belonging to ritual folk songs and

daily folk songs. Specifically, then is typical of the first type; *lượn* is typical of the latter. Whether in everyday life or in a ritual, every singing session of *quan lang* and then exudes a wish for a "happy life" - the spirit of folk art.

The form of Tay folk songs shows that Tay folk songs have the characteristics of "recital melody", with two types of "singing to tell" and "singing to respond". *Lượn* and *quan lang* songs are mainly reciprocal songs between men and women (singing with many voices), with hints of both encouraging people to try their best and making a date or vowing. In then, in the form of mainly monologue (singing with one voice) in a one-way structure, the singer is actually imagining that Ông Giời (The Heaven) (then) is listening and responding in a very specific way (by inspiration). That is the way to mundaneize supernatural beings in the polytheistic beliefs of the ancients. Responding with lyrics, alternating types of structures, singing in the regular way and improvising with "recital melody" ("singing to tell" style) is an ancient folk song style, popular in many ethnic groups in Vietnam.

From a semantic point of view, the themes, semantic fields, and symbols show the way of perception and some features in the behavioral culture of Tay with bold Tay identities. Understanding the semantic fields in Tay folk songs helps to visualize a world of reality and fantasy intertwined in the minds of the Tay people.

5. Some directions need further research are grammatical features; cohesive devices; reasoning; cognitive methods and conceptual metaphors; rhetorical measures; communication strategies in response, etc. through language in Tay folk songs.

The Tay ethnic group has a rich, diverse and unique folklore. They have their own writing system, so they have preserved many works up to now, which are *phong shư, lượn, quan lang and then, phuối pác, phuối rọi, vén noọng nòn, etc.* As a part of folklore, these folk songs not only show the organization of language in artistic texts, but also reflect the spirit, lifestyle and sentiments of the Tay people. In future studies, it is necessary to expand survey subjects in the Tay folk song source (besides *lượn, quan lang* and then), and at the same time pay attention to the folk songs of *lượn, quan lang*, and then in different Tay regions (besides Cao Bang and Lang Son provinces).