



Comparison of Love Metaphors Between British Folk Songs and Yao's Folk Songs

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Abstract

British Folk Songs and Yao's Folk Songs are the art crystallizations of oral literature, which belong to the model of integrating personal creation with collective creation, reflecting the inner emotional activities and the simple way to remember things of the early laboring people. Their significant characteristics are non-individualization, non-subjectivity and non self consciousness. Phenomena of animals, plants, colors, seasons, astronomical appearances applied to love metaphors exist in the both kinds of folk songs. Findings by comparison indicate that they each have their own preferences in words and meanings applied to love metaphors because of the geospatial differences, manifesting their similarity, coincidence, gaining by contrast and unique style, which provides a perspective reference for us to understand the similarities and differences between the two folk literatures.

Key words: British Folk Songs; Yao's Folk Songs; Thematic Narration

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INTRODUCTION

Lakoff and Johnson argued that Language is not just a system of arbitrary symbols, metaphors in language are not ordinary language but a strategy for poetic imagination and rhetorical diversity. That is, language is people's way of thinking and cognitive means. Metaphor is the deep thinking of people, The mechanism of metaphor is to form a mapping relationship by Similarity between a specific concept (source domain) and an abstract concept (target domain) to achieve the goal of cognitive target domain (Lakoff & Johnson, 2015). Metaphor may be as old as language, even before language because "Human beings have the instinct to imitate something since they were children (One of the differences between man and beast is that man is best at imitation, and their first knowledge came from imitation), Man always feels pleasure in an imitated work." (Wu & Hu, 1985) In whatever a language, many polysemous phenomena are closely related to metaphors, and the use of metaphor adds color to a language, which Makes the language from originally dry to fresh and full of vitality. Metaphor is used for love brings the message of love to a high level, which prompts people think about how to let love be in the pursuit of self-perfection as well as on the basis of constructing the happy homeland and showing the emotion cognition of both sexes, instead of a simple psychological instinctive response to the man's animal nature. Thus, throughout the human's history, love has been celebrated and praised by writers, artists and literary works as the most sacred subject of mankind, while "as a special emotion, love is often needed to use some modifiers to understand, such as attractive, idealized, intense, jealous, faithful, exclusive, lovesick, hindered, sad, painful, even desperate, etc. (Zhai, 2017)

Probing the description in love poems of British folk songs and Yao's folk songs, we may find that language, from rough to gentle, from freshness to naturalness, the endless love themes in lines and the melodic voice in songs embody their free and unrestrained colloquial style, which

is suitable for singing in public, field and woodland. In terms of allegory, there are imitations of animals and plants, a sense of the changing circumstances, observation of citing the classics and looking from a strategically advantageous position in folk songs, which shows the metaphorical projection of laboring people's attachment to herbs, birds and other things. It is obvious that both nations gave full play to their imaginations to eulogize for a thousand year's stories and pass on ordinary romance with enthusiasm through the joint efforts of folk collective creation, which reappears working-people's innocent and romantic character and their courage of exploration. "the empty gods, anthropomorphic animals and plants can be used as a metaphor for human emotions." (Lakeoff & Johnson, 2015) Just because of cultural differences, the projection of love metaphor in English folk songs and Yao's folk songs naturally reveals their national styles and word selection preferences, even the same type of metaphor will have different meanings and meanings. Therefore, Understanding and mastering these differences will complement each other in revealing the profound artistic and literary value of British folk songs and Yao's folk songs.

1. DIFFERENT DOMAIN SOURCES HAVE DIFFERENT EMPHASIS

Folk songs originated from the folk are actually a combination of language and music, they exist in the form of oral chanting, mainly used for eulogizing life, spreading information, moral education and maintaining the nation's pure and good characters, conforming to the emotional and imaginative lives of the widest geographical range. As Aristotle pointed out in *Poetics*, art should imitate typical figures and events of universal significance, it should be imitated according to the law of necessity. Although living far apart, when narrating love themes, both British folk songs and Yao's folk songs are used to projecting their own emotions onto their favorite objects, it is considered reasonable to express one's feelings by borrowing scenes or objects, so in both folk songs, some animals, plants, colors, seasons, geographical and celestial phenomena are carefully selected as metaphor objects, while the domain source is different, their metaphor bodies have different emphasis. First, Island life and European cultural origins, as well as the temperate maritime climate gave the British nation a generous material benefit decided the British folk song's love themes focus on the sea adventure, family disputes, tragic events, magic, jealousy, forbidden love, murder, etc. Second, the Yao nationality is a typical diaspora nationality with long life of migration and influenced by Taoism, they moved into the mountains lest they should be too deep, and into the woods lest they should be too dense, forming the village pattern of a large scattered but small concentration. As there are no words of their own, the Yao people can only record things

by songs, worship by songs, narrate history by songs, express feelings by songs, laws and rituals are presented in a song form, while their love ballads reflect a fresh, simple, natural, in the landscape of plants and animals unique style, and their themes are characterized mainly by exchanging tokens, song courtships, festivals, sacrifice ancestor worships, love twists, etc.

1.1 Love Metaphors From Animals

Due to the human belief has experienced the stages of nature worship, totem worship, ancestor worship etc. the genealogies of gods are growing ever more complex. For any nations, their cultural title pages are engraved with the concept of "everything has spirit". One of the most important signs that man is different from animals is that he can think, however the original thinking of human beings was directed at the natural world where they lived. To survive in a primitive society with extremely low productivity, man must rely on the natural world to provide living resources. On the one hand, nature provides limited living resources; and on the other hand, it threatens the survival of human beings with merciless disasters. For "Nature began as a wholly alien, infinitely powerful and irrepressible force against man." (Marx & Engels, 1972) Now that human being evolved from animals, they have not only an instinctive desire for food, clothing and avoiding harms, but differences from animals, they have desires from blind adaptation to nature, trying to understand nature, explaining nature, and finally controlling nature. In the process of changing from passive adaptation to nature to active adaptation to it and avoiding harm from it, primitive people kept thinking about everything around them, including the rules of animal reproduction. There are three bases for the cultural significance of animal nouns-one is animal's appearance, including physiology, psychology, character, behavior, habit function, and the other is cultural psychology of a nation include myth, religion, legend, history, literature, art, language, geographical environment, customs, thinking mode and aesthetic taste, etc. The third is association- associate animals with another things, for national cultural tradition, especially cultural psychology, plays a potential but important role in stimulating and guiding the generation and development of association, there can be no extension of meaning without the function of association. (Liao, 2000)

As the similarity between the source domain and the target domain, human's cognitive understanding process of metaphor involves the mapping process cognition of semantic features (source domain) transferred from one domain to another domain (target domain), the source domain is a well-known domain, and the target domain is an abstract domain. These animal resources can be reflected in the source domain of ballads, that is, ballads often use animals as images and love metaphors. For example,

A pair of scholars sing together,
 It doesn't matter whether single or double.
 It is hard to pick out one among thousands of birds,
 And a pair of partridges are the best choice I think.
 From Yao's ballad *The Yin Song of Stepping Forward*

The partridge in the song is a kind of bird that the Yao people are most familiar with, which habitats in the mountains of southern China with bright feather, and likes to forage in pairs, shy and timid, is often used by the Yao people to refer to beautiful girls.

Stay this night wi me, Willie
 O stay this night wi me;
 The best an sheep in a' the flock
 At your supper shall be.
 A' your sheep, and a' your flocks,
 I value not a prin,
 For I'll win ere she lie down.
 From English and Scottish ballad *The Mother's Malison, or, Clyde's Water*

Sheep are closely related to the lives of the English people, and are regarded as one of the family's most important possessions. Docile and easy to tame, sheep are also used by the English people to refer to beautiful girls.

Table 1
Comparison of Animal Metaphors of English nationality and Yao Nationality

	Discriminative metaphors	Universal metaphors
Categories	Animals	Animals
British Ballads	Lion, vulture, dolphin, albatross, sheep, goat, thrush, Wolf, donkey, cat, pig, snake	Butterflies, mandarin ducks, swans (geese), horses, cattle, deer
Yao's Ballads	Partridge, colourful phoenix, double swallow, ling xi, carp, turtledove, bee, quail, kirin, cormorant, dragon, chicken, duck, roe, mirids, crane	

1.2 Love Metaphors From Plants

In ancient and modern China and foreign countries, many literature works have used plants as the source domain to map the emotions of human life. In *The Book of Odes*, there are lines to metaphor the beautiful ladies, such as "The peach trees are in full blossom, what brilliant time of hers!" According to the foreign sinologists' statistics, among all kinds of tree images in *Three Hundred Tang Poems*, willow alone has appeared 29 times, and it is mostly related to women. It can be seen that plants are used as metaphors for love is very common in Chinese culture. I is known that most of the Yao people live in Nanling area of south China with high mountains and ancient trees, due to living in the mountainous area for a long time, the Yao people have got used to worship tree Gods, and it is natural for them to care for the flowers and trees. Also, the British island in which the English people lived belongs to temperate maritime climate with abundant rainfall and a wide variety of plants, the pleasant surroundings gave them a different affection for flowers and trees, so that they made associations as they cherish and protect them, hoping that love can be like trees and

flowers, growing, blooming and bearing fruit freely. Comparison as follows:
 When there are no beautiful ladies in mountain villages,

There is no love stories;
 If beautiful ladies are there, young guys will swarm to;
 Like bamboos in front of the temple,
 All of them are growing in pairs;
 Bamboos in front of temple are bent in pairs,
 And the Yao people now are busy with marriage affairs.
 From Yao's ballad *Songs of Redeeming A Vow to God*

For the Yao people, bamboo is a kind of useful plant, which is often used in home fence, garden nursery, farm tool, mattress, and so on. The attribution of clustered together, tall and handsome is metaphored by the young guys and young ladies snuggled arm in arm.

She had na pu'd a doule rose,
 A rose but only twa,
 Till up then started young Tam Lin
 Says, Lady, thou's pu nae mae
 From English and Scottish ballad *Tam Lin*

For the English people, roses are noble and fragrant, gorgeous and dignified, which are perfect metaphors for beautiful young girls, as the Scottish poet Robert burns compared his love to rose in *A Red, Red Rose*.

Table 2
Comparison of Plant Metaphors of English Nationality and Yao Nationality

	Discriminative metaphors	Universal metaphors
Categories	Plants	Plants
English Ballads	Oak, palm, apple, beech, daffodil, tulip	Peach, pine, rose, lily, lotus, orchid
Yao's Ballads	Willow, camellia, plum, mangosteen, hawthorn, tobacco	

1.3 Love Metaphors Derived From Color

Color often contains rich metaphorical meaning and is restricted by folk customs, geographical environment, religion and other factors, so much common exists in different cultures, for example in most cultures, red is related to "passionate", black "solemn", and green "vibrant". However, sometimes because of cultural differences, there are huge differences in association. The colors of folk songs come from nature, both the English people and the Yao people had introduced color into songs, and made use of it to embody their cognition and emotion, which adds richness and complexity to the meaning of the folk songs. Therefore color becomes a medium through which one expresses one's feelings. In short, color contains the emotion and will of the singers.

The fourth inquiry is about your idea of the gifts,
 I wonder if three feet red and blue cloth and four feet golden silk are enough;
 Knowing that you are charming with white skin all the year round,
 What noble you are as a darling daughter in your family;
 The fifth inquiry is about the leaves of maple trees,

Which fall onto the ground covered with green;
As there are flowers inserted in the happy house,
Heart and soul I have come to greet with you.

From Yao's ballad *Songs of Asking Gifts*

White skin is the sign of a beautiful young girl, suggesting that the girl was pure and quiet with better health, so it is very popular for the Yao people to use it.

He lifted her on a milk-white steed,
And himself on a dapple grey,
With a blue gilded horn hanging by his side,
And they slowly both rode away.

From English and Scottish ballad *Earl Brand*

Although white sometimes stands for purity in English, compared with a single color, the English people prefer to coexistence of multiple colors, avoiding beauty being affected.

Table 3
Comparison of Color Metaphors of English Nationality and Yao Nationality

Categories	Discriminative metaphors	Universal metaphors
Red	English Ballads Debauchery, brutality, proximity to a goal, a good thing or state, an environment conducive to the development of things	A strong emotion, a strong feeling or attitude, a strong desire, a person or thing that is popular and concerned, good at or familiar with, active or up-to-date person or thing, difficulty or danger, warning
	Yao's Ballads Auspicious festival, high social status, intimate relationship, disease, jealousy	
Green	English Ballads Jealousy, sadness or depression, aristocratic blood, obscenity	Good environment, youth and vitality, childish and inexperienced
	Yao's Ballads Shameful or bad reputation, pure, safe	
White	English Ballads Integrity and honesty, integrity noble, legitimate status	Pure and innocent
	Yao's Ballads Omen of death, bad luck, backwardness, little knowledge	
Black	English Ballads Death, despair and disaster, evil, ominousness, gloom, anger	Ferocious, vicious, criminal and illegal
	Yao's Ballads solemn and serious, just and reactionary	
Yellow	English Ballads Mean cowardice	Babbitry, vulgar
	Yao's Ballads Power and authority	

1.4 Love Metaphors Derived From Seasons

As the cognitive ability of the English people and the Yao people is not only limited by time and space, but also limited by the structure of their own sensory organs, they need to use the known concept and concept system to obtain new cognition and understanding by mapping the concept to the unknown domain when they want to know the world around them and explore the unknown domain. Facing to the passage of time, they feel that life is passing

away with helplessness and often take the change of seasons as the source domain of love metaphor.

It is the rain season after the first month of spring,
All kinds of trees are in bloom then;
I saw you are just like a flower,
How could get a chance to come to your room?
It is the vernal equinox after the second month of spring,
Birds sing seet songs standing on the trees;
Those who are in couples hurried to the vernal equinox,
While those singles wandered alone around their homes.

From Yao's ballad *Wedding poems in bound volume*

When spring appeared in all its bloom,
And flowers grew fresh and green;
As May-a-Rose she set her down,
To lay gowd on her seam.

From English and Scottish ballad *Jellon Grame*

Spring is the season of oestrus, which has the same meaning in the Yao people and British people. However, the climate is sultry in the mountainous area in south China in summer, young guys of the Yao ethnic groups are accustomed to wearing short clothes with bare breasts while young ladies wear short skirts and blouses, as a result, lads and lasses are attracted to each other. Instead, summer in England is the happiest time of the year, which means sunshine and brilliant weather. Everything is warm except that the wind is cool, the flowers were blooming, and all sorts of outgoing are becoming very agreeable. Autumn is the time of harvest, but it's also the time of cooling down. The Chinese people often feel a sad autumn with no exception of the Yao people. Compared with the Chinese people, the British people feel the autumn is full of hope, because it is time for the harvest of apples, the land is calm, and the people begin to prepare for the coming year. It is cold and wet in Britain in winter, often windy and snowy in the north, most British women choose to sit by their fireplaces and raise their children. But for the Yao people, winter is the end of the year, which is a good time to get married and prepare for the lunar New Year, they wish to make a good start to the Next Year.

Table 4
Comparison of Season Metaphors of English Nationality and Yao Nationality

Categories	Discriminative metaphors	Universal metaphors
Spring	English Ballads Cold, dry, pilgrimage	Birth, joy, beauty, pregnancy, heat
	Yao's Ballads Sweet, sowing, flowering season	
Summer	English Ballads Gentle, beautiful, happy, long, wealth	Mature and vigorous
	Yao's Ballads hot, pregnant, charming	
Autumn	English Ballads Quiet, fruitful and expectant	Pregnancy and reunion
	Yao's Ballads harvest, sad, dismal	
Winter	English Ballads Warmth, care, reincarnation	Bleak and long time
	Yao's Ballads Marry, miss, parting	

1.5 Love Metaphors Derived From Geographical and Astronomical Phenomena

In ancient times, in order to enhance the cohesion of the community, Clan tribes often think of something as your own ancestor, and gave it extraordinary power. They believed that their ancestor would exorcise demons for the tribe and bring good luck. Thus, Totem worship began. At first, Totem objects were limited to monsters, birds and stars, then as time went on, wind, thunder, rain, snow, water, mountains, sea, clouds, fog, trees and so on are endowed with special meanings. Ballad creators “broke through the barriers of language to seek an expression way beyond the surface meaning of language”. (Wang & Xie, 2006)

Since the immortals in buddhist paradise had framed cloud roads,
 They could set foot on heaven for ten thousand years;
 When arriving at the sixth step on the cloud ladder,
 In the air they saw it was cloudy and cloudy;
 With Liang shanbo and Zhu yingtai were happy to meet,
 What beautiful flowers blooming inside the heaven ;
 When they arrived at the seventh step on the cloud ladder,
 The seven stars and the big dipper were lined up on both sides.

From Yao’s ballad *Twelve songs of sigh*

Yuntai and Yunti have the meaning of progression in the Yao’s culture. In *Twelve Songs of Sigh*, they metaphored bridges and passages of love which led to the marriage in heaven. Also, with the fairies’ singing and dancing, a happy and satisfied scene of love was presented.

Now tell to me, ye Billie Blin,
 If this fair dame be a leal maiden,
 I wat she is as leal as a wight,
 As the moon shines on in a simmer night.

From English and Scottish ballad *Gil Brenton*

In *Gil Brenton*, Gil Brenton took the bride home, but the bride worried that if the groom found out she was not a virgin, he would cut off her breasts. In fact, the bride once met a Lord in the woods, having had a love affair with him, now she had a child of the lord. Later, the truth was that the Lord was Gil Brenton himself. The moon in the song is a metaphor for the heroine’s uncertain future.

Table 5
Comparison of Geographical Astronomical Metaphors of English Nationality and Yao Nationality

	Discriminative metaphors	Universal metaphors
Categories	Astronomical phenomena	Astronomical phenomena
English Ballads	Stars, west wind, sea, castle, bridge	Sun, moon, heaven, mountains, thunder, rain, snow, water, clouds, fog
Yao’s Ballads	Big dipper, seven female stars, western sky, cave, east sea, western sea, rainbow, wind	

2. DIFFERENT CULTURES HAVE DIFFERENT METAPHORS

English belongs to the Indo-European language family and is written in letters, while Chinese belongs to the sino-

tibetan language family, which uses hieroglyphics. Thus there are differences in meaning in this two languages. English word formation includes mainly three forms: derivation, synthesis and transformation, while Chinese word formation is mainly by synthesis although there are a few by derivation and abbreviation. On the syntactic, English expresses tense and voice through verb changes, while Chinese is not so obvious in this respect. “The main factors affecting the change of English word order are the syntactic rules caused by the basic grammatical categories, but not related to the morphology; Chinese characters generally follow the so-called ‘one sound and one meaning’ principle, that is, one pronunciation and one meaning for each character.” (Liu & Wang, 2015) The differences of these cultural habits determine that the love metaphor patterns in English folk songs and Yao’s folk songs embody their own colors.

2.1 Metaphors Derived From Meaning

In the course of human labor, people found that a better organization of productive activities requires a medium that can communicate with each other, and from this comes languages. After language came into being, people developed their own wisdoms, and applied metaphor, humor, irony, exaggeration, pun and other rhetorical devices to enrich and develop language itself. In English Ballads and Yao’s folk songs, many love metaphors were directly projected onto the associations related to love, and the phenomenon of semantic metaphor appeared. All kinds of tokens such as clothes, belts, skirts, turbans, combs, beds, chairs and so on may become occasions of metaphorical love. For example:

Four words order, string word is object, loquat string, a handful strings;
 Five words order, belt word is object, hairpin with three belts, gold waist and jade belt;
 Five words order, meeting is object, meeting gentlemen on roads, meeting you and me;
 Five words order, flowing is object, sharpen knife on grindstones, brush teeth and hair up.

From Yao’s ballad *Twelve years of command songs*

The eldest sister let him in,

And barred the door with a silver pin.
 The second sister made his bed,
 And placed soft pillows under his head.

From English and Scottish ballad *Riddles Wisely Expounded*

But in using allusions, English ballads often borrow from romantic romances of European chivalry while Yao’s folk songs often quote traditional Chinese love stories such as Liang shanbo and Zhu yingtai.

2.2 Metaphors Derived From Shape

There are certain things in life that are easily impressed and associated in human’s brain because of their special shapes, over time, people have become accustomed to using these things to refer to other things or people. Such

as in English, "Log" means "wood" but sometimes it means "corpse"; "crane" refers to a kind of bird, but it can be extended to a kind of lifting truck. In Washington Irving's *Sleeping Hollow*, "crane" refers to the tall thin schoolteacher in Tarrytown. In Chinese, the graceful lotus is often used as a metaphor for a girl in a green skirt, a vase for arranging flowers refers to a beautiful woman in display, and snake sprites refer to evil women and so on, they are the results of metaphor derived from shape.

Shan bo and Ying tai share a good fate,
They look at the flowers in the world together;
How I regret not meeting you earlier,
Now we fall in love with each other at the first sight;
The two admire each other in front of a mirror,
Swearing that they would never part in their lives.

From Yao's ballad *Songs of Asking Gifts*

Blooming flowers and full moon, a broken mirror joined together are allusions which Chinese people often use to refer to the relationship between husband and wife. In this song, a mirror is round, it is used as a metaphor for the reunion of husband and wife, or a hundred years of reconciliation.

He gript her by the middle sae sma,
He gently sat her down,
While the grass grew up on every side,
And the apple trees hang down.

From English and Scottish ballad *The King's Tochter Lady*
Jean

The apple tree is one of the most common trees in Britain, the perennial apple tree is tall, so apple trees here are used as a metaphor for the strong male body.

2.3 Metaphors Derived From Compound Words

In English, "jellybean" is used as a metaphor for compound words, which means "a spineless man", "henpecked" means "a husband under the strict control of his wife"; Many Chinese compound words are metaphors in themselves, such as "a duck-tongue cap", "an ox-head polish", "a Feng fairy". Metaphors in Chinese idioms are ubiquitous, such as "elegant thought, flowery speech", "copper wall and iron defence", "copper muscle and iron bones". Many love metaphors derived from compound words can also be found in both English ballads and Yao's folk songs.

Now that you have made up your mind,
Please sail the boat wide and let it be free;
Looking forward to your arrival now and then,
As Yuan Yang ducks fly in pairs.

From Yao's ballad *Songs of Asking Gifts*

A pair of bamboos have grown shoulder by shoulder,
And the brother is taller than the sister;

The brother is golden pheasant and the sister phoenix,
The golden pheasant and the phoenix match into husband and wife.

From Yao's ballad *Wedding Poems in Bound Volume*

Yuan Yang ducks are two different animals, together they metaphor men and women, so it is the same with golden pheasant and phoenix.

Thou must shape it knife-and-sheerlesse,
And also sue it needle-threedlesse;
If that piece of courtesie I do to thee,
Another thou must do to me.

From English and Scottish ballad *The Elfin Knight*

The knife yarn and thread here are metaphors for men and women.

CONCLUSION

Most of the British folk songs and Yao's folk songs were created by the laboring people, and mainly spread by oral chanting. Their topics cover social events and ordinary life, among which ballads about love are popular with the people. Because of the close contact with nature, in the creating process they learned to imitate everything in nature. Through metaphors, love songs are depicted as sincere and warm, natural and generous. However, Because of the differences of this two nation in living habits, They have their own preference in choosing words and meaning, which reflects the geographical and spatial differences of culture. Of course, the comparison between the two ballads is by no means limited to love metaphors, More similarities and differences remain to be discovered.

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