



A contrastive analysis of the Conceptual Metaphor "finance is fluid" in Vietnamese and English electronic news

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ABSTRACT

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This study conducts a contrastive analysis of the conceptual metaphor "finance is fluid" in Vietnamese and English electronic news, based on a dataset of 200 metaphorical expressions (100 per language) collected from online financial articles. Employing the framework of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) and the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) by the Pragglejaz Group (2007), the research systematically identifies and categorizes metaphorical language mapping financial concepts onto fluid dynamics. Two main cognitive models are established: (1) "financial situation is the state of liquid" accounting for 57% of Vietnamese and 55% of English cases, and (2) "supplying finance is supplying liquid" comprising 43% and 45% respectively. Key expressions such as "ngập" (flooded), "chảy" (flow), and "bơm" (pump) in Vietnamese, and "drown," "flow," and "pump" in English, illustrate both universal and culture-specific metaphorical patterns. The findings reveal subtle differences in linguistic choices but a shared cognitive mapping across both languages. Importantly, the study discusses concrete implications for TESOL, highlighting how awareness of metaphorical structures can enhance learners' comprehension, translation, and communication of financial concepts in multilingual contexts.

Introduction

Metaphors play a crucial role in financial discourse, enabling speakers to conceptualize abstract economic phenomena through familiar, concrete experiences. In daily language, metaphors such as "cash flow" or "liquidity dries up" vividly illustrate the dynamic and often unpredictable nature of financial systems (Geary, 2012; Kövecses, 2005). The metaphor "finance is fluid" is especially powerful, as it frames finance in terms of movement, change, and instability, qualities drawn from the physical properties of liquids.

Previous research has documented the creative use of metaphors in economic language across cultures. Studies have examined metaphors like “economic growth is a journey” (Liang, 2021), “the stock market is the sea” (Nguyễn, 2019), and “the financial market is a battlefield.” However, most of these works focus on general metaphorical patterns or specific domains, rather than providing a detailed, contrastive analysis of the “finance is fluid” metaphor in both Vietnamese and English. Moreover, while the cognitive and cultural significance of metaphors is well established, their practical implications for language teaching and translation remain underexplored. Beyond economics, other studies also highlight how metaphors reflect cultural and cognitive patterns, such as Pham (2023) on Vietnamese literature and Le & Nguyen (2023) on language learning.

Addressing this gap, the present study investigates how the metaphor “finance is fluid” is conceptualized and linguistically realized in Vietnamese and English electronic news. By analyzing metaphorical expressions mapped from the domain of fluidity onto finance, this research aims to uncover both universal cognitive patterns and language-specific differences. The study also examines the frequency and structure of these metaphors, providing insights into how cultural and linguistic contexts shape financial concepts.

Significantly, this research highlights the pedagogical value of metaphor awareness in TESOL and translation. Understanding how metaphors function in financial contexts can enhance learners’ comprehension of abstract vocabulary, improve intercultural communication, and support effective translation of economic texts. This article demonstrates that a contrastive analysis of the “finance is fluid” metaphor in Vietnamese and English not only reveals underlying cognitive and cultural patterns in financial discourse but also offers practical insights for teaching and translating financial language in multilingual settings.

Literature Review

Metaphor has long been a central concern for linguists and philosophers. Classical scholars such as Aristotle (1954) regarded metaphor primarily as a rhetorical device that enriches language through comparison and substitution. While this perspective laid foundational groundwork, it does not fully account for the profound cognitive role metaphors play in shaping meaning in specialized domains, including finance.

A significant transformation occurred with Lakoff and Johnson’s (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), which reframed metaphor as a fundamental cognitive mechanism. According to CMT, metaphors structure our understanding of abstract domains by mapping them onto more concrete, experiential source domains. This insight has become central to metaphor studies and continues to inform research across disciplines. Kövecses (2005, 2010) extended this framework by emphasizing the influence of cultural background and physical experience on metaphor development, highlighting both universal and culture-specific patterns. However, early work in CMT primarily addressed general language usage, leaving the exploration of metaphors in specialized fields like finance relatively underdeveloped.

Recent scholarship has begun to address this gap, particularly with the emergence of corpus-based and contrastive studies focused on financial discourse. For example, Liang (2021) analyzed financial metaphors in *The Economist*, revealing the creative and pervasive use of metaphor in economic reporting. Vietnamese research by Pham, T.T. T. (2017) and Nguyen, T. T. H. (2019) examined metaphorical conceptualizations in economic texts, identifying metaphors such as “the market is the sea” and “the economy is a living body.” While these

studies illustrate the diversity of metaphorical thinking in financial contexts, they rarely address the pedagogical implications for English language teaching or translation.

The need for updated, domain-specific research has become increasingly recognized in recent years. Le & Nguyen (2023), for instance, explored the role of cognitive linguistics in second language acquisition, demonstrating that awareness of metaphorical structures significantly enhances learners' ability to understand and communicate complex concepts, especially in fields like finance and commerce. This aligns with the prevailing view that metaphor studies are vital for TESOL and translation, where abstract thinking is central.

Contemporary research has further substantiated and expanded CMT in financial language. Zhang and Yang (2023) demonstrated, through corpus-based and experimental approaches, that metaphors based on natural disasters (e.g., "landslide," "flood") are highly effective in framing economic downturns in Mandarin, influencing both public perception and risk communication. In Vietnamese, Nguyễn T.B.H. (2024) applied cognitive linguistic methods to teaching idioms, finding that a metaphor-focused approach improves learners' comprehension and practical use, especially for foreign students engaging with culturally embedded expressions.

In English financial discourse, Qiu (2023) categorized metaphors in *The Economist* into structural, orientation, and ontological types and examined translation strategies for financial metaphors. This research highlights the cognitive basis of metaphor use and the challenges of cross-linguistic transfer, with direct significance for ESP (English for Specific Purposes) teaching and translation.

Beyond finance, conceptual metaphors are also prominent in business and commercial language. Nguyen T.T.H. (2024) identified the metaphor "business is a journey" in business terminology, mapping journey-related attributes onto business processes—such as companies as travelers and growth as progress. Pham T.G. (2025) conducted a contrastive study of "commerce is sport" in Vietnamese and English news discourse, using the Pragglejazz method to analyze sub-metaphors, frequency, and cultural cognitive patterns. These studies reveal both universal and culturally specific aspects of metaphor use, demonstrating how metaphors shape media discourse and public understanding.

The pedagogical value of metaphor awareness is increasingly emphasized in recent scholarly work. Tsitoura (2023) found that explicit instruction based on CMT significantly improves EFL learners' comprehension and interpretation of metaphorical expressions. Raising metaphor awareness helps students decode semantic motivations and enhances proficiency, especially in specialized domains such as finance.

Although metaphors are pervasive in financial language, their impact on English teaching and learning remains underexplored. Expressions such as "flow", "dry capital", or "pump money" are not merely creative language; they embody complex economic concepts and cognitive frameworks that can be challenging for learners. Incorporating metaphor awareness into TESOL programs enables students to interpret figurative language more effectively, enhance reading comprehension, and translate financial texts with greater accuracy. Explicit instruction on the cognitive connections underlying these metaphors fosters critical thinking, intercultural understanding, and practical communication skills, preparing learners to engage successfully with financial discourse in both Vietnamese and English.

Research Questions

This article examines the conceptual metaphor "finance is fluid" in Vietnamese and English electronic news. It focuses on identifying and analyzing the metaphorical models that arise from mapping the source domain "fluid" onto the target domain "finance". This investigation seeks

to uncover the cognitive structures that shape how finance is conceptualized and portrayed across linguistic contexts, highlighting cross-cultural similarities and differences in metaphorical expression.

To achieve the objectives of the study, the following research questions will guide the investigation:

1. How is the conceptual metaphor “finance is fluid” conceptualized in Vietnamese and English electronic news?
2. What similarities and differences exist in the conceptual metaphor “finance is fluid” between Vietnamese and English with respect to metaphorical expressions, frequency, and cognitive significance?
3. What are the implications of the metaphor “finance is fluid” for understanding financial concepts in both Vietnamese and English electronic news contexts?

Methods

This research uses a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches, drawing on Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), to explore how the metaphor “finance is fluid” is reflected in Vietnamese and English online news. The study emphasizes transparency in its methods and ensures reliability in how data is coded. Articles were sourced from well-known financial news websites —VNExpress, Tuổi Trẻ, Dân Trí, and VietnamNet — for Vietnamese content, and from Bloomberg, Reuters, The Economist, Financial Times, and NBC for English content, covering publications from 2020 to 2025. To be included, texts needed to explicitly address financial or economic topics and feature metaphorical language related to fluids or liquids in a financial context; articles not directly linked to finance or using fluid-related words literally were excluded. The initial selection involved searching for key terms like “dòng tiền” (capital flow), “bơm vốn” (pump capital), “ngập nợ” (drowning in debt) in Vietnamese, and “capital flows,” “pump money,” “drowning in debt” in English. This process yielded a targeted sample of 100 metaphorical expressions from each language, ensuring that both major metaphor models were represented.

Metaphors were identified using the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) introduced by the Pragglejaz Group (2007), which examines each word or phrase in its context to determine how the metaphor maps from the source domain (fluid) to the target domain (finance). These expressions were then sorted into two main cognitive metaphor models: “financial situation is the state of liquid” and “supplying finance is supplying liquid.” The frequency of each model was calculated and compared between Vietnamese and English. The research followed a clear sequence: gathering data, identifying metaphors using MIP, categorizing them into cognitive models, and analyzing their frequency. To enhance reliability and transparency in coding, two independent coders with backgrounds in linguistics and metaphor analysis were trained in the MIP protocol and familiarized with key financial and fluid-related terms in both Vietnamese and English. Each coder independently reviewed the selected articles and identified metaphorical expressions according to MIP guidelines, with any differences in identification discussed and resolved through mutual agreement.

Results/Findings

Analysis of 200 metaphorical expressions, 100 from Vietnamese financial news and 100 from English sources reveals two predominant cognitive models: “financial situation is the state of liquid” and “supplying finance is supplying liquid” In both languages, metaphors such as “flow,” “pump,” “dry,” “evaporate,” “stagnant,” and “flooded” are frequently used to conceptualize finance. In Vietnamese, the metaphor “ngập” (flooded) appears 15 times, typically in emotionally charged contexts such as personal debt or market collapse. Its English equivalent, “drown”, occurs less frequently (8 times) with similar meaning. The metaphor “cạn” (dry) is found 6 times in Vietnamese and “dry” 9 times in English, both referring to financial shortages. “Bốc hơi” (evaporate) and “evaporate” are used to describe sudden financial loss (10 occurrences in Vietnamese, 9 in English), while “ứ đọng” (stagnant) and “stagnant” highlight unproductive or immobilized capital (9 in Vietnamese, 4 in English). “Nhỏ giọt” (drip) and “drip” indicate limited or delayed credit release (7 in Vietnamese, 5 in English), and “chảy” (flow) is used 10 times in Vietnamese and 20 times in English to emphasize the movement and distribution of financial resources. Regarding the “supplying finance is supplying liquid” model, metaphors such as “bơm” (pump), “rót” (pour), and “đổ” (pour/spill) are prevalent in Vietnamese (“bơm” 13 times, “rót/đổ” 30 times), while “pump” appears 16 times and “pour” 29 times in English, typically describing the injection or channeling of capital into markets or sectors. Quantitative analysis shows that the “financial situation is the state of liquid” and “supplying finance is supplying liquid” model accounts for 57% of Vietnamese expressions and 55% of English ones, whereas “financial situation is the state of liquid” and “supplying finance is supplying liquid” comprise 43% in Vietnamese and 45% in English.

The survey clearly shows that the metaphor “finance is fluid” is a prominent and frequently used concept in both Vietnamese and English online news reports. According to the principles of partial mapping, attributes from the source domain “fluid” are activated and transferred to the target domain “finance,” endowing financial concepts with properties of fluid dynamics. Based on an analysis of 200 news articles from Vietnamese and English online newspapers, the conceptual model of “finance is fluid” can be represented through the mapping structure presented in Table 1.

Table 1.

Mapping the structure of the Conceptual metaphor FINANCE IS FLUID

SOURCE: FLUID	Mapped onto	TARGET: FINANCE
Liquid flooding and rising uncontrollably	→	Debt piling up uncontrollably
A heavy object sinking into water	→	Bankruptcy, economic collapse
A water source drying up	→	Running out of money, cash flow problems
Liquid being absorbed or evaporated	→	Running out of money; financial depletion
Water becoming stagnant, not flowing	→	unproductive capital
Water dripping slowly, drop by drop	→	Limited, delayed, or insufficient capital/credit release
Water flowing into different directions	→	Movement and allocation of financial resources

Dams and blockages preventing water flow	→	Economic obstacles or restrictions limiting financial circulation
Pumping liquid into a system	→	Injecting capital or funds into the economy or specific sectors
Pouring liquid into a container	→	Channeling capital into targeted industries or businesses
Liquid being stored or blocked	→	Funds being held back or not yet released

Based on the mapping structure of the conceptual metaphor “finance is fluid” in Table 1, we establish the cognitive metaphor models of finance, with the source domain being Fluid, as follows.

Table 2.

Metaphorical Expression Statistics of Conceptual Metaphor “finance is fluid”

The similarities between the source and target domains	Metaphorically-expressed words	Vietnamese	English	Total number of metaphorical expressions	
		Occurrences	Occurrences		
overflow, flow, disappearance, stagnation	Ngập, chìm (drown, submerged)	15	8	200	
	Cạn (dry)	6	9		
	Bốc hơi (evaporate)	10	9		
	Ứ đọng (stagnant)	9	4		
	Nhỏ giọt (Drip)	7	5		
Chảy (Flow)	10	20			
flow, volume, directionality, and system impact	Bơm (pump)	13	16		
	Rót, đổ (Pour)	30	29		
Total		100	100		

By using the mapping structure outlined in Table 1 for the conceptual metaphor “finance is fluid”, we can understand different cognitive metaphorical models of finance, with fluid serving as the source domain, as follows.

Table 3.

The cognitive metaphor models of “finance is fluid”

Cognitive metaphor models	Vietnamese		English	
	Occurrences	(%)	Occurrences	(%)
FINANCIAL SITUATION IS THE STATE OF LIQUID	57/100	57	55/100	55
SUPPLYING FINANCE IS SUPPLYING LIQUID	43/119	43	45/100	45
Total	100	100	100	100

The conceptual metaphor "“ finance is fluid”" draws parallels between the domain of "FLUID" and that of "finance". Through the analysis of 200 metaphorical expressions, the paper identified two cognitive models: (1) "financial situation is the state of liquid" and (2) "supplying finance is supplying liquid". In Vietnamese, the predominant model is "financial situation is the state of liquid" (57%), followed by "supplying finance is supplying liquid" (43%). Similarly, in English, the predominant model is "financial situation is the state of liquid" (55%), followed by "supplying finance is supplying liquid" (45%).

The conceptual metaphor “financial situation is the state of liquid”

From Table 2, it can be seen that 'drown,' 'dry,' 'evaporate,' 'stagnant,' 'drip,' and 'flow' are metaphorical words employed in the state of liquid' metaphor to refer to financial situations. Below are some typical examples taken from the corpus.

- (1) Ngập đầu dù có mớ sổ đỏ trong tay (*Drowning in debt despite holding a pile of land-use right certificates*)
- (2) Giới trẻ Hàn Quốc "ngập" trong nợ nần vì cố mua hàng hiệu (*South Korean youth are "drowning" in debt due to overspending on luxury goods*)
- (3) Ngập nợ vì vay nóng, lừa đảo người thân, bạn bè gần 4 tỉ đồng (*Drowning in debt after taking high-interest loans and defrauding relatives and friends of nearly 4 billion VND*)
- (4) Lỗ 9 quý liên tiếp, Vinafood 2 chìm đắm trong nợ nần (*After nine consecutive quarters of losses, Vinafood 2 is sinking in debt*)
- (5) Lạm phát cao đẩy nước Anh chìm sâu vào nợ nần (*High inflation is drowning the UK in debt*)
- (6) Nga có thể cạn tiền trong năm 2024, rất cần vốn đầu tư nước ngoài (*Russia may face drying up of funds in 2024, urgently needing foreign investment*)
- (7) Cạn tiền, đại gia bất động sản chuyển hướng "đánh bắt xa bờ" để... "nuôi quân" (*As cash dries up, real estate tycoons shift to 'offshore fishing' to... 'sustain their forces'*)
- (8) Thêm khách hàng tố tài khoản tại MSB 'bốc hơi' gần 28 tỷ đồng (*Another customer claims that nearly 28 billion VND in their MSB bank account has "evaporated"*)
- (9) Cảnh giác tiền tỉ trong tài khoản dồn dập 'bốc hơi' (*Be alert: billions of VND in accounts are "evaporating" rapidly*)
- (10) Lãi suất giảm liên tục, trăm ngàn tỷ ứ đọng trong ngân hàng (*As interest rates keep falling, hundreds of trillions of VND are stagnating in banks*)
- (11) 168.000 tỷ đồng vốn ngân hàng đang bị ứ đọng (*168 trillion VND in bank capital is currently stagnant*)
- (12) Tín dụng cuối năm: Vốn vào sản xuất nhỏ giọt, cửa hẹp cho bất động sản (*Year-end credit: capital drips into production, leaving narrow access for real estate*)
- (13) Mở rộng tiền tệ, nhưng cơ chế tạo vốn 'nhỏ giọt' (*Monetary expansion is underway, but the capital generation mechanism is only dripping*)
- (14) 2,1 triệu tỷ đồng tín dụng chảy vào đâu? (*Where is the 2.1 quadrillion VND in credit flowing?*)

The metaphorical expressions “ngập,” “chìm,” “cạn,” “bốc hơi,” “ứ đọng,” “nhỏ giọt,” and “chảy” in examples (1)-(14) illustrate the conceptual metaphor “financial situation is the state of liquid” where different physical states and behaviors of liquids are used to describe financial

conditions. This metaphor draws on the shared attributes between the source domain of liquid—such as overflow, stagnation, evaporation, scarcity, and flow—and the target domain of finance, which includes concepts like debt overload, bankruptcy, cash shortages, loss of funds, financial stagnation, restricted funding, and capital movement. The mapping is rooted in our physical and perceptual experiences with liquids, making these abstract financial situations more vivid and easier to understand. In example (1) “nợ ngập đầu” (debt up to one’s head), the verb “ngập” (flooded) draws on the image of a person submerged in water, mapping onto the experience of being overwhelmed by debt. Similarly, in (2), the phrase “ngập trong nợ nần” (flooded with debt) evokes the same state of being financially overwhelmed, suggesting that debt is rising like water and surrounding individuals. In (3), “ngập nợ” (drowning in debt) continues this mapping, reinforcing the sense being unable to escape and lacking control in difficult financial situations. Examples (4) and (5) use “chìm” and “chìm sâu” (to sink/deeply sink) to describe entities like Vinafood 2 and the UK economy as being submerged in debt. The metaphor of sinking draws a parallel between worsening financial conditions and a heavy object slowly sinking into water, highlighting a gradual decline and a sense of helplessness. In examples (6) and (7), “cạn tiền” (running out of money) transfers the image of a drying water source to the gradual loss of financial resources, implying a shortage and urgency. These expressions suggest that financial reserves, like water, can dry up, requiring alternative sources to restore them. Examples (8) and (9) feature “bốc hơi” (evaporate), metaphorically describing large sums of money disappearing mysteriously from bank accounts. Here, the sudden, inexplicable loss of funds is mapped to the evaporation of water, which visually and experientially vanishes without a trace, signaling instability and a loss of control. The expressions “ứ đọng” in (10) and (11) refer to capital being stuck or stagnant in banks. This draws from the behavior of water that cannot flow, mapping to funds that are frozen or unutilized, suggesting inefficiency or systemic blockage in financial circulation. Examples (12) and (13) employ “nhỏ giọt” (trickling) to depict the slow and limited release of credit or capital. The metaphor relies on the image of water slowly dripping, highlighting the constrained and insufficient financial supply, particularly in the production and real estate sectors. Finally, in (14), “tín dụng chảy vào đâu?” (where is the credit flowing?) uses the verb “chảy” (to flow) to conceptualize credit as a liquid capable of movement. It reflects the idea of financial resources circulating in an economic system, akin to water flowing through channels, and invites inquiry into the direction and efficiency of capital distribution. In summary, these metaphorical expressions using liquid-state terminology create a rich cognitive framework for understanding financial conditions. The shared features, such as containment, movement, and transformation—make financial phenomena more vivid and culturally accessible in both Vietnamese and English electronic news.

In the following section, we explore a range of metaphorical expressions in English that use the concept of liquids to describe financial situations. Phrases like “drowns,” “dried up,” “evaporated,” “stagnant,” “dripping,” and “flowing into” show how people make sense of abstract financial conditions by relating them to the physical properties and behaviors of liquids.

By examining these expressions, we aim to uncover the underlying conceptual metaphor: “financial situation is the state of liquid”. The similarities between the two domains—such as volume, movement, blockage, depletion, and accumulation—make these metaphorical connections possible. This analysis not only sheds light on how financial matters are framed and communicated in English but also enables meaningful comparisons with similar expressions in Vietnamese, offering deeper insight into how language, cognition, and culture shape metaphorical thinking.

- (15) Some states reserved funds for residents facing homelessness, but Maine allowed the funds to be used to house newcomers. Now that federal cash has dried up, the state is

- asking taxpayers to fork over \$182 million for the migrants' hotel and motel rooms.
- (16) Venezuela, a nation in economic and political crisis, sits atop the world's largest crude reserves, but that source of cash has dried up under years of mismanagement and more recently stiff U.S. sanctions aimed at forcing Maduro out
 - (17) Thousands of workers lost their jobs. Investors' money evaporated.
 - (18) Other revenue also disappeared. Over the summer, for example, many schools are accustomed to hosting alumni events and other types of gatherings, Hartle noted. But all that auxiliary money evaporated as the world screeched to a halt.
 - (19) China's stagnant funds sector spurs foreign JVs to branch out
 - (20) Foreign money managers in China have begun chasing tens of billions of dollars in funds expected to be drawn in over the coming years as Beijing steps up its opening of its capital markets, creating fresh opportunities for China's stagnant fund sector.
 - (21) That money is flowing into solar, wind, hydrogen and carbon-capture projects in Europe — as is the case in the U.S.
 - (22) Long-shot money is flowing into start-ups that seek the energy of the stars. Driving the investments is a rising alarm about global warming.
 - (23) Xi Digs In With Top-Down Economic Plan Even as China Drowns in Debt
 - (24) Americans are still going to college; many are just drowning in debt as a result.
 - (25) Private Liberal Arts College Is Drowning in Debt. Should Alabama Rescue It

In examples (15)–(25), the expressions “dried up,” “evaporated,” “stagnant,” “flowing into,” and “drowning in debt” reflect a metaphorical transfer from the source domain “the state of liquid” to the target domain “financial situation”, forming the conceptual metaphor “financial situation is the state of liquid”. In examples (15) and (16), “dried up” is used to describe the complete depletion of financial resources, federal funds in Maine and oil revenues in Venezuela, much like how a water source disappears when it dries up, symbolizing financial exhaustion and the end of economic support. In examples (17) and (18), “evaporated” suggests a rapid, almost unnoticed disappearance of money —whether investors' capital or school funds —paralleling the process by which liquid turns to vapor, emphasizing the speed and permanence of financial loss. Examples (19) and (20) employ the metaphor “stagnant” to characterize China's financial sector as inactive or unmoving, like stagnant water, suggesting a lack of growth, innovation, or productivity in financial terms. By contrast, in examples (21) and (22), “flowing into” describes money actively invested in renewable energy and new businesses. Here, financial capital is compared to liquid flowing into a container or channel, emphasizing movement, direction, and growth. Finally, examples (23), (24), and (25) apply the metaphor “drowning in debt” to national economies, students, and institutions, respectively. This metaphor conveys a sense of being overwhelmed and unable to breathe under financial burdens, similar to a person trapped underwater with no way out. Collectively, these metaphors draw on shared experiential qualities between the liquid state (e.g., movement, depletion, stagnation, lack of air) and financial dynamics to make abstract economic phenomena more concrete, visual, and emotionally impactful for the audience. Such metaphoric expressions not only enhance the communicative power of financial discourse but also reflect culturally rooted ways of understanding complex financial realities.

The conceptual metaphor “Supplying finance is supplying liquid”

The metaphorically-expressed words of the ‘supplying liquid’ metaphor are listed in Table 2 along with their frequencies. It can be seen that two key words, “pump” and “pour”, are identified in this metaphor. Below are some example sentences taken from the corpus.

- (26) Ngân hàng Nhà nước bơm mạnh tiền, giá USD không ngừng leo thang (*The State Bank aggressively pumped money into the market, driving the USD price continuously upward*)
- (27) Ngân hàng chủ động “bơm vốn” (*Banks proactively pumped capital into the economy*)
- (28) Làm sao 'bơm' hơn 1 triệu tỉ đồng vào nền kinh tế? (*How can more than 1 quadrillion VND be pumped into the economy?*)
- (29) Ngân hàng Nhà nước yêu cầu “bơm” vốn cho doanh nghiệp nhập thêm xăng dầu (*The State Bank requested that capital be pumped into enterprises to support additional fuel imports*)
- (30) Quỹ ngoại muốn rót vốn lớn vào doanh nghiệp Việt 'giỏi và ngoan' (*Banks are pouring capital en masse into the infrastructure sector*)
- (31) Ngân hàng ồ ạt rót vốn vào lĩnh vực hạ tầng (*Banks are pouring capital en masse into the infrastructure sector*)
- (32) Rót tiền vào đâu trong năm Giáp Thìn? (*Where should capital be poured in the Year of the Dragon?*)
- (33) Trung Quốc rót 55 tỷ USD cho các ngân hàng lớn (*China poured 55 billion USD into major banks*)
- (34) Gần 7 tỷ USD vốn đầu tư nước ngoài đổ vào Việt Nam 2 tháng đầu năm (*Nearly 7 billion USD in foreign investment poured into Vietnam during the first two months of the year*)
- (35) Vốn đầu tư nước ngoài “đổ” vào bất động sản đạt gần 5,23 tỷ USD (*Foreign investment poured into real estate reached nearly 5.23 billion USD*)
- (36) Gần 4,4 tỷ USD vốn ngoại đổ vào bất động sản (*Nearly 4.4 billion USD in foreign capital flowed into the real estate sector*)
- (37) Dòng vốn FDI đổ vào bất động sản tăng hơn 4 lần so với cùng kỳ 2023 (*FDI poured into the real estate sector, surging more than fourfold compared to the same period in 2023*)

The metaphors “bơm” (pump), “rót” (pour), and “đổ” (pour/spill) in examples (26)-(37) illustrate the conceptual mapping from the source domain ‘supplying liquid’ to the target domain ‘supplying finance’. These metaphors draw on shared attributes between the two domains —such as the flow, volume, and distribution of a substance —to depict the movement and provision of financial resources in a more concrete way. In examples (26)-(29), the metaphor “bơm” (to pump) refers to the injection or flow of money into the economy or specific sectors. The image of pumping liquid into a system is mapped onto the idea of supplying or channeling capital or resources into the financial system. For example, in (26), the metaphor conveys a deliberate, forceful injection of liquidity into the financial system. Similarly, in (28), the metaphor emphasizes the challenge and the strategic effort required to inject a large amount of capital into the economy. The shared attribute between the flow of liquid and the provision of funds helps create a vivid picture of the act of supply and its impact on the financial

landscape. In examples (30)-(33), the metaphor "rót" (to pour) represents the controlled supply of capital into specific sectors or projects. The pouring of liquid is mapped onto the process of channeling finance into particular areas. In (30), the metaphor emphasizes the careful allocation of financial resources to a targeted sector. In (31), the metaphor highlights a significant, controlled infusion of funds into a specific area, akin to pouring liquid into a container. In examples (34)-(37), the metaphor "đổ" (to spill or pour) portrays a more overwhelming or large-scale inflow of finance. The metaphor of liquid spilling or flowing freely is mapped onto the idea of large quantities of money being invested or directed into specific markets. In (34), the metaphor suggests a rapid, large-scale influx of financial resources, akin to liquid spilling into a space. The metaphor is used to depict the scale and impact of the financial surge, highlighting its forceful or substantial nature. Overall, the metaphors "bơm," "rót," and "đổ" help us understand financial supply in terms of liquidity, highlighting similarities in volume, flow, and distribution. This metaphorical mapping clearly illustrates how capital is transferred into different sectors of the economy, emphasizing the intensity, scale, and purpose behind these financial activities. By framing financial infusion in this way, the abstract concept becomes more tangible and accessible, shedding light on the dynamics of economic management and investment.

In the following section, we will explore similar metaphors in English and compare their usage and implications with those found in Vietnamese texts. By examining these examples, we aim to understand how different linguistic and cultural backgrounds shape the conceptualization of financial activities—especially the act of providing funds—through metaphor. In particular, we focus on the conceptual metaphor “Supplying finance is supplying liquid”, which draws on the connection between the movement of liquids and the distribution of financial resources.

- (38) China pumps \$188 billion into the economy to counter real estate slump
- (39) Saudi Arabia ‘bullies’ wealthy families to pump cash into oil IPO
- (40) The nation’s finances have proven resilient, despite punishing sanctions, giving it leeway to pump money into its military machine.
- (41) Democrats Pour Money Into Florida Races to Erode GOP Majority
- (42) Investors pour money into US corporate bond funds at record rate
- (43) Investors pour money into US corporate bond funds at record rate
- (44) Central Banks to Pour Money Into Economy Despite Sharp Rebound
- (45) Foreigners Pour Money Into Turkish Stocks on Hopes for U-Turn

In these examples, the verbs “pump” and “pour” serve as vivid metaphors that reflect the idea of supplying finance as if it were supplying a liquid. Here, the act of moving or directing liquid is mapped onto the act of distributing money, highlighting qualities like flow, force, and abundance. For example, in (38), the verb "pump" emphasizes a controlled and substantial injection of finance, akin to how a pump forces liquid into a system. Similarly, in (39) "pump" suggests a directed, pressured flow of money into a specific financial project, drawing on the imagery of forceful liquid flow. In (40), the metaphor of "pumping money" evokes the image of a continuous supply of resources, akin to a steady flow of liquid into a system, to sustain and strengthen military operations. On the other hand, the metaphor "pour" in examples like (41),” and (42) conveys the idea of a steady, perhaps overwhelming flow of money, similar to the action of pouring liquid into a container. "Pour" suggests an abundant, steady stream of finance, highlighting the volume and impact of financial contributions. In (43), the metaphor reinforces the notion of liquidity, where the financial market is metaphorically filled with monetary

investments, just as a container might be filled with liquid. Similarly, (44) suggests an ongoing, substantial release of financial resources into the economy, comparable to pouring liquid into a system to sustain or stimulate it. Finally, in (45), the verb "pour" emphasizes the rapid, large-scale entry of foreign investment, portraying money as flowing into the stock market like liquid flowing into a vessel. Both "pump" and "pour" highlight the process of injecting or releasing financial resources into specific areas, whether to stimulate, maintain, or redirect economic activity. The shared imagery of liquid movement—forceful, steady, and abundant—effectively communicates the dynamic and impactful nature of financial transactions. Through these metaphors, finance is portrayed as something that can be managed, directed, and distributed, with significant consequences for the systems it enters, just like liquid in a physical environment.

Similarities and Differences of the Conceptual metaphor of "finance is fluid" in Vietnamese and English

Analyzing the "finance is fluid" metaphor in both Vietnamese and English reveals that, while there are many similarities, the two languages also differ in how they depict financial concepts through fluid-related imagery. In both languages, the metaphor draws on shared ideas about how fluids behave—flowing, stagnating, evaporating, or accumulating—to describe various aspects of finance. For example, words like "chảy" (flow) and "rót" or "đổ" (pour) are used in Vietnamese and English to illustrate the movement and distribution of money. Both languages employ "chảy" and "flow" to depict financial circulation, and "bơm" (pump) and "pump" to suggest the injection or infusion of funds. Similarly, expressions like "ngập" or "chìm" (drown) in Vietnamese and "drown" in English are used to convey financial crises or overwhelming situations, while "cạn" (dry) and "dry" describe shortages or resource exhaustion. Statistical analysis shows that these metaphors are fairly evenly distributed, with around 200 instances in total—100 in Vietnamese and 100 in English. The overall patterns in how people conceptualize finance as a liquid or flowing entity are remarkably similar, with roughly 55% of the metaphors aligning with the idea that "financial situation is the state of liquid" and the remaining 45% emphasizing the notion that "supplying finance is supplying liquid". This suggests a shared cognitive framework in how both cultures perceive financial processes. However, some distinctions can be observed in the specific lexical choices and their relative frequencies. Metaphors with strong imagery, such as "ngập" and "chìm" (drown/submerge), appear more frequently in Vietnamese—about 15 times—than in English—8 times. Conversely, the term "flow" is used more often in English (approximately 20 times) than in Vietnamese (around 10), suggesting a greater emphasis on the continuous, systematic movement of financial resources. These subtle cultural and cognitive differences in metaphorical framing are reflected in these variations. Nevertheless, the dominant metaphor of finance as a fluid system remains consistent across both languages, underscoring its universal role in shaping financial discourse.

Implications for foreign language teaching and learning

Gaining a clear understanding of the similarities and differences in the metaphor "finance is fluid" can provide valuable benefits for teaching and learning foreign languages. It's important to recognize that metaphors are more than just decorative language—they play a crucial role in helping people grasp abstract ideas, such as finance. This awareness can make it easier for learners to handle complex financial terms in both Vietnamese and English. Teachers can help students realize that metaphorical words like "flow," "dry," "pump," or "evaporate" aren't randomly chosen but are based on common ways of linking the behavior of fluids to economic concepts. By encouraging students to find and compare these metaphorical expressions in both languages, educators can promote critical thinking and intercultural understanding. This

exercise not only shows how financial topics are talked about differently across cultures but also explains why those differences exist, rooted in cultural views and language habits. Additionally, bringing in other finance-related metaphors, such as “finance is plant” or “finance is fire,” can broaden students’ metaphorical skills and deepen their connection to abstract vocabulary. Ultimately, learning through conceptual metaphors helps students form meaningful connections, enhancing both their understanding and ability to express ideas. This method also invites learners to explore the reasoning behind metaphorical thinking and appreciate how each language uniquely reflects cultural values and cognitive patterns.

Discussion

The present study’s findings on the conceptual metaphor “finance is fluid” in Vietnamese and English electronic news can be best understood within the framework of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 2003). According to CMT, abstract domains such as finance are often interpreted through more concrete, embodied experiences, in this case, the physical properties and behaviors of liquids. This theoretical perspective is supported by the frequent use of fluid-related metaphors in both languages, as shown by the corpus analysis of 200 metaphorical expressions.

Comparing these results to previous research reveals several similarities and differences. Liang (2021) and Qiu (2023) both highlight the importance of fluid metaphors in English-language financial journalism, noting frequent use of terms such as “cash flow,” “liquidity dries up,” and “capital flows.” The present study confirms these observations, showing that English financial discourse tends to use technical, process-oriented metaphors that emphasize movement, supply, and blockage within economic systems. This is consistent with Kövecses’ (2005, 2010) argument that metaphors in specialized fields often reflect established and analytical viewpoints, especially in English-speaking contexts.

In contrast, Vietnamese financial news features a more vivid and emotionally charged set of metaphors, with frequent use of expressions such as “ngập” (flooded), “chìm” (sinking), and “bốc hơi” (evaporating). This pattern aligns with the findings of Pham T.T.T. (2017) and Nguyen T.T.H. (2019), who observed that Vietnamese economic discourse often employs nature-inspired imagery and dramatic language to describe financial events. The present study builds on these observations by measuring how often and how widely these metaphors appear, showing a consistent preference for expressive language and story-like presentation in Vietnamese financial reporting.

The cross-linguistic similarities observed —namely, the mapping of fluid dynamics onto financial processes —support the universality of certain conceptual metaphors, as argued by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and Kövecses (2005). However, the differences in how metaphors are expressed in Vietnamese and English highlight the importance of cultural variation in metaphor use (Kövecses, 2010). While both languages draw on the main features of the source domain (fluidity), the specific words used and the emotional impact of these metaphors are influenced by unique cultural attitudes toward finance, risk, and stability.

Furthermore, the findings have pedagogical implications consistent with recent work on metaphor awareness and language teaching (Le & Nguyen, 2023; Tsitoura, 2023). Explicit instruction in metaphorical structures, particularly in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and TESOL contexts, can enhance learners’ comprehension of abstract financial vocabulary and improve their ability to interpret and translate financial texts. The challenges faced by Vietnamese learners, whose native language metaphors are more emotive and narrative, when

encountering the more neutral and technical metaphors of English financial discourse mirror the difficulties noted by Qiu (2023) and Nguyen T.B.H. (2024) in cross-cultural metaphor transfer and idiom acquisition.

In summary, this study's results not only support the main ideas of Conceptual Metaphor Theory but also build on previous research by offering a systematic, quantitative comparison of metaphorical models in Vietnamese and English financial news. The findings reveal both universal cognitive connections and culturally specific patterns, underscoring the importance of cross-cultural awareness of metaphor in language education. By relating these results to established theoretical frameworks and earlier research based on real-world data, the discussion provides a more objective and thorough explanation of how the metaphor "finance is fluid" influences financial discourse and language learning across cultures.

Conclusion and Suggestion

This study offers a detailed cross-linguistic examination of the conceptual metaphor "finance is fluid" as it appears in Vietnamese and English electronic news. The analysis reveals two main metaphorical frameworks: (1) viewing financial situations as states of liquidity, and (2) framing the act of supplying finance as akin to supplying liquidity. Both models are found at similar rates in the news articles from each language, about 55–57% for the first and 43–45% for the second. These results underscore the role of fluid-related imagery —such as flow, stagnation, evaporation, and pumping —in shaping financial discourse across cultures.

Beyond mapping metaphorical expressions, this research sheds light on important cross-cultural dynamics. While both Vietnamese and English rely on fluid metaphors, Vietnamese expressions tend to be more vivid and emotionally charged (for example, “ngập,” “chìm,” and “bốc hơi”), whereas English typically favors more technical and neutral terms like “capital flow” and “liquidity dries up.” These distinctions reflect differing cultural perspectives on financial issues and have clear implications for language instruction. For educators working in TESOL and ESP, awareness of these metaphorical patterns is essential. By actively teaching students about cross-cultural metaphors in financial English, instructors can help learners develop a deeper understanding of authentic financial texts. Recognizing how metaphors encode cultural values and technical detail enables students to engage with financial discourse more confidently and bridge gaps in intercultural communication.

Looking ahead, future research should broaden its scope to include spoken language and examine how "finance is fluid" metaphors are used in everyday conversations, business meetings, and media broadcasts. Experimental studies could also explore how learners of English as a foreign language comprehend and produce these metaphors, and how targeted instruction might enhance their financial literacy and communicative skills. Such work would further clarify the role of metaphor in financial understanding and contribute to more effective language teaching methods.

In sum, this study deepens our understanding of how metaphorical thinking shapes financial language across cultures and underscores the importance of fostering metaphor awareness in ESP and TESOL contexts.

The findings of this study hold significant implications for TESOL practitioners, particularly those engaged in teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP) with a focus on finance. The prevalence and cultural nuances of the "finance is fluid" metaphor in both Vietnamese and English highlight the need for explicit metaphor instruction in the language classroom. TESOL

educators should include targeted activities that raise students' awareness of metaphorical language, especially as it relates to financial contexts. By comparing and contrasting metaphorical expressions across languages, instructors can help learners recognize underlying cultural attitudes, thereby enhancing both comprehension and production of authentic financial discourse. It is recommended that teaching materials include real-world examples from electronic news and encourage students to analyze and create metaphorical expressions themselves. Furthermore, integrating discussions on how metaphors shape meaning and reflect cultural perspectives can foster deeper intercultural competence. Future TESOL research should investigate the effectiveness of metaphor-focused instruction in improving learners' financial understanding and communicative confidence. Ultimately, embedding metaphor awareness into ESP curricula will better equip students to handle complex financial texts and participate actively in global business environments.

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Biodata

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