

BỘ GIÁO DỤC VÀ ĐÀO TẠO
TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC QUẢN LÝ VÀ CÔNG NGHỆ HẢI PHÒNG



KHÓA LUẬN TỐT NGHIỆP

NGÀNH : NGÔN NGỮ ANH

Sinh viên : Phạm Thị Hằng

HẢI PHÒNG – 2023

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**SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN
VIETNAMESE LUNAR NEW YEAR AND AMERICAN
NEW YEAR**

**KHÓA LUẬN TỐT NGHIỆP ĐẠI HỌC HỆ CHÍNH QUY
NGÀNH: NGÔN NGỮ ANH**

Sinh viên : Phạm Thị Hằng

Giảng viên hướng dẫn : ThS. Bùi Thị Mai Anh

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Tên đề tài: Similarities and differences between Vietnamese Lunar New Year and American New Year

NHIỆM VỤ ĐỀ TÀI

1. Nội dung và các yêu cầu cần giải quyết trong nhiệm vụ đề tài tốt nghiệp

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2. Các tài liệu, số liệu cần thiết

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3. Địa điểm thực tập tốt nghiệp

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CÁN BỘ HƯỚNG DẪN ĐỀ TÀI TỐT NGHIỆP

Họ và tên : Bùi Thị Mai Anh

Học hàm, học vị : Thạc sỹ

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Đã giao nhiệm vụ ĐTTN

Giảng viên hướng dẫn

Phạm Thị Hằng

Bùi Thị Mai Anh

Hải Phòng, ngày 24 tháng 02 năm 2023

XÁC NHẬN CỦA KHOA

CỘNG HÒA XÃ HỘI CHỦ NGHĨA VIỆT NAM

Độc lập - Tự do - Hạnh phúc

PHIẾU NHẬN XÉT CỦA GIÁNG VIÊN HƯỚNG DẪN TỐT NGHIỆP

Họ và tên giảng viên: Bùi Thị Mai Anh

viên:

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Họ và tên sinh viên: Phạm Thị Hằng

Chuyên ngành: Ngôn Ngữ anh

Nội dung hướng dẫn: Similarities and differences between Vietnamese Lunar New Year and American New Year.

1. Tinh thần thái độ của sinh viên trong quá trình làm đề tài tốt nghiệp

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2. Đánh giá chất lượng của đề án/khóa luận (so với nội dung yêu cầu đã đề ra trong nhiệm vụ Đ.T. T.N trên các mặt lý luận, thực tiễn, tính toán số liệu...)

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3. Ý kiến của giảng viên hướng dẫn tốt nghiệp

Được bảo vệ Không được bảo vệ Điểm hướng dẫn

Hải Phòng, ngày ... tháng ... năm

Giảng viên hướng dẫn

CỘNG HÒA XÃ HỘI CHỦ NGHĨA VIỆT NAM

Độc lập - Tự do - Hạnh phúc

PHIẾU NHẬN XÉT CỦA GIẢNG VIÊN CHẤM PHẢN BIỆN

Họ và tên giáo viên:

Đơn vị công tác:

Họ và tên sinh viên: Phạm Thị Hằng

Chuyên ngành: Ngôn Ngữ anh

Đề tài tốt nghiệp: Similarities and differences between Vietnamese Lunar
New Year and American New Year

1. Phần nhận xét của giảng viên chấm phản biện

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2. Những mặt còn hạn chế

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3. Ý kiến của giảng viên chấm phản biện

Được bảo vệ Không được bảo vệ Điểm hướng dẫn

Hải Phòng, ngày ... tháng ... năm 2023

Giảng viên chấm phản biện

ABSTRACT

Culture is the background of every human communication. Cultural embedding as a feature of texts in general is also valid in technical and scientific texts. As translation by humans is based on understanding, the translator needs knowledge in order to detect cultural aspects. This is possible by putting down implicit cultural references to certain structures on the text level. Cultural elements appear in the text on all levels-from the concept and form of words, to the sentence and text structure, to pragmatics. Examples for the various appearances are presented in the first part of the paper. Culture, being what people have to learn as distinct from their biological heritage, must consist of the end product of learning: knowledge, in a most general, if relative, sense of the term.

By this definition, we should note that culture is not a material phenomenon; it does not consist of things, people, behaviour, or emotions. It is rather an organization of these things. It is the forms of things that people have in mind, their models for perceiving, relating, and otherwise interpreting them.

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Last, My special thanks approve to my parents for their love, care and motivations for the whole of my life , I also would like to express my thanks to my sister and friends for their support and care all the time.

Hai Phong, Feb 2023

Phạm Thị Hằng

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PART 1: INTRODUCTION

1. Rationales

Nowadays, with the development of society there are a lot of Viet Nam people goes to abroad for study, work and live. Besides, there are also foreigners come to Viet Nam to travel, therefore lead to cross cultural traditions between Vietnam and America for example the way to welcome New Year holiday. America and Vietnam are two distinctive countries with many differences. The two countries are on different continents, and there are a lot of differences between them as culture, beliefs and practices of the people are also different . There are several similarities and differences between Vietnamese and American culture, especially in holiday New Year's traditions to celebrate. “Similarities and differences between Vietnamese Lunar New Year and American New Year” is an interesting topic, which attracts much care of young people. But the ways to celebrate the New Year in Vietnam (an Asian country) and America (a Western country) is different from each other, This research will bring the readers common knowledge about New Year tradition in those two mentioned countries.

2. Aims of the Study

This study is aimed at comparing similarities and differences between Vietnamese Lunar New Year and American New Year. Therefore, the following objectives are set to full the overall aim:

- Point out the Similarities between Vietnamese Lunar New Year and American New Year
- Point out the differences between Vietnamese Lunar New Year and American New Year

3. Research questions

To gain the objectives which are mentioned above, the following research questions were raised:

Question 1: what are the Similarities between Vietnamese Lunar New Year and American New Year holidays?

Question 2: what are the differences between Vietnamese Lunar New Year and American New Year holidays?

4. Scope of the study

Because of the limitation of time and ability, in this thesis I just study the New Year holiday in Vietnamese and American during the entire time. I will concentrate about New Year holiday customs with three main stages: pre-New Year prepare, during the New Year and after the New Year.

5. Significance of the study

Understanding the New Year holidays between the two countries of Vietnam and the US is very important. Through this it is possible to contribute more research materials on the holiday traditional. At the same time the research finding ideas offer to help preserve and promote good cultural values in holiday of both Vietnamese and Americans. From there, it can be contribute to help protect and maintain the nationality core.

6. Design of the study

This thesis consists of three main parts as follow:

Part 1: "Introduction" presents thereotical and practical background of the study, the aims, the research questions, scope, significance and the design of the study.

Part 2: "Development" consists of two chapters

Chapter one provides some characterise of New Year celebrate in Vietnam and America.

- Chapter two analyzes typical features and stages of Vietnamses and

American New year celebrate customs. Based on that foundation, a comparison was conducted to find out the similarities and differences between New Year customs of those two countries.

Part 3: “Conclusion” summarizes all the main points presented throughout the study. It also presents the limitations of the study in which the author states the reasons for the study’s limitations, and suggestions for further research.

PART 2 : DEVELOPMENT

CHAPTER 1 : LITERATURE REVIEW

1. New Year and Lunar New Year Definition and Meaning

1.1 What is the New Year?

New Year is the first day or days of the year in various calendars, usually celebrated as a holiday, when capitalized, the term New Year commonly refers to the first day or the first few days of a new year starting on January 1.

This is the sense of the term that's used in the phrase Happy New Year and in the terms New Year's Eve (December 31) and New Year's Day (January 1), which is a holiday to celebrate the New Year. The term New Year's can refer to either New Year's Eve or New Year's Day. It can also refer to the period of time spanning the end of the year and the beginning of the new one. New Year can also be used in this way, as in We'll be away for the New Year, but we'll be back on January 4.

Of course, people who are wishing you a Happy New Year are probably wishing that your entire year is happy, too not just its first day or first few days. In general, a new year is the year that has just begun or will begin soon.

The term New Year is also used in the context of the beginnings of years that are based on other calendars, such as a Lunar New Year. For example, the Chinese New Year and the Jewish New Year (known as Rosh Hashanah) are both based on lunar calendars. The New Year holiday known as Nowruz (sometimes called the Persian New Year) occurs on the vernal equinox.

In the U.S., the New Year is part of what's known as the holiday season (sometimes called the holidays) the period that starts on Thanksgiving and continues until New Year's Day and includes the holidays of Hanukkah,

Christmas, Kwanzaa, and New Year's Eve. Many people view the New Year as a time for new beginnings and resolutions.

1.2 What is the Lunar New Year?

Lunar New Year is the observance of the start of a new year in a lunar.

Lunar New Year is one of the most important celebrations in Vietnamese culture. The colloquial term “Tết” is a shortened form of Tết Nguyên Đán, with Old Vietnamese origins meaning “Festival of the First Morning of the First Day”. Tết celebrates the arrival of spring based on the Vietnamese calendar, which usually has the date on January or February in the Gregorian calendar.

1.3 New Year Date

New Year's Day falls on 1st January and marks the start of a new year according to the Gregorian calendar. It marks the end of New Year's Eve celebrations in the United States and gives many Americans a chance to remember the previous year. This is a state public holiday. State government offices are closed. Public transit systems do not run on their regular schedules, Some schools and businesses may also be closed on this day.

New Year's Day is a festival observed in most of the world on 1st January, the first day of the year in the modern Gregorian calendar. 1st January is also New Year's Day on the Julian calendar, but this is not the same day as the Gregorian one. While most solar calendars (like the Gregorian and Julian) begin the year regularly at or near the northern winter solstice, cultures that observe a lunisolar or lunar calendar celebrate their New Year (such as the Chinese New Year and the Islamic New Year) at less fixed points relative to the solar year.

In pre-Christian Rome under the Julian calendar, the day was dedicated to Janus, god of gateways and beginnings, for whom January is also named. From Roman times until the middle of the 18th century, the new year was celebrated at various

stages and in various parts of Christian Europe on 25 December, on 1 March, on 25 March and on the movable feast of Easter.

In the present day, with most countries now using the Gregorian calendar as their civil calendar, 1 January according to that calendar is among the most celebrated public holidays in the world, often observed with fireworks at the stroke of midnight following New Year's Eve as the new year starts in each time zone. Other global New Year's Day traditions include making New Year's resolutions and calling one's friends and family.

The Julian calendar, proposed by Julius Caesar in AUC 708 (46 BC), was a reform of the Roman calendar. It took effect on 1 January AUC 709 (45 BC), by edict. The calendar became the predominant calendar in the Roman Empire and subsequently, most of the Western world for more than 1,600 years. The Roman calendar began the year on 1 January, and this remained the start of the year after the Julian reform. However, even after local calendars were aligned to the Julian calendar, they started the new year on different dates. The Alexandrian calendar in Egypt started on 29 August (30 August after an Alexandrian leap year). Several local provincial calendars were aligned to start on the birthday of the Emperor Augustus, 23 September. The indiction caused the Byzantine year, which used the Julian calendar, to begin on 1 September; this date is still used in the Eastern Orthodox Church for the beginning of the liturgical year.

At various times and in various places throughout mediaeval Christian Europe, the new year was celebrated on 25 December in honour of the birth of Jesus; 1 March in the old Roman style; 25 March in honour of Lady Day (the Feast of the Annunciation, the date of the conception of Jesus); and on the movable feast of Easter.

Most nations of Europe and their colonies officially adopted 1 January as New Year's Day somewhat before they adopted the Gregorian calendar. France changed to 1 January from 1564, most of Germany did so from 1544, the Netherlands from 1556 or 1573 according to sect, Italy (not being united) did so on a variety of dates, Spain and Portugal from 1556, Sweden, Norway and

Denmark from 1599, Scotland from 1600, and Russia from 1725.[2] England, Wales, Ireland, and Britain's American colonies did so from 1752.

While Lunar New Year is a Vietnamese tradition also known as Tết Nguyên Đán. It is a Vietnamese tradition celebrated from the 1st of January to the 3rd, according to the lunar calendar. Each year a different sacred animal in the Chinese Zodiac controls the luck and destinies of all people.

Tet is based on the lunar calendar, and generally celebrated on the same day as the Chinese New Year. The date changes annually, but falls between mid-January and late February. Most Vietnamese people will have five days off for Tet. Tet celebrations can range from 3 days and continue for up to one week. The festival is split into the day before New Year's Eve, New Year's Eve, and New Year's Day.

Americans might recall the 1968 Tet Offensive during the Vietnam War. Tet Nguyen Dan, shortened to Tet, is Vietnam's Lunar New Year and is the most important annual celebration and public holiday in Vietnam spanning 5-7 days. Tet celebrates the beginning of a new year as well the coming of spring. Exuberant festivities are held — traditional food, music and dragon dancing performed along the streets. During this time there is a real sense of celebration in the air, making it a festive time to visit Vietnam. Celebrated as a time of renewal, Tet serves as an opportunity for Vietnamese people to pay homage to their ancestors and have family reunions.

Preparations usually begin a week before Tet, as people start to return home, clean their family graves, worship at their family altars and decorate their homes with apricot blossoms, peach blossoms and kumquat trees, symbolizing the hope of prosperity and well-being.

1.4 Traditional Lunar New Year in Vietnam

Tet celebrations can range from 3 days and continue for up to one week. The festival is split into the day before New Year's Eve, New Year's Eve, and New Year's Day.

The season of Tet occurs around the end of January and the beginning of February. The meaning of Tet is ending an old year and welcome a new year. Tet holiday is very special for Vietnamese families to reunite. At that time, all family members try to come back their homes and get together to prepare for Tet. Moreover, they will buy new clothes and clean their house. A branch of Mai flower or a Kumquat tree can't be absent from every home. They bring a fresh atmosphere to the house. There is various typical Tet's food such as sweets, coconut jam, candied fruits, lemon seeds, rice cake, especially sticky rice cake. On Tet holiday, people have many typical activities. Young people can take part in the traditional games such as: tug; cooking rice, cock fighting, watching lion dance. Others will visit their relatives to wish a happy new year. Woman like going to the pagoda to pray good things will come to their family in the coming year. Beside, adults will give lucky money for children, that makes them really excited.

1.5 Traditional New Year in America

New Year's Day falls on January 1 and marks the start of a new year according to the Gregorian calendar. It marks the end of New Year's Eve celebrations in the United States and gives many Americans a chance to remember the previous year.

New Year in the USA is a big party night – so you won't be short of people to toast or bid “Happy New Year” to. Many get together at each other's houses to drink and be merry, often with Dick Clark's Times Square Ball Drop, a US institution, on the TV in the background to ensure everyone knows when the clock strikes midnight. This celebration involves a huge ball located at One Times Square being lowered, starting at 11:59, sparking a sixty-second

countdown to the New Year. Wherever you are, you should be able to find a party to attend, or a fireworks display to enjoy. Parades, clocks striking midnight, fireworks, street decorations, and themed parties in bars, nightclubs, and restaurants are all just as widespread as they are here in the UK. It's traditional in the USA to kiss people at midnight – so be warned, you may get some kisses you didn't quite bargain for!

1.6 Overview of New Year customs

New Year is very special for families to reunite. At that time, all family members try to come back their homes and get together to prepare for New Year.

1.6.1 New Year customs in America

In the United States, people begin to celebrate the New Year on December 31st, New Year's Eve. New Year's Day (January 1st) is a national holiday in the United States.

An American New Year's consists of classic traditions including attending parties, watching the Times Square Ball Drop for the midnight countdown, watching fireworks displays, creating a New Year's resolution, hosting potlucks, and much more. Some of the food that has significance for the new year in American culture include black eyed peas for good luck and wealth along with cooked collard greens to symbolize a prosperous new year. When midnight strikes, it is an American tradition to say "Happy New Year! to friends and family and even share a New Year's kiss between loved ones".

Watching the "Ball Drop" in Times Square

Each year, billions of people around the globe gather together to celebrate the coming of the new year. Across the United States, many celebrate by popping champagne and counting down the seconds until the clock strikes midnight. Check out some of the popular traditions you might come across with American New Year's Eve celebrations!

Every year, about two million people gather in New York City’s Times Square to watch the famous “ball drop”. This tradition began in 1907 with a 700-pound ball that was slowly lowered down a pole until it reached the ground at midnight. Today, ball is 11,875 pounds and covered in sparkling Waterford crystals. For all of those unable to witness this annual tradition in person, the ball drop is broadcasted both nationally and internationally, with about one billion people worldwide crowding around their TV screens to count down the seconds until the ball reaches the ground in time to usher in the new year!



The New Year's Kiss



One symbol you might spot dotted around that could cause an eyebrow raise is that of Baby New Year. This chap is typically a white male baby dressed in a nappy, hat and a sash. Legend has it that Baby New Year matures into a man in just one year, which means that by the end of each year, he's grown old and in turn, he hands his role over to the next Baby New Year.

Hoppin' John



Hoppin' John is a popular Southern dish of black-eyed peas, pork, and rice, eaten on New Year's Day to bring good luck. The black-eyed peas are thought to symbolize coins. As a result, legend has it that eating this dish will bring prosperity and a year of good luck. The source of this dish can be traced back to slavery and the slave trade, and may stem from West African dishes.

1.6.2 Lunar New Year customs in Vietnam

In Vietnamese culture, Lunar New Year – known as the most important celebration

they call Lunar New Year as 'Tet Nguyen Dan' or 'Tết' which is translated as "Feast of the First Morning of the First Day". The word ' Nguyen ' represents a new beginning and 'Dan' means new dawn.

The dates of Lunar New Year differs every year but it generally takes place around late January or February.

In Vietnam, Tet is normally divided into three periods:

Tất Niên – Before New Year’s Eve

Giao Thừa – New Year’s Eve

Tân Niên – The New Year

1.6.2.1 Before New Year’s Eve (Tất Niên)

This period begins one or two weeks before the actual celebration. The general atmosphere leading up to Tet is in the bustle of shopping, decorating the home, cooking traditional Tet food and waiting for relatives to return home. The dishes and foods that are usually prepared include bánh chưng, bánh dày; hạt dưa (roasted watermelon seeds); mứt (dried candied fruits); mâm ngũ quả (five fruits type); canh măng (dried young bamboo soup), giò chả (spring roll) and xôi (sticky rice).

Vietnamese families usually have a family altar, to pay respect to their ancestors. During Tet the altar is thoroughly cleaned and new offerings are placed there. Traditionally, the three kitchen guardians for each house (Ông Táo) (Kitchen God) return to heaven on the 23rd day of the twelfth month by the lunar calendar to give his annual report on family members to the Jade Emperor. Their departure is marked by a modest ceremony where the family offers sacrifices for them to use on their journey.



1.6.2.2 New Year's Eve (Giao Thừa)

On the New Year's Eve, Vietnamese people have a spectacular celebration which involves the whole nation—some may gather around the TV and watch the Tao Quan show, some may go out for fireworks observation. When the bell of the twelfth-hour rings, everybody gathers, at exciting parties or at the comfort of their homes, saying Happy New Year to one another in warm hugs, forgetting all problems as well as hoping for a better start.



Some of the common wishes for Tết are: “Cung Chúc Tân Xuân” (gracious wishes of the new spring), “Vạn Sự Như Ý” (may myriad things go according to your will), “An Khang Thịnh Vượng” (security, good health and prosperity), “Phát Tài Phát Lộc” (wisdom and prosperity), “Đại Cát Đại Lợi” (great luck and prosperity).

A huge part of the celebration is the traditional Tết dishes that are carefully prepared and cooked. Main dishes include bánh chưng (square cake), boiled chicken, lean pork paste, spring rolls, pickled onions and bamboo soup cooked with pig’s trotters, the Tết tray carries major significant spirituality: remembering and respecting ancestors and wishing them to always support their offspring with a Happy New Year, good health, good luck and safety.

1.6.2.3 The New Year (Tân Niên)

During this period, there are many traditional customs that are only practised during this special occasion such as ancestor worship, visiting a person’s house on the first day of the new year (xông nhà), New Year’s greetings, giving lucky money to children and elderly people... Especially, Vietnamese women often wear Áo Dài for Lunar New Year. The women select a beautiful red Áo Dài to visit their neighborhood, which makes Lunar New Year more meaningful. The red Áo Dài symbolizes luck, warmth and prosperity

The first day of Tet is reserved for the nuclear family. Children wear their new clothes, give their elders the traditional Tet greetings before receiving the lucky money from them in exchange. Since the Vietnamese believe that the very first visitor a family receives in the year determines their fortune for the entire year, a person of good temper, morality and success will be the lucky sign for the host family and be invited first into the house. This special activity is called *xông đất* or *xông nhà* , which is one of the most important rituals during Tet.



According to Vietnamese tradition, if good things come to the family on the first day of the lunar New Year, the entire following year will also be full of blessings.

During subsequent days, people visit relatives and friends. Traditionally but not strictly, the second day of Tet is usually reserved for friends, while the third day is for teachers, who command respect in Vietnam. Besides, people go to pagoda in new year to pray for health , happiness , goodluck during the year . Local

Buddhist temples are popular spots as people like to give donations and to get their fortunes told during Tet.

1.7 Common New Year traditions associated with various countries and cultures

Whether you're ringing in New Year's Eve from some exciting foreign country or at home with family and friends, you probably have a New Year's tradition or two. Common traditions throughout the United States include singing "Auld Lang Syne" to greet the New Year, and eating black-eyed peas for good luck. Around the world, cultures welcome the change of the calendar with unique New Year's traditions of their own. Here are some of our favorite New Year's traditions around the world (we're especially fans of Colombia's!).

In Spain, it is customary to eat 12 grapes – one at each stroke of the clock at midnight on New Year's Eve. Each grape represents good luck for one month of the coming year. In bigger cities like Madrid and Barcelona, people gather in main squares to eat their grapes together and pass around bottles of cava.

In hopes of a travel-filled new year, residents of Colombia carry empty suitcases around the block. That's one New Year's tradition we can get behind!

Residents of Denmark greet the New Year by throwing old plates and glasses against the doors of family and friends to banish bad spirits. They also stand on chairs and jump off of them together at midnight to "leap" into January in hopes of good luck.

In Finland, people predict the coming year by casting molten tin into a container of water, then interpreting the shape the metal takes after hardening. A heart or ring means a wedding, while a ship predicts travel and a pig declares there will be plenty of food.

During Scotland's New Year's Eve celebration of Hogmanay, "first-footing" is practiced across the country. The first person who crosses a threshold of a home in the New Year should carry a gift for luck. Scots also hold bonfire ceremonies

where people parade while swinging giant fireballs on poles, supposedly symbols of the sun, to purify the coming year.

You'll find round shapes all over the Philippines on New Year's Eve as representatives of coins to symbolize prosperity in the coming year. Many families display piles of fruit on their dining tables and some eat exactly 12 round fruits .

In Brazil, as well as other Central and South America countries like Ecuador, Bolivia, and Venezuela, it is thought to be lucky to wear special underwear on New Year's Eve. The most popular colors are red, thought to bring love in the New Year, and yellow, thought to bring money. (grapes being the most common) at midnight. Many also wear polka dots for luck.

An onion is traditionally hung on the front door of homes on New Year's Eve in Greece as a symbol of rebirth in the New Year. On New Year's Day, parents wake their children by tapping them on the head with the onion.

1.8 Importance of this culture in daily life

Culture is the physical and mental value system of the creators, which is confirmed by the community, creating the individual identity of the human race, each society. Culture plays an important role in everyday life. Culture is belief, is lifestyle, is the spiritual place encouraging human encouragement constantly exists and develops. Thanks to the culture people have the purpose of living and working. The more people and human societies grow, the need for spiritual culture requires increasing. To meet the cultural needs of the spirit that is to ensure the increasingly growing of material wealth for people and society.

Culture is the motivation of development, because every development is determined by man. Culture arouse and multiply all of the creative potential of human beings, mobilizing enormous endogenous strength in humans to contribute to social development. Thanks to the culture that people are becoming increasingly perfected.

1.9 Concluding remarks

This chapter has delineated issues relevant to the New Year holiday and New Year customs in Vietnamese and American culture. A review of the New Year customs associated with religions and cultures support the researcher to analysis typical New Year customs in Vietnamese and American culture.

CHAPTER 2 : METHODOLOGY

2.1 Data collection and analysis

2.1.1 Preparing data

Data can be defined as the quantitative or qualitative values of a variable. Data is thought to be the lowest unit of information from which other measurements and analysis can be done. It plays the most important and vital role in any research studies as it helps to bring about the quantitative evidence for a hypothesis or supports the justification for a qualitative study. Within this study, data is collected from a number of articles, books, and materials about Vietnamese and American cultures. The author first collected data according to different periods of time in two different cultures so that he can figure out the similarities and differences of New Year customs based on time. In addition, data is collected based on geographical locations. In fact, different places have different customs.

2.1.2 Setting criteria for data collection

To get data for analysis, some criteria are set up.

First, the books, articles, and materials collected for the study must be reliable. They are published books, not the ones posted on the internet.

Second, the sample size is large enough to guarantee that each main category of data should include at least thirty cases as recommended in Cohen (2000) to guarantee the validity of statistical findings. To satisfy this requirement, the researcher has collected more than 30 different sources of materials so that it helps to guarantee the reliability and validity of the statistics borne out.

2.1.3 Analyzing and interpreting data

Once data are collected, we start to analyze them from two approaches. The quantitative approach guarantees the completion of a statistical analysis which helps to provide necessary statistical evidences for the generalization of common

features and stages of wedding customs in Vietnamese and American cultures. The qualitative approach supports the researcher to interpret the occurrence of prominent features and stages of New Year customs in two cultures. Specifically, from the processed data related to the common features help to justify the implication of the study on the culture of learning English at HPU.

2.2 Research methods

The following methods have been deployed in this research:

First, descriptive method enables the researcher to figure out typical features and stages of New Year customs in Vietnamese and American culture.

Second, interpretative method provides justifications for the occurrence of such features and stages.

The next method to be mentioned is the synthetic method which is applied to help the researcher categorize the common features found in the analysis. After these features are described, the typical ones are synthesized and categorized.

Finally, comparative method is employed to find out the similarities and differences in typical features and stages of New Year customs in Vietnamese and American cultures.

2.3 Concluding remarks

This chapter is devoted to the presentation and analysis of the appropriate the methods for data collection and analysis. Moreover, a brief review of the research methods are also mentioned.

CHAPTER 3 : FINDING AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1 The similarities between Vietnamese Lunar New Year and American New Year traditions

New Year Day is an important time for everyone regardless of their nationalities. All over the world, everybody is always eager and waits for this time in a year. However, the celebrations of New Year in each country are not nearly parallel because different cultures observe their traditional or religious New Year Day according to their own customs. In this essay, we will examine some similarities and differences between New Year's celebration in The United States and Tet holiday in Vietnam.

In the first place, they share some similarities. Both of them have some days off. At that time, in both of these countries all businesses, schools and offices are closed and every family always gathers to take part in parties together. In addition, at New Year time, Vietnamese spend time visiting their relatives and their friends just as Americans do. Moreover, this is the moments for not only Vietnamese but also Americans to do their meaningful things such as forgiving, repairing broken relationships and thinking about the future.

3.2 The differences between American New Year and Vietnamese Lunar New Year celebrate

Despite some similarities, there are several differences in the celebrations of New Year in these countries. The first difference is the time. Americans celebrate New Year on the first day of the civil year, meanwhile Vietnamese' Tet holiday starts on the first day of lunar year which is a month later than Americans' celebration of New Year. Besides, the celebrations of New Year in The United States always last for about three days while Tet holiday in Vietnam usually lasts until for up to a week from 29th December to 5th January according to Lunar Calendar.

The next distinction is the preparation. In Vietnam, Tet holiday is the busiest time of the year when the whole family make up plans for cleaning the house and decorate their houses with kumquat trees and peach blossom trees. They also make a lot of traditional food such as Chung cakes, Vietnamese sausages, sticky rice, boiled chicken and spring rolls.

3.2.1 The Features and how is Lunar New Year Holiday celebrated in Vietnam

Vietnamese Lunar New Year (Tết) is the biggest celebration in Vietnam. When Tet is about to come, everyone is busy preparing many unique activities to welcome it. Here are special things they usually do.

In Vietnam, Tet is normally divided into three periods:

- *Before New Year's Eve -Tất Niên*
- *New Year's Eve- Giao Thừa*
- *The New Year -Tân Niên*

3.2.1.1 Before New Year's Eve (Tất Niên)

3.2.1.1.1 Reuniting with our families

Tet is a privileged time for family, similarly to Christmas in Western countries for example. As you might know, in Vietnam, plenty of people from rural areas move to big cities such as Ho Chi Minh, Ha Noi, Da Nang, Can Tho for working and studying. When Tet is about to arrive, everyone just cannot wait to come home to celebrate the Lunar New Year. That's why Tet is the perfect time to gather around all generations. During this wonderful time of the year, all of family members meet together, catch up, play games, and share memories.



3.2.1.1.2 Cleaning and decorating the house

- Shopping

From 25th to 30th on the last month of Lunar Calendar, the Vietnamese will spend much time to visit local markets and buy some main ingredients to make traditional food such as “Lá Dong” - special leave to wrap Chung cake, rice, sticky rice, chicken, fruits, etc. Locals also buy many accessories to decorate the house in a beautiful and colourful way.



- Mâm Ngũ Quả - Tray of Five Fruits



This is fruit basket decoration made for Tet Holiday consisting of five different fruits such as bananas, a pomelo, tangerines, a pineapple and oranges. They can be replaced by some other type of fruits like custard-apple, apples, persimmon and pear. Each region in Vietnam usually choose different fruits but the meaning of the tray is still the same - expressing the wishes of the host family by their names, arrangements and colours.

Cleaning the house is one of the common traditions before the Lunar New Year. As a clean and nice house would bring a pleasant atmosphere, it would therefore help bringing a positive and lucky year ahead.

Additionally, there will be many friends and relatives who will be visiting each other during this holiday. Keeping the house organized, neat, and covered with Tet colors such as red, yellow, and green is necessary to show our respect and hospitality to our guests.

That's why we spend a lot of time to decor and make the house as clean, tidy, and beautiful as possible to welcome Tet. This is mainly how Vietnamese celebrate the Lunar New Year.

At Tết every house is usually decorated by hoa mai – *Ochna integerrima* (in the central and southern parts of Vietnam) or hoa đào – peach flower (in the northern part of Vietnam) or hoa ban (in mountain areas). In the north or central, the kumquat tree is a popular decoration for the living room during Tết. Its bright orange-colored fruits represent the fertility and fruitfulness that the family hopes for in the coming year.



3.2.1.1.3 Taking care of ancestor's graves

Vietnamese people not only prepare their houses to celebrate the Lunar New Year but also care about cleaning and repairing the resting places of the deceased. We call this activity “Tảo mộ” in Vietnamese.

From about December 20 to 30th of the lunar calendar (around January of the solar calendar), families will gather all generations and come to the cemetery. They clean the graves of their ancestor, repair them if there’s something wrong, clear the grass around.



After cleaning the tombs, they bring incense, flowers, fruits, and offerings to invite the deceased to come home, to celebrate Tet with their family.

This is also one of the very popular activities that Vietnamese do to celebrate the Lunar New Year. It helps to remind young generations about their ancestors, introduce new family members to the deceased, as well as pray to have a new year full of health, luck and happiness.

3.2.1.1.4 Going to the local Tet market (chợ Tết)

Apart from supermarkets, Vietnamese people often go to local markets to buy things for the new year. I would say these local markets are signatures of Tet. They are always more crowded than usual. Locals go to there very early around 6 am to buy fresh products. Flowers are sold everywhere and make the local markets become colorful and lovely.

The sound of selling, bargaining, the voice of chatting, laughing creates a very unique and characteristic song of the local Tet market in Vietnam.

This is one of the greatest things in the Vietnamese Lunar New Year. It's boldly local and vividly reflects the real spirit of Tet. If you would like to feel what Tet is, just simply go to the local Tet market, buy some products and enjoy the vibe.



- *Trees and Flowers on Tet Holiday*

Two typical flowers for Tet are Peach blossoms in Northern Vietnam and Yellow Apricot blossoms in Southern Vietnam. The Northern people often choose red peach branches to place on altars or decorate their houses since they believe that Peach blossoms have the power to protect them from devils and its flower colour will bring the luck and a prosperous new year to them.

With the Southern part of Vietnam, since these areas have a tropical climate that is suitable for Yellow Apricot blossoms to sprout every Spring. They also believe the yellow colour of the flower symbolizes the fortune to the owners.

In addition, in the North or Central Vietnam, locals also buy kumquat tree - a tree is often placed in the living room during Tet Holiday. This kumquat tree is believed to bring fertility & fruitfulness to the owners.



- *Neu tree*



As mentioned before, during Tet Holiday, each family will display “Cây Nêu” in front of their houses. This Neu Tree can be a bamboo pole 5 to 6 meters long and is usually decorated with different objects (this will depend on each region) such as votive papers, origami fish, cactus branches, good luck charms, alcohol bottle made of straw and amulet exorcism. This New Tree is considered as one of the important signals for the devils to realize that this house is home of living people, not to harass.

But today Neu tree is no longer use for many Vietnam home in Lunar New year.

3.2.1.1.5 The Cuisine of Tet Holiday

The Vietnamese traditional proverb denotes that “Đói giỗ cha, no ba ngày Tết”, it means no matter how poor you are, you will need to borrow or manage to have enough to eat for three days of Tet so that elderly people can have soup and young children have new clothes. In addition, despite you can be hungry all year but in Tet, you will be well fed especially small children. Below are some main signature dishes during Tet Holiday:

- *Chung cake and Tet cake*

One of the indispensable activities before Tet is cooking Chung cake (Bánh Chung) and Tet cake (bánh tét)

This is the traditional cake in Vietnam that used to appear on Tet holiday only. However, nowadays, you can find it easy to eat this special food all seasons. The main ingredients to make this cake are glutinous rice, green beans and pork. After adding a bit salt into the glutinous rice, pepper into pork, all ingredients will be wrapped in “Dong Leaves” and boiled overnight (it takes around 8 to 10 hours).



Some families also make “Bánh Tét” from the same ingredients but in different shape. According to a legend of Lang Lieu, a prince of the last king of the 6th

Hung Dynasty, who became the successor thanks to his Chung cake and Giay cake which symbolized the earth and the sky respectively.

Depending on each area and region in Vietnam, we will cook either Bánh Chung or Bánh Tét or both. Normally, people in the North are more with Bánh Chung while the Central and the South prefer Bánh Tét.

Bánh Chung and Bánh Tét are similar as both are made of sticky rice, meat, and beans. They are both wrapped in leaves, and cooked for hours. However, Bánh Chung is square-shaped and we often use dong leaves to cover it. While Bánh Tét is cylindrical and is wrapped in banana leaves.

They are traditional food and the symbol of Tet. Whenever we see them, we feel Tet coming around. Preparing and cooking Bánh Chung and Bánh Tét are how Vietnamese celebrate the Lunar New Year with their family.

In the last days of the year, the whole family gathers around the boiling pot of Bánh Chung and Bánh Tét, waiting for the cakes to be cooked, which is the warmest moment when Tet comes. The image of grandmas and mothers showing their children how to wrap and make a Bánh Chung and Bánh Tét for Tet. This is the beauty of the Lunar New Year where generation connection has a chance to be reinforced.

- *Xôi*

Besides, xôi is also a very important part of Têt holiday in Vietnam, along with Bánh Chung, xôi is the main staple foods for Têt holiday. Xôi can be seen in many forms: Xôi Lạc (sticky rice with peanuts), Xôi Đỗ Xanh (sticky rice with mung bean), Xôi Gấc (sticky rice with special “gấc” fruit). Among these types, xôi gấc is favorite the most by people because of its special red color – symbolizes the luck and new achievement for the New Year.



- *Tet Jam*

This is one of the special snacks which is used to welcome guests on Tet Holiday. It is made from many different dried fruits such as coconuts, apples, carrots, tomato, etc. Its sweet taste and colourful colour are believed to bring luck for the New Year.



3.2.1.1.6 Worshipping Land Genie, and Gods of Kitchen

Although Tet starts on the 1st day of the Lunar Year, its preparation takes long before that (from the 23rd day of the last Lunar month which is also the day that the “Ông Công - Ông Táo” (Land Genie & Kitchen Gods) ceremony takes place). According to the legend, the Land Genie and these Gods (including two males and one female) will ride carps to heaven to tell Jade Emperor (Ngọc Hoàng) about households’ activities on earth. Since the Land Genie and the Gods will make their journey on the backs of fish, it is traditional that Vietnamese release lives carp into either lakes or rivers to pray for good luck. Locals also burn paper clothing (including hats, robes and boots) which are intended for use by the Land Genie and the Gods on their trip to the beyond.



According to folk beliefs, Tao Quan are the Gods including Land Genie (ông Công) who takes care of the land and the house, Mr. Kitchen God (ông Táo) who oversees the kitchen, and Mrs. Kitchen God (bà Táo), who takes care of the market and trading.

Their role is to witness and take notes on all events happening in each family. On December 23 every lunar year, Kitchen Gods and Land Genie will

ride a carp to heaven. They will then present to the Jade Emperor all the things he has seen and heard during the year.

From there, the zenith will give rewards and punishments for each family based on what they have done, good or bad. This belief somehow reminds us to live a better life, to share and help others as there will be karma for what we did.

That's why on the same day, Vietnamese families often hold a decent ceremony with offerings to send Tao Quan to heaven solemnly with the hope that they will bless the family with much luck.

3.2.1.2 New Year's Eve (Giao Thừa)

On the New Year's Eve, Vietnamese people have a spectacular celebration which involves the whole nation—some may gather around the TV and watch the Tao Quan show, some may go out for fireworks observation. When the bell of the twelfth-hour rings, everybody gathers, at exciting parties or at the comfort of their homes, saying Happy New Year to one another in warm hugs, forgetting all problems as well as hoping for a better start.

Some of the common wishes for Tết are: “Cung Chúc Tân Xuân” (gracious wishes of the new spring), “Vạn Sự Như Ý” (may myriad things go according to your will), “An Khang Thịnh Vượng” (security, good health and prosperity), “Phát Tài Phát Lộc” (wisdom and prosperity), “Đại Cát Đại Lợi” (great luck and prosperity).



3.2.1.3 The New Year (Tân Niên)

During this period, there are many traditional customs that are only practised during this special occasion such as ancestor worship, visiting a person's house on the first day of the new year (xông nhà), New Year's greetings, giving lucky money to children and elderly people...

With the children or at present, everyone who still are studying instead of working, Lunar New Year is their most favorite time in the year as they will be given lucky money. In the old-time, the lucky money is just a small amount of money, normally is pennies, putting in a tiny red envelope as a wish of luck; however, as the time flies, the living standard of Vietnamese is higher, the amount of money given as lucky money in Lunar New Year is much higher, especially in the North of Vietnam and the traditional red envelope is slowly changed into many different types of the envelope with diverse shape, size, and design.



Mut (candied fruits) is served as a snack to welcome guests visiting house and always kept in beautiful boxes and placed at the table in the living room.

The first day of Tet is reserved for the nuclear family. Children wear their new clothes, give their elders the traditional Tet greetings before receiving the lucky money from them in exchange.

Since the Vietnamese believe that the very first visitor a family receives in the year determines their fortune for the entire year, a person of good temper, morality and success will be the lucky sign for the host family and be invited first

into the house. This special activity is called *xông đất* or *xông nhà*, which is one of the most important rituals during Tet. According to Vietnamese tradition, if good things come to the family on the first day of the lunar New Year, the entire following year will also be full of blessings.

During subsequent days, Vietnamese often go to visit their parents and relatives to give them best wishes on New Year. While that, they will give lucky money to their parents, children and elders with the aim at giving lucky money to wish them a lucky and healthy year.

Besides it, everyone also delivers to each other meaningful wishes such as: Money influx is as strong as Da's river, expenditure is as little as dripping coffee, I wish you a healthy new year, I wish you a wealthy new year, New year, new triumphs, All wishes come true, etc. Everyone is in the smooth and happy feelings. Local Buddhist temples are popular spots as people like to give donations and to get their fortunes told during Tet. In addition, during the Tet holiday, there are many special and traditional activities carried out on the first days of the New Year.

Last but not least, taking part in folk games is one of the interesting activities during the Tet holiday. Some traditional games such as: Swinging (*Danh Du*), Wrestling (*Dau vat*), Tug of war (*Keo co*), Go on stilts (*Di ca kheo*), Cockfighting game (*Choi ga*), etc. The games are held to create the condition for everyone living in a village or area to take part in and exchange with each other. Also, it is to make everyone remember to folk games of the country and let children know more about the tradition of the nation.

3.2.2 The Features and how is New Year Holiday celebrated in America

Unlike Vietnamese people, Americans simply prepare for New Year. They do not decorate their house with kumquat trees or peach blossom trees just like Vietnamese. Therefore, they usually buy many their enjoyable kinds of beverage such as champagne, tequila, vodka and whiskey. Families and friends gather to share a meal and "ring in" the New Year, often with a toast and a song.

Every country has its own traditional foods for New Year Eve .Families in most Western countries normally will enjoy Year End party or have a hearty dinner with a menu which is more diverse and plentiful than normal.

Many get together at each other's houses to drink and be merry, often with Dick Clark's Times Square Ball Drop, a US institution, on the TV in the background to ensure everyone knows when the clock strikes midnight.

American Citizens often celebrate the New Year with a party featuring toasting, drinking and fireworks on New Year's Eve late into the night before New Year's Day, where the gathering counts down the final seconds to January 1st. Some might even get a kiss at midnight.



Many English speaking countries play “Auld Lang Syne”, a New Year song celebrating the year's happy moments. Americans often make resolutions and watch the Time Square Ball drop in New York City. Although much of this celebration occurs the night before during New Year's Eve, the merrymaking typically continues into the following year. Football is a common fixture on New Year's Day in America, usually the day of the Rose Bowl. Some foods considered “lucky” to eat during the festivities include:

- *Circular shaped foods*
- *Black-eyed peas*
- *Cabbage*

- *Pork*

In the southern U.S., particularly in the “low country” region of South Carolina, “Hoppin’ John” is an important New Year tradition. Originally made with old, heirloom ingredients such as Carolina gold rice and cow peas, Hoppin’ John is meant to bring prosperity in the new year. This dish is commonly eaten with collard greens fried in bacon grease and braised with vinegar as well as hot sauce and corn bread. Hoppin’ John and greens on New Year’s, like many U.S. culinary traditions, was originated by enslaved Africans hundreds of years ago and became popular with white Americans in the 19th and 20th centuries. The traditional type of rice and peas are often substituted with easier-to-find black eyed peas and common long grain rice. For extra luck New Year luck, some families put coins under their plates or add extra pork to their Hoppin’ John.

Cold-Water Plunges

In colder countries close to water, such as Canada, parts of the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands, it is customary to organize New Year cold-water plunges. These plunges and races, sometimes called a Polar Bear Plunge, often raise money for charity or awareness for a cause. This tradition is so popular that the first day of the year (January 1st) is also referred to as Polar Plunge Day by many in the U.S. The first Polar Bear Plunge took place on New Year’s Day, 1904, in South Boston, Massachusetts, when a local swim club leaped into Dorchester Bay. The largest annual plunge in the U.S. takes place in Maryland at Sandy Point State Park, which set a record in 2008 with 12,000 plungers showing up to raise money for the Special Olympics.

3.3 Concluding remarks

The main characteristics of cultural New Year traditional .Moreover some of the similarities and differences have been analyzed primarily based on the following factors: Before New Year’s Eve,New Year’s Eve and the New Year

From the above analysis, we easily see the similiraties and differences between Vietnamese and Americans in the organization of the New Year traditional

From there it still exist many differences apparent in the prepare for New Year of both countries. And we can see Vietnamese people attach importance to the form of the New Year traditional while Americans focus on the simple.

Finally, despite the similarities and differences but the purpose of the New Year celebrate is New Year's Day provides us the chance to celebrate having made it through another 365 days, the unit of time by which we keep chronological score of our lives. Another year over, and here we still are.

PART 3 : CONCLUSION

1. Recapitulation

New Year and lunar New Year holidays is one of the most significant events in both countries Vietnam and America. The meaning of this holiday is many people remember last year's achievements and failures and look forward to the promise of a new year, of a new beginning.

This research use some methods such as descriptive, interpretative, synthetic, comparative. As a result, the author clarifies the similarities and differences in Vietnamese Lunar New Year and American New Year culture such as the way of celebration for New Year and Lunar new year holiday The above analysis helps readers to better understand the culture of the two countries and contributes to affirming the importance of culture for daily life. Implications for further research.

2. Implications for American-Vietnamese cross-cultural communication and understanding

Each culture has its own characteristics, so it is necessary to understand the features and behaviours in each culture to avoid misunderstandings and cultural shocks. One of the most important and interesting rituals at New Year is prepare for enjoy New Year come . However, there are a lot of things different between in Vietnam and America.

In Vietnam Tet Nguyen Dan or Tet is the most important and popular holiday and festival. It is the Vietnamese New Year marking the arrival of spring based on the Lunar calendar, a lunisolar calendar. The name Tet Nguyen Dan is Sino-Vietnamese for Feast of the very First Morning. Tet takes place from the first day of the first month of the Lunar calendar (around late January or early February) until at least the third day. Many Vietnamese prepare for Tet by cooking special holiday foods and cleaning their house. There are a lot of customs practiced during Tet such as visiting a person's house on the first day of the new

year (xông nhà), ancestral worship, wishing New Year's greetings, giving lucky money to children and elderly people and opening a shop. Tet is also an occasion for pilgrims and family reunions. During Tet, Vietnamese visits their relatives and temples, forgetting the troubles of the past year and hoping for a better upcoming year. They consider Tet to be the first day of spring and the festival is often called Hội xuân (spring festival).

Like other Asian countries, Vietnamese believe that the color of red and yellow will bring good fortune, which may explain why these colors can be seen everywhere in Lunar New Year. People consider what they do on the dawn of Tet will determine their fate for the whole year, hence people always smile and behave as nice as they can in the hope for a better year. Vietnamese people usually return to their families during Tet. Some return to worship at the family altar or visit the graves of their ancestors in their homeland. Although Tet is a national holiday among all Vietnamese, each region and religion has its own customs.

Tet in the three Vietnamese regions can be divided into three periods, known as Tết Niên (Before New Year's Eve), Giao Thừa (New Year's Eve), and Tân Niên (the New Year), representing the preparation before Tet, the eve of Tet, and the days of and following Tet, respectively. All of these customs are to celebrate Tet in Vietnam. Before New Year's Eve This period begins one or two weeks before the actual celebration. The general atmosphere leading up to Tet is in the bustle of shopping, decorating the home, cooking traditional Tet food and waiting for relatives to return home. People try to pay off their debts in advance so that they can be debt-free on Tet. Parents buy new clothes for their children so that the children can wear them when Tet arrives. In the days leading up to Tet, the streets and markets are full of people. As the shops will be closed during Tet, everyone is busy buying food, clothes, and decorations for their house. Vietnamese families usually have a family altar, to pay respect to their ancestors. Vietnamese families have a tray of five different fruits on their altar called "Ngũ

Quả” (five fruits type). During Tet the altar is thoroughly cleaned and new offerings are placed there. Traditionally, the three kitchen guardians for each house (Ông Táo) (Kitchen God) return to heaven on the 23rd day of the twelfth month by lunar calendar to give his annual report on family members to the Jade Emperor. Their departure is marked by a modest ceremony where the family offers sacrifices for them to use on their journey. In the days leading up to Tet, each family cooks special holiday foods such as bánh chưng and bánh dầy. Preparations for these foods are quite extensive. Family members often take turns to keep watch on the fire overnight, telling each other stories about Tet of past years. One of very popular traditional food in Tet is Mut (candied fruits) which is not served in the meals but a snack to welcome guests visiting house and always kept in beautiful boxes and placed at the table in the living room. The New Year is the first day of Tet is reserved for the nuclear family. Children wear their new clothes, give their elders the traditional Tet greetings before receiving the lucky money from them in exchange. The traditional greetings are “Chúc Mừng Năm Mới” (Happy New Year) and “Cung Chúc Tân Xuân” (gracious wishes of the new spring). People also wish each other prosperity and luck. Common wishes for Tết include:

Sống lâu trăm tuổi (long life of 100 years): used by children for elders. Traditionally, everyone is one year older on Tet, so children would wish their grandparents health and longevity.

An khang thịnh vượng (security, good health, and prosperity)

Vạn sự như ý (may myriad things go according to your will)

Sức khỏe dồi dào (Plenty of health)

Cung hỉ phát tài (congratulations and be prosperous)

Tiền vô như nước (many money flows in like water): used informally Since the Vietnamese believe that the very first visitor a family receives in the year determines their fortune for the entire year, a person of good temper, morality and success will be the lucky sign for the host family and be invited first into the

house. This special activity is called xông đất or xông nhà, which is one of the most important rituals during Tet. According to Vietnamese tradition, if good things come to the family on the first day of the lunar New Year, the entire following year will also be full of blessings.

During subsequent days, people visit relatives and friends. Traditionally but not strictly, the second day of Tet is usually reserved for friends, while the third day is for teachers, who command respect in Vietnam. Local Buddhist temples are popular spots as people like to give donations and to get their fortunes told during Tet. At Tet every house is usually decorated by Ochna integerrima (in the central and south Vietnam) or peach flower (in the North). In the north or central, the kumquat tree is a popular decoration for the living room during Tet. Its many fruits symbolize the fertility and fruitfulness that the family hopes for in the coming year.

Besides the differences mentioned above, there are a lot of taboos that people in both cultures should avoid to reduce the tension triggered from misunderstanding and culture shock.

In Vietnam TET (an occasion during the first days of the year) is an expression used to denote “THE NEW YEAR” of Vietnamese people according to Lunar Calendar. According to many Vietnamese people, what happening during TET decides all happening during that year. It means, the first days with a lot of luck and happiness will bring everyone a happy, lucky and successful year. Therefore, so as to prevent the bad things, Vietnamese people always try to avoid some taboo things listed as follow:

- *Funeral*

The first day of the year is considered to be a time when all people in a country contribute for the happiness of the whole nation. Therefore, if any families unluckily have someone who passes away, they should not organize a funeral. However, they should prepare everything already to hold a funeral on the second day of the year. To families whose member has died in the previous year, they should not visit any other families to avoid bringing the bad things to them. In

contrast, other families will visit the family who are in mourning to console and help ease their pain of losing their family member.

- *Sweeping house*

According to people in the past, sweeping the floor of the house on the first days of the year is to sweep out all the good fortune, which is supposed to lead a poor year. Besides, it is believed that if people collect the rubbish in the house and throw them, the God of Wealth will leave the house. Therefore, it is common that people sweep the floor of the house, but not bring the rubbish out of the house on TET. And members of the family normally tidy up their house and put the furniture in order cleanly on the last days of the year to welcome the New Year.

- *Talk*

The speech spoken on the first days of the year is said to affect what happens all the year. Therefore, instead of mentioning unlucky words, people are advised to talk to everyone by pleasant and happy words to bring joyfulness to not only themselves but also other people.

- *Dishes*

On TET occasion, there are many dishes that Vietnamese people avoid eating. For instance, duck meat should not be eaten on the first month of the year because eating duck is mentioned to be a thing that will bring the bad luck. Besides, in some areas, people do not eat “shrimp” to avoid moving backwards like shrimp. Moreover, it is also people’ opinion that eating shrimp on TET is a sign of a slow, not developed year.

- *Costumes*

People prefer colorful clothes to white ones on TET. People keep off white clothes because white is believed to be the color of funeral and death. Therefore, costumes in red, pink and green are used commonly on TET, These colors will bring people a lot of happiness and joyfulness.

- *Water and fire*

Red fire has the meaning of the luck that a family will have in the next months of that year. Therefore, people are advised to refuse to give fire when being asked for fire. Giving fire to others on TET will bring the bad luck for a family like loss-making, internal frictions, having unlucky things when going out. Similarly, people also avoid asking other people for fire. In addition, people should not give

water to others, according to a folk speech with the meaning that money will go into people's pocket like water. Giving water to others is supposed to lead to the loss of good fortune.

- *First-foot*

Being the first New Year's caller of a house on the first day of the year is a long-standing habit of Vietnamese. If the age of the first caller on New Year's Day is suitable with a family, or he or she is a person who is always in luck in his or her life, that family will meet with good fortune in the New Year. Therefore, people whose age is not suitable with the master of the house should not be the first caller on New Year's Day. Similarly, people who are in mourning should not be also the first New Year's caller to avoid bringing unfortunate things to others.

- *Breaking things*

In ancestors' opinion, breaking things is supposed to be a sign of separation and sorrow. It is a bad omen for every family in the New Year. Therefore, people are advised to be careful with furniture in their house so that there will be no quarrels or sad news happening in that year.

- *Borrowing money*

During the first days of the year, if people borrow money, they will have a year with a poor finance. Therefore, people do not often borrow money from others on TET.

Every ethnic and area has its own customs and habits; but the things mentioned above are the most common forbidden ones that Vietnamese people avoid during the first days of the year to have a happy and successful year.

3. Implications of culture for life

Culture can be defined as a way of life. No matter where people live, their behaviors and thoughts follow and are generally based on their own cultures. Culture has many different dimensions. It includes ideas, customs, skills, arts and tools that characterize a group of people in a given period of time; it is also the beliefs, values, and material objects that create our way of life. Culture establishes a context of cognitive and affective behavior for each person. It influences individual estimation and attitudes, and can also have an effect on practical aspects of life such as hobbies. Culture is also a matter of habit, and it

is habit that becomes tradition and tradition that gives rise to culture. Local people begin with habitual actions and go on to create common stereotypes. Condon further explained that stereotypes assign group characteristics to individual purely on the basis of their cultural membership. The cultural stereotypes affect how people think, speak, act, and interact with one another. Culture and communication are inseparable because culture not only dictates who talks to whom, about what, and how the communication proceeds, but also helps to determine how people encode messages, the meanings they have for messages, and the conditions and circumstances under which various messages may or may not be sent, noticed, or interpreted. In a word, culture is the foundation of communication.

Without culture, we can not understand the lives and motivations of others and connect with their concerns and interests. Culture is inherent in our being and a powerful human tool to develop our society, add to our knowledge, and establish the relationships between people. However, culture is fragile. The traits of culture are constantly changing and easily lost. If we do not value it, we will lose it eventually.

4. Recommendations

Many of the problems we have in this world are due to cultural misunderstandings. When people learn about another culture, and see why others do the things they do, it is easier to understand them. Therefore, understanding the similarities and differences between Vietnamese Lunar New Year and American New Year traditions are very important because it will help people avoid “culture shocks” and be more ready for an increasingly global world. With technology making the world ever-smaller, and with the ease of travel between countries, it is getting easier and easier that people would meet someone with a different cultural heritage at some point. Being able to tolerate others, and not berate them because of their differences is not only an essential skill of living in a global community, but it is also the mark of a well-rounded person. If once

wants to be able to adapt more when they travel, and when encountering others in their own country, it makes sense to learn about other cultures so that people can avoid faux pas. Also, each should take the trouble to learn about other cultures and customs in order that they would have richer experiences no matter where they go.

Due to the short time as well as limited knowledge, the research still has many shortcomings. The biggest limitation is that only some parts of New Year customs are mentioned, including before the New Year, New Year eve's, and the New Year. Secondly, for some aspects of the New Year customs between Vietnam and America, the study only mentioned to the general information. The author hopes to fulfill those gaps with a deeper look on the origins and religious features hidden behind the similarities and differences of the weddings in two cultures in further research. Previously, the study has left spaces for further discussions, improvements and criticisms by those who concerns. All remarks, the author hopes for receiving comments, suggestions and contributions from other researchers.

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