



Research Article

**WEDDING SINGING IN CALL-AND-RESPONSE FOLK SONGS
OF VIETNAMESE PEOPLE**

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the wedding songs in Vietnamese Call-and-Response folk songs between men and women about the characteristics and art language, showing some similarities (about meaning, function) and differences (about the numbers and capacity of wedding songs, style and tones) in these songs across different areas. The paper also focuses on clarifying the role of wedding singing in the overall process of antiphony, literary and cultural values (marriage, culinary and costume culture) of these songs in the old-time and present social life.

Keywords: Call-and-Response folk songs, wedding singing, wedding presents exaction, traditional culture, marriage customs.

1. Across regions of our country, there are many forms of collective singing activities between men and women: Quan Ho singing, Vi singing, Giam singing, Dam singing, Gheo singing, Trong Quan singing, Co La singing, Khoan chanty, Ong chanty, Gia Gao chanty, Cheo Ghe chanty, Cay chanty which are collectively called Call-and-Response Folk Songs. These can be seen as conversations with the singing that is both direct and very artistic, interesting and attractive of the old-time workers, most of whom are boys and girls in love. Entering the singing, the boys and girls can call and respond to each other in many ways: opening singing, welcoming singing, quiz singing, love-sick singing, blaming singing, wedding singing, goodbye singing... Each stage has a different style and interesting characteristics. Understanding these singing stages is essential to get a truly complete and profound view of the role and value of the call-and-response folk songs in the community life. Folk songs texts (comprising only the words and notes separated from the context, not seamlessly arranged according to the singing process), from the research results, will also be more thoroughly realized, true to the inherent values.

These call-and-response folk songs can be performed at anytime, anywhere, while working, playing, and in festival... These lyrical songs meet the needs of composing and enjoying the music of all classes and ages, jobs; therefore, they have the ability to connect the community strongly. Each song has always fixed elements (singing style, theme,

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content... predetermined) and not fixed (singers, listeners, places, times, situations...), that is why the progress is often unduplicated. As the context of the performance changes, the verses are also used creatively to create a concordance. No singings are the same. This is the appeal of the call-and-response folk songs. The verses are both formal and creative. The voices of the community and the performers are harmoniously combined. In this living space, everyone feels “living” fully and completely with their feelings, dreams and aspirations. Therefore, when “*Trai thanh tân sánh gái mỹ miều*” [The gentleman meets the beautiful lady], then “*Trăm gươm kề cổ quyết liều cùng chơi*” [Even when hundreds of swords are near the neck, they’re still nothing]. They want to “burn out” their best to “*Hát cho lở đất long trời, Cho đời biết mặt, cho người biết tên*” [Sing to the shattering earth and sky, so that the world knows our faces and names], as to meet each other it is not easy at all “*Ở nhà nghe tiếng hò khoan, Trốn cha trốn mẹ băng ngàn tới đây*” [I hear some shanty so I leave my family to be here]. They call and respond all-night endlessly because of the magic of the voices, of the words “*Em nghe anh bỏ giọng trầm, Hồn xiêu phách lạc, vàng cầm em cũng buông*” [When I hear your bass tone, I even drop the gold I’m holding]... The process of a singing usually consists of the following forms: 1) *The opening singing form* comprising opening singing, greeting singing, asking after singing, promise singing, inviting singing, 2) *The challenge singing Form* comprising quizzing singing, exchanging singing, illustrative singing, catching singing; 3) *The xe kết singing Form* comprising longing singing, letter singing, promise singing, oath singing, complaining singing, wedding singing; 4) *The Ending Singing Form* comprising memory singing, parting singing. This paper introduces briefly about the wedding songs, in the form of xe kết singing on overall.

2. In the old-time society, wedding was considered as a material fact: “*Tậu trâu, cưới vợ, làm nhà, Trong ba việc ấy thật là khó thay*” [Purchasing a buffalo, marrying a bride, building the house. Those three tasks are so challenging]. The biggest difficulty for poor farmers is probably the costs for wedding: money to pay the mandarin, to buy wedding presents, money for a wedding party, and to buy household furniture... According to the custom, the future bride’s family can exact wedding-presents from the future groom’s family. Sometimes, the wedding presents exacted were too high (which means selling the bride), the other party could do nothing but rejected. Therefore, there are guys who was never able to marry a wife all their lives, the couples were separated. The wedding songs were composed simulated from this wedding custom.

Wedding singing is a stage for girls and boys to express their thoughts and dreams about their wedding day by exacting wedding presents, shopping... This is also an inevitable development in the process of singing, after they acquaint, give a try, confess, swear... The wedding is a “happy ending” for a love affair, and this subject is always attractive to the singers and listeners because through it, one can imagine a wedding, a couple life as wishes or show of your marriage concerns.

In marriage ceremonies of many ethnic groups in our country (Tay, San Diu, Pa Ko, Ta Oi, Dao, Thai...), there are also wedding songs. According to custom, on this material fact, both the bride's and groom's families must choose reputable representatives, have talent in singing, have a happy couple life... to "call and respond" together while the wedding ceremony is taking place. The style of lyrics must be beautiful, polite, moderate, humble to please both the bride and groom's sides. Many years ago, scholar Nguyen Van Huyen had an elaborate collection process in Cao Bang and recorded a number of call-and-response songs in the Tay wedding. It is a song about tea ceremony, a song for offering wedding presents, a song for the groom to conduct ancestral cult, and a song for the groom to salute to his parents-in-law and a song for calling the bride to step down the house, a song for the bride to bold in front of the ancestor altar... In general, the wedding process is fully expressed through songs. Rituals and singing are inseparable. The singing seems to carry a sacred mission. The song welcoming the groom's family by the bride contains these words: "*Mời tất cả cùng ngồi cho đông đủ! Giờ này là giờ cô dâu xin làm lễ tạ ơn, Ngày hôm nay là ngày lễ thành hôn, Chúng tôi xin quý ngài bảo ban mọi điều lệ, tục, Xin quý ngài nói cho cô dâu biết cách sống và cách ứng xử, Để cho cô dâu có thể theo dấu Tổ tiên, Cô dâu chúc mừng bố mẹ chồng khoẻ mạnh, sống lâu...*" [I would like all of you to sit down! It is time for the bride to show her gratitude, today is the wedding day, we ask our Gods to take care of our rituals and tradition, Wish our God tell the bride how to live and how to behave, so that she can follow our Ancestors, the bride wishes here parents health and longevity...] (Nguyen Van Huyen, 1995, p.797). In the work of "Folklore and reality", when discussing Russian folk songs, a researcher gave a comment: "...The songs of the bride, the songs of blessing and the sentences with sneering songs are the main genres of marriage songs." (V. Ia. Propp, 2004, p.373) Thus, this type of folk song exists not only in Vietnam but also in some other countries' cultures.

The wedding songs that this paper aims at have a different style. This is not the singing in rituals, but in daily activities. These are visualizations, not the reality. The singers are not representatives of the two family sides but the bride and groom in an imaginary wedding. The lyrics, hence, sometimes "lift up to the sky" because of the ostentation and the magnificence, sometimes "descend to the ground" to return to the reality of the poor life of the old-time workers. This wedding song stage has been mentioned in many works of collecting and researching call-and-respond folk songs, is an indispensable step in the process of... The content of the wedding songs is very rich, there are bride's family's exacting wedding presents song, groom's offering wedding presents song, shopping song... The number of shopping songs is not as much as wedding presents exacting songs and wedding presents offering songs.

3. The girl often starts with the phrase "*I am a rich girl...*" or "*I am a poor girl...*" to determine her situation, then starts to exact wedding presents. What is the most common is the high wedding presents exaction trend. On behalf of her parents, the girl asks for a lot of

things: for food and drink, there are buffaloes, cows, chickens, pigs, cakes, tea, betel nuts, areca, wine, tea...; for wearing and beautifying, there are brocades, silk, hats, rings...; for household furniture, there are mats, blankets, lime pipes, fans...; for entertainment, there are singing inviters; for housework assistance, there are servants; for traveling, there are dragon boats, quadrigas; for paying expenses, there are gold, silver, money, land...

The preferred numbers in many songs are nine, ten, hundred, thousand, ten thousand... Counting and storing units are often big as boats, pans, urns... All are extremely used generously beside the offerings: *ninety acres of fields, hundreds of dragon boats, ten vessels of silver rings and golden rings, ten vessels of pig, rice, cow, buffalo...* Let see some impressive “self conceited” words of a girl: “*Cưới ta trăm ngỗng, nghìn dê, Trăm ngan, nghìn phượng ta về làm dâu...*” [Marry me you need to bring a hundred of geese, a hundred of goats, a hundred of swans, a thousand of phoenixes, and I will be your bride]. Each of the items is clearly explained about the purpose of use: “*Xin chàng lấy chín mâm xôi, Chín con gà luộc lễ nơi ông bà, trước là lễ tổ tiên nhà, Sau là bạn hữu người ta trông vào*” [My dear please bring nine trays of glutinous rice, nine boiled chickens, to tribute to our grandparents, that is tribute to our ancestors first, our acquaintances also know about this...] Sometimes, the girl’s side also requires things that are impossible to find: fish liver, mosquito fat, goat eggs, white snake tail feathers, chicken horns, widow bats, Cuoi’s fangs, god of thunder’s chin beard... In response to the girl’s side, the boy’s side performs the wedding presents offering songs in style of playfulness. The opening form is usually “*Anh là con trai nhà nghèo, nàng mà thách thế anh liều anh lo...*” [I am the son of a poor family, if you challenge me that I risk to fulfill]. Despite his cognition of being poor, being a pupil, then he removed the problem by “*Nghèo thì bán núi bán sông, Cưới em cho bỏ cái công ra vào*” [Poor as I am, I have to rely on the land and water, I will try to marry you to make up for the efforts], “*Thấy em thách cưới lạ đời, về làm văn tự bán trời xin lo*” [Your wedding challenge is so unusual, perhaps I have to prepare to sell the sky to afford], and firmly affirm meeting the high demands of the other side: “*Voi thì mua ở Lịch Sơn... Cá thì mua chợ nhà Ân, Mua người Hàn Tín câu sông Vị Hà...*” [The elephants can be bought in Lich Son... the fish can be bought at the Yin market, buy the guy Han Yin to fish in Wei River...]. He is ready to mobilize every province to prepare for the wedding day: “*Thanh Hóa thì đỡ giầu cau, Quảng Bình, Hà Tĩnh giết trâu mổ bò...*” [Find the betel and areca in Thanh Hoa, the buffaloes and cows in Quang Binh, Ha Tinh...], followed by Hung Yen, Ha Nam, Thai Binh... and invited Jin, Qi, Qin, Chu, and parts of the sky bringing the bride home including Mr. Thunder, Mrs. Lighting, God of Thunder.

If the girl demands too much, the boy responds by asking her to marry him for free and she refuses. It is interesting to see the dramatic “duel” between the two sides. The boy makes a concession: “*Theo anh cưới chịu nên chăng, Một mai thu xếp cũng bằng người ta...*” [Will you follow me? I’m trying to see to things]. But the girl definitely refuses: “*Bẽ bàng phận gái thuyền quyên, Lấy chồng cưới chịu lòng phiền buồn thay...*” [a young and

beautiful girl as I am, I will not take the shame of marrying someone without betrothal gifts] and angrily adds: “*Chùa nào mà thiếu vị sư, Mời chàng đến đó mà tu cho rành...*” [If there is a pagoda without a monk, you should come there and be the monk]. The boy threatens if she does not agree, she might have to face the inconclusive love-affair: “*Hết duyên ngồi gốc cây hồng nhật hoa*” [If our fate is no longer, you will wait to collect the remains]. The girl alleges: “*Xin đi cưới chịu tiếng tai muôn đời... Chị em bạn gái chúng tôi xin chào*” [Marrying without betrothal gifts is a shame... We girls regret to say good bye]. Eventually, the boy confesses: “*Nàng ơi anh thử lòng nàng, Để xem tình nghĩa đá vàng mà thôi*” [My lady, I just wanted to test your heart, to see whether you are really faithful] and affirms: “*Nhà anh khó nhưng họ anh đông, Mỗi người một đồng cưới được cả tiên*” [My family may be poor but we have lots of people, each person gives a cent, we can even marry fairies]...

In wedding singing, there are still a few other songs that “advocate” a very low wedding presents exaction (which is nothing “challenging” anymore!), in stark contrast to the above trend. The offerings are very popular, easy to find, with extremely small quantity: “*Cưới em có nửa con gà, Có dăm sợi bún, có vài hạt xôi...*” [Marry me you have half a chicken, There are chips, and some sticky seeds...], “*Cưới xin em chỉ buồng cau, Gọi chia làng họ miếng trầu khai tân...*” [Marry me with only a tray of areca, Call to share their village with the new betel nut...], sometimes asking for “a house”, but that is “a house of sweet potatoes”. As for the boy, he would like to offer wedding presents with four-legged animals (which seems to be luxurious), but that is not a buffalo, nor a cow, but a fat rat to “regale the villagers”. Another future groom imagines: “*Hôm qua dạo phố cầm khăn, Cầm được đồng bạc để dành cưới em*” [Yesterday walking the street holding a towel, found a silver coin to save for my wedding] and calculates just with this amount money, it is enough to buy stamps to send wedding invitations, to offer family meals...

The progressive concept of marriage, appreciating the meaning of love and not material wealth, is clearly stated in some songs: “*Lấy em em chẳng thách tiền, Thách cheo thách lợn cho phiền về sau...*” [Marry me I do not ask for the money, The challenge only troubles me later...], “*Chàng mà có bụng thương giao, Dù nhiều dù ít thế nào cũng xong*” [If you have affection for me, little or much both ways are alright].

After the wedding presents exacting and offering singings, it turns to be the shopping singing. As being husband and wife, they bought each other the most beautiful and precious things to have a full and happy life as what they have dreamt. These items are usually houses, furniture, costumes... The shopping takes place in style and pattern of wealth, very luxurious. Words like jade, ivory, gold, silver... are mentioned quite often. Husband sings for his wife, then his wife sings for her husband, so thoughtfully, thereby expressing their affection and caring for each other between the couples.

The wife shops for the husband: “*Em sắm cho chàng một bộ quần áo ăn chơi, Cái áo the lương, cái quần gấp trắng, cái dù thành thoi...*” [I shop for you a playboy clothes, The

shirt, white folding pants, though disengaged...] followed by fragrant handkerchiefs, silver-covered knife, tortoiseshell-hand fans, gold jewelry, lime pipes, cigarettes...

For a matching, the husband also shops for his wife: “*Anh sắm ba gian nhà ngói lè vôi, Màn điều màn nhiều đủ mùi vẽ vang...*” [I buy three spaces of the tiled house, all kinds of curtains to make you proud], then adds honey, sugar, rice, rattan chairs, flowers to contemplate the moon, bronze pots, brass pots, torches, combs, mirror.

4. Making a comparison between regions, the number of wedding songs is the biggest in the North, the length of each song is up to several dozen lines. The wedding songs described above all belong to this area. In Central and South Vietnam, the content of wedding is also expressed in some lyrics, but not as bold as in the North and the capacity is often short. The male and female artists of the land Nghe singing very briefly: “*Anh về liệu lấy trăm mâm, Để cho hai họ tri âm một nhà*” [You go back to get hundreds of trays, Let the two of them listen to one house]. That is somehow the same as in the Mekong Delta: “*...Cha mẹ nàng đòi lễ một trăm, Anh đi chín chục mười lăm quan ngoài, Cha mẹ nàng đòi đôi bông tai, Anh ra thợ bạc làm hai đôi vòng*” [Your parents demanded a hundred, I went to the ninety and fifties, Your parents demanded earrings, I went to a silversmith to make two pairs of ring]. There are not so many lengthy songs but they are very impressive. This is a song in the Khoan chanting Le Thuy: “*Thầy mẹ bên em đòi chi không biết, Còn anh xin đi vàng liếp trăm khay, Xe tay trăm cái, xe máy trăm đôi, Anh đi ngựa bạch, em ngồi võng loan, Bốn chiếc tàu đồng chở hai họ đưa sang, Đàn ông dù Ngô, khăn nhiễu, đàn bà nón Thượng chóp vàng, Còn bao nhiêu con nít, bận áo hàng sơ mi!*” [Your parents asked me not to know, but I asked to go to gold for hundreds of trays, Hundreds of motorbikes, hundred pairs of motorbikes, I went to white horses, you sat in a retina, Four copper ships carrying them both, Men Although Wu, a towel, and the golden top hat, how many children, how many shirts are there!] and another shopping song in the Southern: “*Anh thương em, anh sắm cho em bộ áo dài màu cà, màu huyết, Anh đây nói thiệt, chẳng phải nói càn, Anh đây sắm cho em một cây kiềng vàng chạm tông chạm bá, một bộ cà rá có chạm cừu long hường, Anh sắm cho em áo túi đủ màu, lụa Hà Đông, lục soạn...*” [I love you, I shop for you a long, dark-colored ao dai, I'm serious, I don't have to say anything, I buy for you a gold-rimmed tree with a touch, a set of curls with a touch of grace. I buy for you a full-color pocket shirt, Ha Dong silk...].

Wedding singing generally prefers the listed description to meet the purpose of exacting wedding presents, offering wedding presents, shopping... For the Northern, this method is used at a higher frequency than Central and South Vietnam due to the rhetoric, exaggerated dominating most of the singing stages. The old-time composers were poor farmers who had to work hard all year round but still underfed; however, on immersing on the song, they create a space for their imagination to weave a affluent life. From the inquiring singing (introducing the rich and successful family condition) to betel offering singing, water offering singing, call-on invitation (delicious, unique food; luxurious and

expensive containing boxes; skyscrapers) and singing wedding (noble, rare and precious; beautiful and valuable furniture)... all are consistent in a common style. Perhaps when they were immersed in singing activities, they wanted to get out of their daily life and dreams to relieve the pressure of making ends meet. The girls not only dream of a lavish wedding ceremony but also wish to receive respects: “*Chàng về nhắn nhủ mẹ cha, Mua tre tiện đốt, làm nhà ở riêng, Chàng về nhắn nhủ láng giềng, Quét cổng, quét ngõ, ra giêng ta về...*” [He reminded his mother and father, Buy bamboo to burn, build houses separately, He reminded neighbors, Sweeping the gate, sweeping the lane, going back to my home...], the procession of the bride has the elephant leading, the horse following, people holding the fan to cover the head, and servants.

Wedding singing in Central and Southern Vietnam, on the contrary, carries the clear resonance of daily life. The number of songs referring to the simple wedding ceremonies, simple offerings occupy the majority. What they concern about the most is not the material value but the obedience to the rituals: “*Anh đi cho em một lễ thỉnh kì, Heo thời một cặp, gà ri một lồng...*” [You went to me for a special occasion, Pig in a pair, a chicken in a cage], “*Người ta giàu thì đầu heo nọng thịt, Hai đũa mình nghèo cặp vịt đôi bông*” [People are rich when they have a pig's head, we are poor with a couple of ducks and ear rings]...

Thus, the difference lies not only in the quantity and capacity but also in the distinct color, style and tones of each region, etc. The Northern region is a land of cultural traditions, long-established rituals that the singing is built on that basis. Call-and-response singing activities are often a combination of many singing stages and a clear form. Therefore, the common existence of wedding singing is natural. Moving to the south, the land with a new history of formation, the customs of marriage from the outskirts following the footsteps of immigrants bring in are also open, more compact and the call-and-response folk songs do not often follow the predetermined “lines” and had a more liberal nature, so the wedding songs account for a small part and the content does not put a burden on the wedding presents exacting and offering. It seems that wedding songs here are for poverty, but that is the money poverty, not ritual or gratitude poverty.

5. On overall, call-and-response folk songs in general and wedding singing in particular are the full and vivid expressions of the inner world of the old-time people with hopes, worries, joys and sadness...

This is really the “self-singing”, “self-talk” of the male and female youth before their marriage threshold. Singing activities create conditions for each individual to be connected to the community, raise their voices, and meet the harmonious souls. Facing each other and the crowd of attendees, they seem to be not hesitant singing about what seem to be their private things, because that is their own personalities (affection, creativity) and the commonplace of the community (what is inherent) have joined together. This creates an attraction that is difficult to resist for both singers and listeners, forming interesting “playgrounds” and as a result, wedding songs become more and more rich and unique.

Through the “long list” with the high requirements of the number and quality of offerings with the listing manipulation in a humorous tone, we can see somewhat critical attitude of the old-time workers toward the exacting wedding presents. Some statements of both sides have a direct mention of this depraved custom. The female side themselves find it unnecessary: “*Em là thân phận nữ nhi, Thầy mẹ thách cưới làm chi bẽ bàng...*”. The male said: “*Anh là con trai học trò, Em thách cưới thế anh lo thế nào...*” [I am a part of the female child, the mother and father challenge the wedding to be humiliating...; I am a son of the student, you challenge that wedding, how am I...]. A free marriage, unconstrained by the concept of “suitable alliance”, not requiring high-class offerings as a sale, without “exaction” and “bargaining”... is really an aspiration of the couples at that time. Talking about marriage, for poor workers, worries and lament are unavoidable. Wedding singing reflects closely, honestly and these feelings: “*Cưới em anh nghĩ cũng lo, Con lợn chẳng có, con bò thì không...*” [If I marry you, I think it is also worrying. The pig does not have it, the cow does not]. Besides, the dream of a wedding that is full, a life without worries is also expressed quite clearly. The reality of the daily hardship and the hard living earning couldn't eliminate their creative spirit, sense of humor, inspiration and enthusiasm. It can be said that wedding singing has contributed to bringing a close look on life and people in a passed historical period.

6. From the cultural perspective, the wedding singing provides the readers with more insights of the customs of old-day marriage. “*We are both poor...*”. When shopping for newlyweds..., the customs are always mentioned naturally and vividly in a significant amount, lasting from the time when the two families intend to hold a wedding until it is completed with a wedding. Beginning is a matchmaking procedure. The girls often tell their lovers “*Thương em đừng dỗ đừng đành, Cây mai dong tới nói, cha mẹ đành em ưng*” [Love me, don't coax, don't talk, Say it to me, my parents agree I agree]. They play such an important role that they are an indispensable guest on the happy day, even at very poor weddings: “*Phía bên anh đừng mời chi đông, Nội cha với mẹ, vợ chồng ông mai...*” [His side did not invite the eastern branch, Grandfather father with his mother, his wife tomorrow...]. The man who wants to get married must pay a sum of money or gifts as prescribed to the village so that the marriage is recognized by everyone. This is also a great challenge for the poor. Wedding singing has referred to this custom many times: “*Anh về thưa mẹ cùng cha, Bắt lợn sang cưới, bắt gà sang cheo*” [You return to your mother and father, Catching pigs to marry, catching chickens to ask]. The process of marriage must go through six ceremonies, including rite of asking names and asking ritual. After getting the consent of the girl's family, the son's family brings betel and areca, and officially mentions the issue. It is a rite of asking names. From here on, it is considered that the girl has found a new place: “*Anh về thưa với ông bà, Buồng cau chai rượu để mà vấn danh*”. Asking ritual is a ceremony where the man's family confirms that he would definitely marry the girl and asks for a suitable day to arrange a wedding: “*Anh đi cho em một lễ thỉnh kì, Heo*

thời một cặp, gà ri một lồng...”. During his unmarried period, the man is obliged to give gifts to his parents-in-law at Tet or on other important occasions of the year, called tục sêu: “*Anh về thưa mẹ cùng cha, Bắt lợn sang cưới, bắt gà sang sêu*”. Before the reception of the bride, the bride's family organized for the family and relatives to meet the bride before she moves to her husband's house, called the family group: “*Anh về dọn dẹp loan phòng, Mời ba nhóm họ bữa rằm rước dâu*”. In addition, there are also bride see-off and bride pick-up customs: “*Xin chàng trăm đôi chiếu hoa, Để rải ra ngõ họ nhà đón dâu...*”, ancestral ceremony and congratulating on the both sides' parents ceremony: “*Xin chàng một vạn quan tiền, Để về làm lễ gia tiên ông bà*”, eating and worshipping betel customs “*Đính hôn vui về thiệp chàng, Mâm trầu, hũ rượu dâng hoàng mới rước dâu!*” [Cheerful engagement you and me, betel areca nut, wine jar dignified new procession...]

Not only is it a place to store the extremely interesting customs, the wedding singing also provides detailed and clear lines in the culinary culture, costumes of the ancient Vietnamese. Traditional dishes, specialties of the regions are enthusiastically listed: cake, sticky rice, gruel, nem, spring rolls, wine (daisies, lotus wine, spicy wine), tea (Van tea, Dai Loc tea)... Popular types of clothing appear with high frequency: clothes, scarf (square head scarf, neckerchief, handkerchiefs) made of brocade, stalks, silk, and silver rings and gold rings, torques, rafters, belts, bat wings umbrellas, Chinese shoes, flower shoes,... There are local products mentioned proudly like the Nghe hats (Thanh Hoa, Nghe An): “*Ba trăm nón Nghệ đội đầu, Mỗi người một cái quạt tàu cầm xinh*” [three hundreds of Nghe hats for the heads, each person is holding a chinese fan beautifully] or the Silk fabric in Binh Dinh: “*Tắm lụa An Thái em bận cho mát, Lụa Kiểng Hàng em bận lót mồ hôi, Nón Phú Trung anh chạy đời đời, Gấm Nước Mặn chạy hoa bông cúc...*” [The An Thai silk cloth I wear because it's cool, the King Hang silk cloth I wear to absorb sweat, the Phu Trung hat I include the tortoise-shell, the Nuoc Man brocade I include the chrysanthemum] (these places are in this province).

7. From the above descriptions, it can be seen that wedding singing is a unique stage in the whole process of call-and-response singing activities. The boy and the girl performing must “play” and “embody” like real couples who love each other and are about to get married. Getting married is an intense wish, and also a concern for many couples. The wedding singing stage brings men and women both romantic dreams and moments of sadness and anxiety for their entire life. The existence of these songs demonstrates the need to talk and interact with each other in the community on marriage-related issues (money and happiness, marriage customs, parental power, and public opinions...). Voices, views are intertwined and each person finds himself the necessary “conclusions”.

Though called generally as wedding singing, in each region, the songs have their own unique shapes and looks. Each text of the lyrics carries in it the imprints of the living environment, of the local culture. The call-and-response folk songs, in general or on each stage, are “specialties” of each region and area. Wedding singing is a vivid demonstration

of beauty in the unity and diversity of folklore.

At the present time, wedding singing can also be seen as valuable products that contain a lot of potential for research and teaching at all levels, most notably the literary and cultural aspects. Wedding singing in particular, the call-and-response in general deserves a deep understanding as researcher To Ngoc Thanh has affirmed: “This is a type of folk performance with many cultural-art social behavior products with high quality. (...) In the folklore of each ethnic group, the products of charming love are often considered as one of the symbols carrying the national cultural identity” (To Ngoc Thanh, 2007, p.37).

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HÁT CƯỚI TRONG DÂN CA ĐỐI ĐÁP NGƯỜI VIỆT

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TÓM TẮT

Bài viết khảo sát những bài hát cưới trong dân ca đối đáp nam nữ người Việt về đặc điểm nội dung và ngôn ngữ nghệ thuật, chỉ ra một số điểm tương đồng (về ý nghĩa, chức năng) và dị biệt (về số lượng bài hát, dung lượng mỗi bài, phong cách, giọng điệu) trong những bài hát này ở các địa phương. Bài viết cũng tập trung làm rõ vai trò của hát cưới trong tổng thể tiến trình đối ca, giá trị văn học và văn hóa (văn hóa cưới xin, âm thực và trang phục) của những bài hát này trong đời sống xã hội xưa và nay.

Từ khóa: dân ca đối đáp, hát cưới, thách cưới, văn hóa truyền thống, phong tục hôn nhân.