

“A TALE OF TWO CITIES” VÀ BẢN DỊCH TIẾNG VIỆT “HAI KINH THÀNH”: SO SÁNH THEO LÍ THUYẾT CHỨC NĂNG HỆ THỐNG

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Tóm tắt: So sánh nguyên tác và bản dịch “Hai kinh thành” trên cơ sở Ngữ pháp chức năng hệ thống, theo sau đó là tóm lược một số nghiên cứu về việc ứng dụng Ngữ pháp chức năng hệ thống trong so sánh văn bản dịch với nguyên tác. Bài báo hướng đến việc cung cấp cho độc giả một số kiến thức về ngôn ngữ, văn bản, mối quan hệ giữa ngôn ngữ và ngữ cảnh, hệ thống chuyển tác và các quá trình trải nghiệm. Thông qua đó các dịch giả có thể có những chiến lược dịch văn bản phù hợp tránh được các sai lệch khi so với nguyên tác. Ngoài ra đây cũng có thể trở thành nguồn tham khảo cho các nghiên cứu có cùng chủ đề.

Từ khóa: Ngữ pháp chức năng hệ thống, văn bản nguồn, văn bản đích

“A TALE OF TWO CITIES” AND ITS VIETNAMESE VERSION OF TRANSLATION “HAI KINH THÀNH”: A SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL COMPARISON

Abstract: This study employs Systemic Functional Grammar to compare two literary text extracts, one is the translation (the Vietnamese translated version) of the other (the English original). This article aims to provide readers with knowledge on Language, Text, the relationship between language and social context, the transitivity system and the experiential processes. Then translators can use the systemic functional grammar as an important tool in translation, and it is also a useful source for researchers who are concerned with this topic.

Keywords: Systemic functional grammar, source text, target text

1. INTRODUCTION

The study is intended to make a small contribution to the applying insights of a general linguistics theory – Systemic Functional Grammar (SFL) to compare two literary text extracts, one is the translation (the Vietnamese translated version) of the

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other (the English original), hoping to open up a new approach to interlingual and intercultural contrastive/comparative discourse analysis.

In comparing any two things, we need a common theoretical framework guiding us to establish similarities and differences between them. This comparative study will employ systemic functional linguistics (SFL) as the theoretical framework. As SFL is a comprehensive general linguistic theory (Halliday, 2001, 2017; Matthiessen, 2001; Hoang, 2018, 2021) comprising quite a number of aspects: transitivity, mood, theme, and others, it would be impossible for a minor research like this to compare the two chapters in terms of all these aspects. This study employs transitivity as the theoretical framework for the comparison.

With regard to research design, this review article aims to compare the English novel “A Tale of Two Cities” and its Vietnamese version of translation “Hai kinh thành” to establish the similarities and differences between the source text (ST) and the target text (TT) by using SFL as the theoretical framework. The objectives of the study are to clarify what transitivity resources are employed in both texts and then to manifest the main similarities and differences between two texts in terms of transitivity. In order to achieve the aims and objectives above, the study focuses on the following research questions: (1) what transitivity resources are employed and how are they employed, (2) transitivity resources are employed in "A tale of two cities" and its Vietnamese translated version "Hai kinh thành" and how are they employed, and (3) the similarities and differences between the two texts in terms of transitivity.

This study employs the quantitative method and qualitative methods. To get the baseline data for the further analysis and discussion, the data collected from the ST and the TT are analysed quantitatively. Then the results of the analysis are discussed and compared in terms of Halliday’s transitivity theory to reveal the similarities and differences between the two text portions.

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2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Language as text

In the formal approach, linguists focus on determining the formal properties of a language. But in the functional approach, linguists concentrate on studying language functions. There are two terms for describing the functions of a language: transactional and interactional (Brown and Yule, 1983).

The functional dichotomies are also found in the functional approach about ‘ideational and interpersonal’ metafunctions by Halliday (1994). The first one is about making sense of our experience, and the second is about acting out our social relationship (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004). The internal organization of natural language can best be explained in the light of the social functions which language has evolved to serve. Language is as it is because of what it has to do. (Halliday, 1973, p.34). We get into the point where answering how language is used then indirectly to the way language is structured for use. It is language functions, this leads to an approach that is functional in not only relation to language use, but also in relation to the organization of the linguistic system itself.

Text as a representation of language operates as a whole at the semantic level to make meaning, its purpose depends on the particular social context or situation. “A text may be spoken or written, prose or verse, dialogue or monologue. “A text is a unit of language in use.” (Halliday, 1976, p.1). “A text has texture, and this distinguishes it from something that is not a text.” (Halliday, 1976, p.2). A text is seen as a semantic unit which is not of form but of meaning, then we can realise the text not by size but by realisation. They determine that whether a set of sentences do or do not constitute a text by the cohesive relationships within and between sentences, “the texture is provided by the cohesive RELATION...” The cohesion occurs in a text when an interpretation of some elements is dependent on that of another (semantic relations

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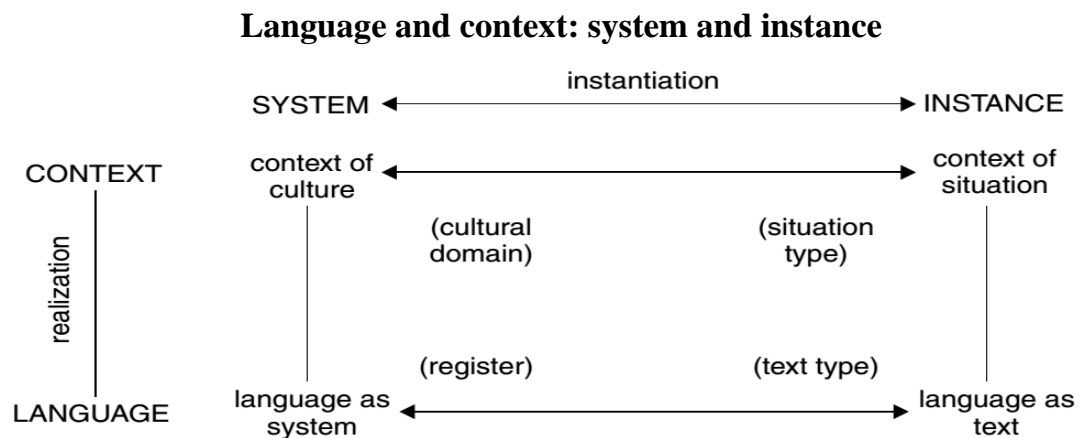
between elements). A text is embedded with the situation or the context of situation which refers to all extra-linguistic factors bearing in the text.

2.2. The relationship between language and social context

That the texts make sense may not just from within the textual environment but from the extra-textual context. The fluency and continuity of the text take place not only with the elements within their boundaries but within the factors within the context. The category of context had been recognized as a stratum (Halliday 1994, Chapter I) in its own right in the theoretical linguistic framework. If we go further, we have the context of culture which provides the familiar elements and events related to the contents of the text with the given socio-cultural background.

Halliday and Hassan (1976, Chapter I) explains the features of situation derives the features of the text, then it affects to the meaning of the text within the context of a particular situation as well. They are field, and tenor, mode which influence the way language is used in a text.

The category of context was recognized as a stratum in its own right according to the explanation of the core function of lexicogrammar, Halliday sketches out a model expressing the interaction between the factors (Halliday; cited in Hoang, 2018, p. 3):



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In this model, there are two types of relation: realisation according to the vertical axis and instantiation according to the horizontal axis. For the horizontal axis, culture is instantiated in situation as system instantiated in text. For the vertical axis, culture is realised in language as the relation between the linguistic strata including semantics, lexicogrammar, phonology and phonetics). Finally, Context consists of extra-linguistic factors, and is the highest stratum. It is construed by language through four other strata.

2.3. The transitivity system and the experiential processes

In systemic functional grammar, there are three metafunctions: ideational, interpersonal and textual. These structures serve to express three sets of semantic choices and determine the structural frame of the clause, and transitivity structures explain what the clause is about and types of processes with relevant participants and circumstances.

Halliday (1994, p.106) says “*Our most powerful impression of experience is that it consists of ‘going-on’ – happening, doing, sensing, meaning, and being and becoming.*” Thus the mode of reflection allows the clauses to produce the innumerable variations of events, feelings and experience. Language enables us to build a mental picture of reality, and the principles we use to build that are made up of processes. Halliday recognized six process types, they are Material, Behavioural, Mental, Verbal, Relational, and Existential. The circumstantial elements occur in all types of process. They are: extent, location, manner, cause, contingency, accompaniment, role, matter, and angle.

2.4. Related studies concerning discourse analysis

Studies on contrastive/comparative discourse analysis are various; but the following is in focus:

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Hanh Thu Nguyen (2012) conducted a research on transitivity analysis which aimed to identify and explain how the main character's personality is portrayed and represented through language used in "Heroic Mother" by Hoa Pham. She clarified the roles of language in social life, basing on the functions of Halliday's transitivity system, she proved that linguistic choices in transitivity play an important role in building up the main character in the story. As a result, the linguistic analysis with the observation about the text enables the readers to have a better understanding of the main character.

Rym Ezzina (2015) used the transitivity as a tool for discourse analysis. The researcher investigated the relationship between linguistic structures depending on the SFG and meanings in a text which is The crying a lot of 49 by Thomas Pynchon. The paper focused on the analysis of the verbs according to the different process types in the experiential metafunction. It also helps to uncover power relations by analyzing participant roles involved in each process with the aim to unveil the characteristics and techniques employed by Pynchon as a post-modernist writer.

Dr. Nancy Anashia Ong'onda (2016) from Mount Kenya University conducted a qualitative study presenting the findings of a linguistic analysis on newspaper headlines on terrorism in Kenya. The paper adopted Halliday's theory of transitivity to identify and explain how the Al-Shabaab are portrayed and represented through language used in the headlines of newspapers. The aim of the paper is to answer the question on how reporters in Kenya construct the image of Al-Shabaab in a newspaper. To answer that question, she used SFL and the framework of transitivity analysis which identifies the ideational meanings realised by the grammatical choices. The paper also clarified how the linguistic features contribute to the construction of negative image of the AlShabaab, and showed that the grammatical choices in newspaper reports played a role to express the writers' perspectives toward Al-Shabaab, which affects the readers' opinion making process.

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Hoang Van Van (2018) conducted a comparative study of a Vietnamese famous poem “Bánh trôi nước” and three English versions of translation, using systemic functional grammar as the theoretical framework. This research is a thorough analysis and comparison revealing interesting findings about the similarities and differences between the three translated versions and the source poem, and between the translated versions with reference to ideational, interpersonal and textual meanings.

3. CONCLUSION

This paper has provided a brief overview of SFL and previous studies related to the study with regard to several aspects of discourse analysis as follows.

First, the definition of language and its functions have been thoroughly discussed. Given such discussions, language is seen as a network of systems and it has strata, which consists text as a stratum in that. Context in turn is interpreted as a stratum in the linguistic system. In the view of SFL, it plays an important role in the linguistic model, an essential part for text making meaning. The transitivity system is one of three main metafunctions in SFL, it is about the processes which help represent our experience in terms of doing, thinking, being and so on.

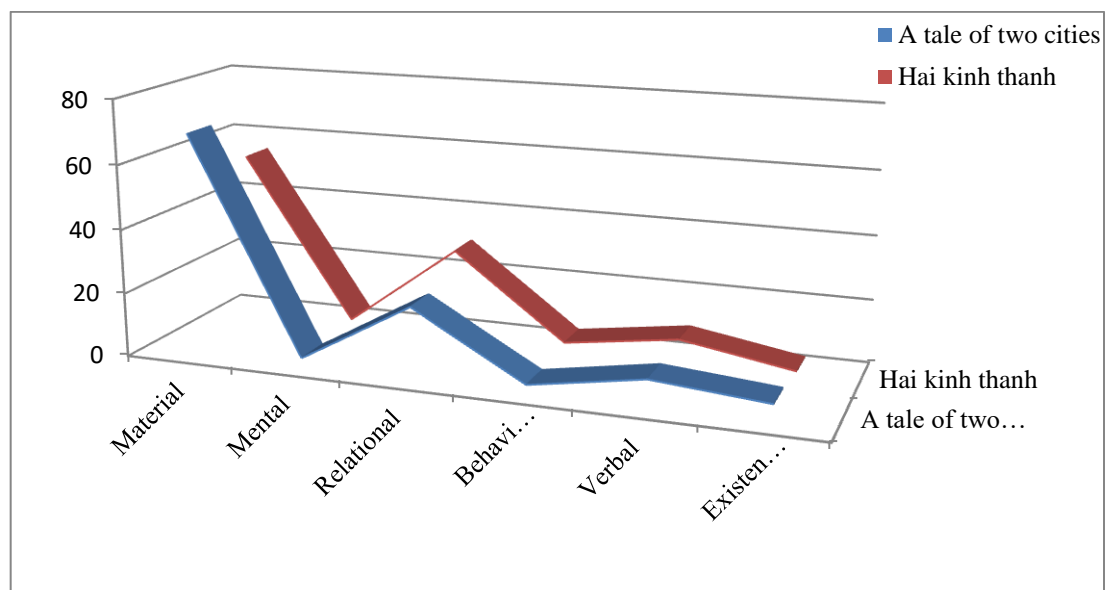
Second, some previous studies which are related to the topic have been briefly reviewed then the researcher can take experience from them as well as avoid the limitation. These help the researcher compare and determine the way of analyzing the novel “A tale of two cities”.

The objectives of this study is to compare a chapter in “A tale of two cities” with its Vietnamese translation in “Hai kinh thành” to find out what transitivity resources are employed and how they are employed in the two text extracts, and ultimately to establish the similarities and differences between them in terms of transitivity analysis. To achieve these purposes, Halliday’s theory of systemic functional grammar was adopted as the theoretical framework. The novels have been

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functionally analysed according to the six types of processes and nine circumstantial elements. The findings response to the research questions indicated that:

Third, there are some similarities and differences between “A Tale of Two Cities” and “Hai kinh thành” in terms of process types. The material processes tend to reduce while the relational processes tend to increase, the other processes are quite stable and in the good rate with the source. These changes are created by the increase in the processes, which also affects to the participant distribution in the translated novel. The distribution of the process types in both versions is summarize in the following chart.



For the circumstantial elements, a big change in manner and location, there are a lot of reasons for this including the transformation from process types to or from a circumstantial element to another. The number of Manner and Location change significantly but they are distributed into each chapter in good proportions which are close the source. The other circumstances are still close in total numbers but sometimes different to the source regarding the chapter distribution. This table provides the distribution of circumstantial elements in English and Vietnamese texts:

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Texts	English	Vietnamese
Manner	25.93%	35.37%
Location	56.79%	40.24%
Accompaniment	2.47%	4.88%
Role	0.00%	0.00%
Extent	6.17%	13.41%
Angle	1.23%	0.00%
Cause	7.41%	4.88%
Contingency	0.00%	0.00%
Matter	0.00%	1.22%

Last but not least, based on the findings of the present study, the importance of the process distribution in translation helps the readers follow the right way which is oriented by the writer and translator. Transitivity analysis becomes one of the important criteria to evaluate the quality of the translation process.

One of the findings of the present study reveals that the transformation of each process or circumstantial element will form the readers' experiences differently. Therefore, the linguistic structure helps reserve the writer's intention and underlying meanings of the novel.

When the transitivity resources are unveiled, and the way of employing them is clarified, it will be easier to analyse the novel deeply and more exactly in terms of contents, characteristics, theme and so on. This demonstrates that the systemic functional grammar plays an important in linguistics and it is very useful for learners to comprehend a new language.

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