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EXPERIENTIAL MEANINGS IN ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE SPECIALISED ECONOMICS JOURNAL ARTICLES: A TRANSITIVITY COMPARISON

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SUMMARY OF DOCTORAL THESIS

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INTRODUCTION

1. Research aim and questions

The overarching aim of this study is to compare the English and Vietnamese Economic research articles published in specialised economics Journals, using Halliday's transitivity model as the theoretical framework, to pinpoint the similarities and differences in the way experiential meanings are expressed in the mentioned research articles. To fulfill the above aim and the objectives, the following three questions are raised for exploration:

1. What transitivity resources are employed to construct experiential meanings in English economics research articles, and how are they employed?

2. What transitivity resources are employed to construct experiential meanings in Vietnamese economics research articles, and how are they employed?

3. What are the similarities and differences between English and Vietnamese economics research articles in terms of experiential meanings?

2. Scope of the study

The scope of this study is confined to exploring and comparing the experiential meanings expressed in English and Vietnamese Specialised Economics Journals from Systemic Functional Grammar perspective. This means that the Interpersonal and Textual meanings are not covered. The corpus for the analysis includes ten English and ten Vietnamese research articles from the leading Journals in Economics. This also means other types of discourses in economics like magazines or textbooks are not considered in the study. Due to the data size, the thesis does not aim to represent all types of economic research articles which may have various schematic structures. Only ten from each language having the schematic structures Introduction, Method, Results and Discussions (IMRD) are chosen for the investigation and comparison.

3. Contribution of the study

The following contributions the thesis can be made:

3.1 Contribution to the insight into the experiential resources that enable experiential meanings from the SFL perspective. Though transitivity analysis has been made in literary works and in several scientific languages in textbook, none has been done into economics research articles in English and Vietnamese. This has also been the first comparative study into experiential meanings of the two languages.

3.2. Contribution to the application of SFL into interpreting non-English languages. SFL is used as the theoretical framework for analysis and comparison. The results of this thesis once more reinforce the applicational values of the framework.

3.3 Contribution to the reconfirmation of the notion that language is universal, and thus can be analysed and compared based on one theoretical framework. This comparative study takes the English as the base language to compare with the Vietnamese language and the results show great similarities between the two in terms of the use of experiential resources to express meanings. Differences enable the confirmation that language is culture specific, and subject to variation.

3.4 Contribution to practical research writing. Researchers coming new to the economics research community in particular and research community in general can have an insight into the way they can use experiential resources to express their research experiences and to report these in the right manner.

3.5 Contribution can also be made to the application of language teaching at university. It provides a basis for educational decisions made at universities. University students, and lecturers especially those from economics universities should know what they need to study, how they should approach research studies and how to make sense of the research articles to be able to produce research report of this types when required.

CHAPTER 1. LITERATURE REVIEW

First, a brief review of the concepts of genre and research genre is made. Then it focuses on examining in detail Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) – the chosen framework for the research.

1.1. Genre and research genre

Genre was defined by Swale (1990, 2001) as "comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. In addition to purpose, exemplars of a genre exhibit various patterns of similarities in terms of structure, style, content and intended audience".

Regarding genre studies on research papers, there are works on different sections of research articles by Heslot (1982); Hopkins and Dudley Evan (1988); Swale (1990); Dudley Evan (1993) or the studies on different paragraphs in newspaper editorials by De Bolivar (1985). In terms of macro-structure of research articles, Bruce (1983) had a study on the generic structure of research articles and suggested an *Introduction-Method-Results-*

Discussion (IMRD) format that follows the logical cycle of inductive inquiry. Swale (2005) confirmed, there are cases that show that RA is rarely simple narratives of investigations but complexly distanced reconstructions of research activities.

1.2. Systemic functional approach

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is a model of language which was developed by M.A.K. Halliday. His linguistic theory draws on work by a number of eminent linguists such as Ferdinand de Saussure (1913, 1983), Hjelmsev (1961), Malinowski (1923, 1935) and Firth (1957, 1968). SFL facilitates the exploration of meaning making of language via the text-based grammar tool. Thus, when a text is put under the analysis, it is essential to show the functional organization of the text structure, what meaningful choices have been made and each one seen in the context of what might have been meant but was not.

Halliday (2004:29) suggests two basic functions of language: *making sense of our own experience* and *acting out our social relationships*. Language construes human experience, providing lexico-grammatical resources to construe meanings and to perform the functions, including **ideational** meta-function (which are distinguished into **experiential** and **logical** meta-function) and enacting (our personal and social relationship with others around us) called **interpersonal** meta-function (to show that language is also interactive and personal). Furthermore, to facilitate the two aforementioned meta-functions, it is also essential to build up a sequence of discourse, organizing them into flows with cohesion and continuity. This meta-function is called **textual** meta-function.

1.3. The transitivity model

To facilitate the comparison of the two sets of data, we need to explore and then to establish a common theoretical framework – the transitivity model. As a way of start, let us reproduce Figure 1 which is taken from Hoang Van Van (2020: 4) below:
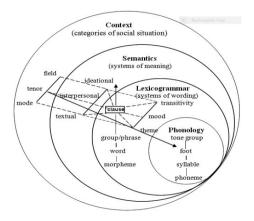

Figure 1.3: Systemic Functional Linguistics

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Figure 1 shows that SFL is a comprehensive model of language which consists of four levels: context, semantics, lexicogrammar, and phonology/phonetics. Figure 1 also shows that transitivity – the focus of our comparative research – lies at the level of lexicogrammar.

1.3.1. Language and social context

Halliday (2004) confirms that the **context of culture** is the contextual potential of a community for meaning potential, an environment for meanings in which various semiotic systems operate. The **context of situation** is the context for particular instances, or context for language as a process. The context of situation will be varied with the three dimensions, and Halliday (2004) terms these three situational dimensions **field**, **tenor** and **mode**. They together create the basis for the development of taxonomy of situation as well as taxonomy of a text that functions in a context. The **Field of discourse** refers to what is happening, to the nature of the social action that is taking place. The **Tenor of discourse** refers to who is taking part, to the nature of the participants, their statuses and roles. The **Mode of discourse** refers to what part the language is playing, what it is that the participants are expecting the language to do for them in that situation, the organization of the text, the status that it has, and its function in the context.

1.3.2. Semantics

Semantics is mainly referred to as the semantics of the clause and multi-strata (Halliday & Hassan, 1989), with the ideational semantics, interpersonal semantics and textual semantics. **Ideational semantics** is the representation of the ideational content of the clause or of the whole text. **Interpersonal semantics** has the speech functions at the clause level and at the discourse level it is the organization of sequences of speech acts into exchanges or turns. **The textual semantics** is concerned with how the text is organized as a message.

1.3.3. Lexicogrammar

In SFL, **grammar** is not merely the analysis of structures but the "words" and the various combinations of words to make meanings, hence it is **Lexico-grammar** rather than just grammar as viewed by traditional grammarians. In other words, grammar in SFL is realized by the system of transitivity, system of mood and the system of theme. The **Transitivity** aims to describe the option of representational/ideational meaning, analyzing the clause in terms of who is doing what to whom. The **Mood** aims to describe the option of interpersonal meanings, analyzing the clause structure - a more traditional syntactic

function. The **Theme** aims to describe the option of textual meanings, analyzing how different themes are structured to carry out the message.

1.3.4. The clause

SFL takes the "clause" as a unit of analysis. The clause in SFL is defined as a lexicogrammatical unit that provides more than any other unit a clear indication of the distinct line of structures which are associated with metafunctions. The clause carries three lines of meanings including: Ideational meanings, Interpersonal meanings and the textual meanings as mentioned in **1.3.2. Ideational meanings is** subdivided into *experiential* and *logical* subfunctions or modes, with *experiential* referring to our experience of the goings-on in the world. This meta-function is analysed in terms of **transitivity system** or a choice of six processes with the participants and circumstances that go with the processes.

1.4. The Transitivity system in English

Transitivity is the grammatical system consisting of (1) processes unfolding through time, (2) participants involved in the processes, and (3) circumstances as attendant.

1.4.1. Processes and participants

The system has six processes namely *material, behavioural, mental, verbal, relational* and *existential:* **Material process** is the process of doing, construing doings and happenings. A material clause is characterized by structural configurations **Actor, Goal/Recipients + Process + Circumstances**. **Mental process,** also known as the process of sensing, is an internalized and conscious type of process which is subdivided into cognition, perception and affection. Mental process is configured as **Process + Senser + Phenomenon**. The Senser is "conscious being" and refers to a person, or a human collective product of human consciousness realized by a nominal group denoting a "potent" entity. **Relational process - process of being and having -** is concerned with the process of description, certifying and characterising. The configuration is **Carrier + Precess _ Identifying/Attributive. Behavioural Process** relates the physiological and psychological behavior such as smiling, crying, laughing or breathing. The configuration is *Behaver + Processes + Behaviour.* **Verbal processes** are actually processes of 'saying' things. It can also be understood as a direct or indirect report, and it covers "any kind of symbolic exchange of meaning" in Halliday's terms (1986, p.129). The configuration is **Sayer + Process + Verbiage**. **Existential process** is the process of existing or showing that

something exists or happens. The configuration is **There + Be/Exist/Arise** (or verbs that express existence).

1.4.2. The circumstances

Halliday and Matthiessen (2014:313) categorise circumstances into main types: (1) ***Enhancing,*** subdivided into (a) *circumstance of extent* denoting the distance, duration, frequency, (b) *circumstance of location* specifying place, time, (c) *circumstance of manner* specifying means, quality, comparison and degree, (d) *circumstance of cause* specifying reason, purpose, and behalf, (e) *circumstance of contingency* detailing condition, and concession; (2) ***Extending***: to show a joint participation in the process and represents the meanings 'and', 'or' as circumstantial. (3) ***Elaborating***: to augment the configuration of processes + participant by specifying the role that participants take in the process. This type of participant construes the meaning of Guise *be* or Product *become; and (4)* ***Projection***: to project the Senser in Mental clause (Angle) and Sayer in Verbal clause (Matter).

1.5. The transitivity system in Vietnamese

1.5.1. Processes and participants

Hoang Van Van also assumes six kinds of processes in Vietnamse as postulated by Halliday (1985, 1994, 2004, 2014) but while Halliday terms processes Doing, Sensing and Being, Hoang Van Van organizes the six options under three major headings including (1) Doing processes (subdivided into Material and Behavioural processes) (2) Projecting processes (subdivided into Mental and Verbal processes), and (3) Being processes (subdivided into Relational and Existential processes). He suggested the structures and how to distinguish among the various types.

1.5.2. Circumstance in Vietnamese

While Halliday (2004) categorises circumstances into nine types (cf. 1.4.3), Hoang Van Van (2012) distinguishes circumstances from participants in terms of how this part is realized, its mobility, in terms of inherency. Hoang Van Van classifies circumstances into Circumstance of Extent, of Location, of Manner, of Cause, of Accompaniment, of Matter, of Role and Stance. However, in terms of subtypes, they are similar.

1.6. Impersonality

The transitivity offers a syntactic resource for the representation of participants. This allows for explicit intervention of authority or impersonal distancing, aiming at achieving 'objectification' of research articles. Another way to present impersonality that contributes

to the creation of the effects of the absence of rhetoric characteristics is the removal of explicit agency (Halliday & Martin, 1993 P.52). The removal of explicit agency can be achieved by either **ergative** constructions or **passive voice structure**s (Lyons, 1986; Synclair, 1990 as cited in Martinez, 2001), or processes with **inanimate subjects** (Master, 1991).

1.6.1. Ergativity

Halliday (1970, 1985) takes a semantic approach to view Ergativity as an aspect of meaning which may be expressed through a range of lexico-grammatical choices. This involves a reinterpretation of Ergativity in terms of semantic concept of causation. When Ergative structure is used, the Medium (normally something) can acts as the Actor and takes on the focus of the process.

1.6.2. Passive voice

The representations of the process *collect* come in either form: the active or called **operative** and the passive or called **receptive** by Halliday and Matthiessien (2014: 247). The active voice has no explicit marker and the passive is expressed by *be* or *get* plus passive participle. The difference is, the roles are mapped onto the interpersonal functions in the modal structure of the clause. In the passive form or called 'receptive' by Halliday, the Goal is mapped on to the Subject, becoming the central participant of the clause, and thus receiving more focus. This way, impersonality can be achieved in the text.

1.7. Review of previous studies on SFL and transitivity analysis

Within the related literature available, we find studies by Đỗ Tuấn Minh (2007), Nguyễn Thị Thu Hạnh (2012), Nguyễn thị Minh Tâm (2013), Shuyuan et al. (2014), and Võ thị Bê (2020). However, none of them have investigated into the experiential meanings of specialised economics journal articles.

1.8. Economics discourse and economics research articles

Economics discourse in general and economics research articles in particular uses 'expert grammar' for reasoning (Halliday, 1987), and is characterized by the use of abstract language in writing like metaphor, metonymy, personification, and nominalization, leaving gaps in the message (Mason, 1990), the use of terminology and the use of reference to other semiotic system including mathematic for modeling (Mc. Closkey, 1986), the use of impersonality (Bloor and Bloor, 1993, Salager and Meyer, 1994), and the use of passive voice to create abstractness (Mason, 1990).

CHAPTER 2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Research methodology

In this study, the major research design adopted is the corpus linguistics with the application of computational tools for data storing and analysis. Following a corpus-based linguistic approach, quantitative method is used to quantify the types and frequency of transitivity resources. Qualitative and descriptive methods are used to describe how the resources are used to construe experiential meanings in the two corpora. The comparative method is used to answer the question what are the similarities and differences in the ways the experiential meanings are expressed in ESEJs and VSEJs.

As for cross-lingual comparative research, the researcher has to decide on a starting point for the comparison. In this case, the ESEJs are chosen as the starting point - *the base language* and the VSEJs will be the *comparative* one.

Data processing is done with the use of SysFan developed by Wu, as a computational tool for separating clause and clause complexes, processes and circumstance; marking, storing and analysing the data.

2.2. Data collection

The data gathered for this research consists of ten specialised economics research articles in English, and ten comparable specialized research articles in Vietnamese. By comparable data in the research we mean the data collected should be comparable in terms of number of articles, research area, research topic and the genre (Baker, 2010).

The ten English articles are chosen from three leading Anglo-American economic specialized journals: *American Economics Journal*, *The Journal of Economic Growth*, and *Journal of International Economics*. The ten Vietnamese journals are taken from Vietnam's most prestigious economic journals: *Nghiên cứu kinh tế, Kinh tế và phát triển, Phát triển kinh tế -* written by Vietnamese economics researchers. The economics journal articles in both languages are updated journal articles, having Introduction – Research _ Method_ Discussion (IRMD) structures.

Unit of analysis is the ranking clause of the articles. Since the lengths of the English articles are different from those in Vietnamese, the numbers of clauses from the two corpora are different. To deal with this problem, the author uses **percentages (%)** when describing, and analysing the data.

CHAPTER 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION: TRANSITIVITY IN SPECIALISED ECONOMICS JOURNALS ARTICLES IN ENGLISH

This chapter is designed to address the first research question, "What transitivity resources are employed to construct experiential meanings in English specialised economics journal articles (ESEJs), and how are they employed?".

3.1. Processes in the ESEJs

In this part, an analysis of each part was made, but within the limit of a summary, the following remarks are made:

- All processes are used with Material and Relational occurring most frequently then comes to Mental and Verbal processes. Existential and Behavioural account for the smallest of all.

- Material percentage is highest (35.82%), especially in the Abstract, Introduction and Method sections to enable researchers to establish their doings in the research and the happenings or goings-on in the economies. Relational processes occur frequently in most sections (at an average of 35.01%).

- Verbal and Mental processes are used (at around more than 10%) to state, suggest, propose and show cognition and perception of the economic processes.

- Existential processes (at 3- 4%) to denote the existence of economic happenings or of other research factors.

3.2. Animate and inanimate subjects participants in ESEJs

This part investigates the use of subjects as central participants in processes in each of the section via the frequency of various structures namely *Active + Agent, passive + Agent, Passive without Agent*, *Active with inanimate* subjects and *Ergative*.

Findings show that inanimate and inanimate subjects are actually the economic indicators/issues/data/facts/features - the subject matter of that research articles- and are used at the highest percentages in each section, and increase as over each part, while active agentive subjects, which are *We, the author, the researchers* and names of other researcher in the fields of study, are second most frequent at the beginning; and decrease as the research proceeds. This is because in the first sections, the authors use active voice to establish their status to do the research. When the names of other authors are mentioned, researchers aim to create a space for their current research. That high percentage of animate subjects in active voice, at around 50%-60%, plus that in passive voice structures at

12.52%, passive without agent, 0.11% passive with agent, 1.28% inanimate subjects in ergative structures, is also aimed at creating a sense of objectivity for the research.

3.3. Circumstances in EESJs

All types of circumstances are found in all sections and the highest ones found at work are circumstance of location (51.67%), manner (6.83%) and cause (12.15%), followed by contingency (2.4%), accompaniment (3.1%), matter (1.26%) and extent (1%). The use of circumstance enables the researcher to enhance, elaborate, extent or project processes, specifying when, where, how, in what manner, under what circumstance and from what stance/angle the processes or research implementation or the economic processes unfold. This creates a sense of precision, validity and reference-based for the ESEJs.

3.4. Discussion and Summary

All experiential resources are used in ESEJs: material and relational occur most frequently showing the experiences of doing the research by authors, the happenings and relationship among economic factors. Relational with inanimate active subjects, and material processes in passive form is used to create distance to the research and maintain objectivity and validity. This can be reinforced by dominant number of impersonal subject participants. Circumstance of location, manner, cause are used most with the addition of other types to enhance the eligibility, precision, validity and reference-based of the research. These are very much the qualities of a typical research article that any researcher heads for.

CHAPTER 4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION: TRANSITIVITY IN SPECIALISED ECONOMICS JOURNALS ARTICLES IN VIETNAMESE (VSEJS)

This chapter attempts to address the second research question, *"What transitivity resources are employed to construct experiential meanings in Vietnamese specialised economics journal articles (VSEJs), and how are they employed?"*

4.1. Processes in VSEJs

Findings shows that all process types are used in all sections of the VSEJs with the highest ones being Relational processes (at 43.84%), followed by Material processes at 28.17%. Verbal and Mental come next at respectively 13.57% and 9.77% respectively. Existential processes account for 3.52% and Behavioral occur very little.

The high Relational processes are used to characterize and identify economic agents/factors/ data/problems, as a way that the research uses to step backward to distance themselves from the research. Added to this is the high material processes used to maintain objectivity for the

research. Verbal and Mental processes are used to state aims, purposes, suggest or to express the perception and cognitions by the researchers.

4.2. Animate and inanimate subject participants in VSEJs

This part investigates the use of subject participants via various structures, including *Active + Inanimate, Active Agent, Passive Agentless, Passive + Agent,* Ergative, *There + be* structures in each of the VSEJs section.

Findings show that inanimate or agentive subject structures are highest, playing an essential role in expressing the central participants of the processes and in reflecting the authors' objectivity level. The investigation illustrates very low frequency of use of *Active voice + Animate Subject* structures in all VSEJs. Only 18.4% of all the processes has the central participants being animate or human and these actually refer to the "We" – the authors or researchers of the articles. This also means more than 80% of the clauses are passive voice, used in the forms of *Passive + agent*, *Passive + Agentless* (11,84%), *Active + inanimate subject , There + be* structures (2.79%), and *Ergative* (1.29%). The high frequency use of the passive voice and ergativity obviously means the intentional distancing that the authors create to confirm the objectivity of their studies, the precision of the analysis, which are independent of any subjective thoughts.

4.3. Circumstances in VSEJs

Investigation of circumstances in each of the VSEJs section show that circumstance of location is mostly use, followed by manner, then cause and contingency. However, manners are more frequently used in Abstracts and Conclusions to introduce and wrap up the manner of researches. Location specifies when and where researches are done or the economic processes unfold. All circumstances enhance the precision, validity and reference-based of processes unfold in the VESJs.

4.4. Discussion and Summary

Overall, the exploration of transitivity resources in VESJs shows that they are condensed written, and informative. Moreover, the Vietnamese researchers use the highest number of Relational processes with high inanimate subject structures (meaning high impersonality) as a technique to distance themselves from any possible happenings in the economies or from any result of research activities. In so doing, they aim to achieve impersonality, objectivity and validity in their research activities. Next, the high frequency of *Active + inanimate* structures in VESJs is also a technique employed by Vietnamese

researchers to conceal the causality, revealing high degree of in-negotiability in their research. Furthermore, the use of various circumstances in processes is a way that researchers enhance, and elaborate the information either related to the participants or the processes themselves, which enables them to achieve persuasion via the precision, argumentation, justifications and referenced-based methods.

CHAPTER 5. THE SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE WAY EXPERIENTIAL MEANINGS ARE EXPRESSED IN ESEJs AND VSEJs

5.1. Process types

This part compares the similarities and differences of the ESEJs and VSEJs in each of the sections in terms of processes. The investigation and comparison show similarities and differences.

Table 5.1: Process types in the EESJs and VESJs

Processes	Material	Behav	Mental	Verbal	Rela	Exist	Total
English	35.82%	0.85%	11.78%	12.56%	35.01%	3.98%	100%
Vietnamese	28.17%	1.14%	9.77%	13.57%	43.84%	3.52%	100%

In terms of similarities, (1) both corpora employ all six process types in all sections of the articles at quite similar percentages; (2) both corpora have the highest

concentration of material and relational processes (referred to as groups 1), with 35.82% and 35.01% for English and 28.17%, and 43.84 % for Vietnamese, respectively; (3) the second most used processes in both corpora are verbal and mental, at 12.56% and 11.78% respectively in the English corpus and 13.57% and 9.77% respectively in the Vietnamese corpus. Noticeably, (4) both English and Vietnamese authors use more verbal processes than mental ones, and (5) the least frequently used are existential and behavioural ones, at around under 4% for existential and around 1% for behavioural with both corpora using more existential processes than behavioural ones.

In both of the corpora, the distribution of the processes in each section manifests the regularities that characterise the generic structure of a research article and of each part of the research articles. Both of the corpora are research articles, thus a high proportion of material processes are used to describe the happenings in the economies, the impacts on the economic agents/matters and the research activities by the researchers. Noticeably, relational constructions also dominate the articles in both languages; meanwhile, these constructions are highly impersonal, which brings the sense of objectivity to persuade the readers of the validity of the research – the quality found in both of the corpora.

Verbal and mental processes are second mostly used in every section of both to suggest, present, propose, comment and express cognition and perception of the goings-on in economic processes or research processes.

Existential occurs at around 2-4% of all process to unfold the existence of economic processes or research processes. Behavioural Processes account for a tiny proportion in each section of both languages, which is also typical for the scientific language. This is because experiences in the RAs of both corpora are to report the happenings in economic situations and relations among economic agents/matters.

The differences can also be explained as follows,

That the English authors tend to employ more material and mental than Vietnamese authors in this section may means the English authors desire to emphasise the sum of changes of their outerworld (the world of economic study) as well as those of their innerworld (the world of their own concioueness) after the research has been carried out. Meanwwhile, Vietnamese authors choose to use more verbal processes, which also shows the changes in another part of human conscious referred to as 'external verbalization of conciousness' by Matthiessen (1995), used 'to exchange meaning' related to the aim, purpose of their research.

Vietnamese authors often set the scene by discussing generally the contexts for the research using more verbals like *khái quát, đưa ra,, giới thiệu,, cho thấy, gợi ý, trình bày, thảo luận* to discuss the aim and purpose of their research, which sounds more tentative. In the English articles, after generally discussing the situation or problems, the authors seem to favour mental processes like *find, note, assume, estimate, address* apart from verbal processes such as *explain, discuss or show*.

5.2. Animate and inanimate subject participants in ESEJs and VSEJs

This part shows similarities and differences in the occurrences of various types of subjects in various structures including active agentive, active inanimate subjects, passive agentive and passive agentless, and ergative structures in every section of the RAs in both languages.

The differences is English writers tend to use more agentive subjects/participants in most sections the articles, and from the observation, most are *we* and *the author*, the researchers and sometimes the names of other researchers in their articles. Thus, the percentage of inanimate subjects tends to be lower than in Vietnamese articles. On the other hand,

Vietnamese researchers tend to use less frequent agentive subject as *we* to address, instead they use both passive voice and active voice with the subjects being *this research, this paper*. This explains why in passive structures and active inanimate structures seem to be higher in Vietnamese corpus as compared to that in the English one.

5.3. Circumstances in ESEJs and VSEJs

In this part, a discussion of the similarities and differences in the use of circumstances in each section of the RAs in both languages is made.

In terms of similarities, following remarks can be made:

- (1) In every part of the sections of both corpora, circumstance of location, manner and cause occur most frequently, followed by contingency, accompaniment, matter and stance/angle. (2) Both use a high number of circumstances of location of time and places to achieve the preciseness of when and where the actions take place. (3) Both use high frequency of circumstances of manner of qualities to further describe the qualities of the activities, manner of means (by means of prepositional phrases) to enhance the information of how an action is done, high concentration of circumstances of cause to justify, rationalise, and to inform the purposes of the actions, circumstance of contingency for specification of the conditions in which the activities occur. (4) Though circumstances of role, matter, and stance are used less frequently in both corpora, they are used when the researchers want to confirm the role of something in their actions or of some factors in the economy, or to establish a ground for their statements via the circumstances of angle or stance.

The differences can be seen in the specific distribution of circumstance types in each of the sections of both corpora. It is also noticeable that circumstances of location is much higher every section of ESEJs than in sections of VSEJs. Moreover, circumstance of matter and angle/stance seem lower in English compared to that in Vietnamese.

5.4. Discussion and summary

The investigation shows that the English and Vietnamese articles share more similarities in the way, the types and the frequencies of experiential resources they use in their RAs.

Particularly, both use all types of experiential resources. Both corpora use highest relational and material processes, inanimate subjects and circumstances of location, manner and causes. In this way, both groups of researchers can maintain objectivity, impersonality

thus enable the validity of their own research. This quality of research articles are also achieved by the way the researches use passive structures, to implicitly mention the Actors/Sayers/Sensers. Added to this are the similar percentages of ergative structures in both corpora with the subject participants being the economic indicators/factors/agents. These processes in these ergative structures indicate the goings-on in the economies beyond the desire of anyone in the economies.

Furthermore, both of the corpora use high degree of economic terms and jargon. These terms and jargons are actually the participants in various economic processes and authors of both corpora provide not further definitions. Understandably, the specialised economics journals are aimed to report the outcomes of economic analysis to the participants of scientific community, thus the assumption is that the reader has high expertise in the area and no further explanation of economic terms are necessary as in the scientific textbooks for school students or magazines for the general readers.

There are obviously disparities in experiential meanings between the two set of corpus. First, English authors use more Material processes to express the experience of their actions. Thus Material process frequency is higher in almost every section of the English papers than that in Vietnamese counterparts while Vietnamese researchers use more Relational processes in each section of their articles. Vietnamese authors utilise more verbal processes and fewer mental processes compared to English authors. Though both discuss intentions, the two seem to express themselves in different ways. To compensate for the lower percentage of active agentive subjects, Vietnamese researchers use more active inanimate subject structures. The reason is when it comes to establishing the space for the current research, Vietnamese authors use *các nghiên cứu trước chỉ ra rằng, lý thuyết thành công chỉ ra rằng, lý thuyết chi phí chìm nhấn mạnh rằng* (*many previous studies show that, Success theory shows that, sinking expense theory emphasise…)* as the central participants in verbal processes while authors of English corpus use names of other authors.

CONCLUSION

1. Recapitulation

This thesis has been devoted to investigating the experiential meanings expressed in English and Vietnamese economics research articles via the analysis of transitivity. The research questions are thus (1) *"What transitivity resources are employed to construct experiential meanings in English specialised economics journal articles (ESEJs), and how*

are they employed?", (2) *What transitivity resources are employed to construct experiential meanings in Vietnamese specialised economics journal articles (VSEJs), and how are they employed?* And (3) *"What are the similarities and differences between English and Vietnamese specialised economics journal articles in terms of how experiential meanings are constructed?"* To answer the research questions, the author reviewed genre theory by Swale (1981, 2001, 2005) and Bhatia (1993), SFL theory by Halliday (1994), Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, 2014), and the transitivity model for Vietnamese by Hoàng Văn Vân (2012), and the related literature using SFL as the theoretical framework on economics as well as on other genres.

The review of SFL shows that SFL is a comprehensive framework for describing language as a system. Language enables us to make sense of our own experience, and act out our social relationship (Halliday, 2004). It construes human experience, providing us with lexico-grammatical resources to construe meanings and perform functions including ideational meta-function (experiential and logical meta-functions), enacting interpersonal meat-function, and building up a coherent and continuous sequence of discourse, called textual meta-function. In SFL, the core unit is the clause – a lexicogrammatical unit that provides more than any other unit a clear identification of the distinct line of structures that are associated with meta-functions. SFL confirms that there can be three ways of looking at the clause: from the angle of Mood, which concerns interpersonal meanings – the nature of the exchange between the speaker (or writer) and listener (or reader); from the angle of Theme, which concerns the textual meaning – nature of a message; and from the angle of Transitivity, which concerns ideational meanings – the nature of the clause as a representation.

As the focus of the study is on Transitivity, a thorough review of the Transitivity system and its components including the processes, the participants, and the circumstances were also made for the further analysis of the transitivity resources utilised in the English corpus. Then, a careful review of the experiential grammar of the Vietnamese clause by Hoàng Văn Vân (2012) was made, based on which the analysis of the clauses of the Vietnamese corpus was carried out. The review of the two frameworks shows that although Hoàng Văn Vân has grouped processes and circumstances for Vietnamese transitivity resources in a way slightly different from Halliday, they both employ the same theoretical framework – the SFL model as developed by Halliday (1985, 1994). Both Halliday's and Hoàng Văn Vân's

studies view the clause as a multifunctional unit which can be analysed experiential, interpersonal, and textual meanings; and thus their studies have given the present researcher insights into the clause of the two languages and detailed guidelines for clause separation and analysis.

To achieve the aims and objectives of the study, the research is designed as a comparative study, conducted under the corpus linguistics methodology. The specific approach adopted for the study is corpus-based linguistics. To decide on the above-mentioned appropriate methodology and research approach, the author provided a brief review of the methodology and research approaches concerning the current research with justifications were also made. From the chosen research design, research methodology, and research approach, the author then decided on the specific methods applied for the research, which include corpus method (a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods for corpus analysis), descriptive, and comparative methods.

The corpus for the research is ten English specialised economics journal articles and ten English specialised economics journal articles. They have their genre-specific schematic structures. The comparison was made with English being the base language and Vietnamese being the comparative one. The comparison of the two sets of data was made in terms of the use of transitivity resources and their frequency of use, and how these resources are used to pinpoint how the experiential meanings are achieved in the ESEJs and VSEJs in each of the article sections and in the articles as a whole. The baseline English data were obtained with the assistance of SysFan – a computational tool for greater convenience while that for Vietnamese was done "manually".

The exploration and comparison of the two sets of data show that the operation of transitivity resources in both English and Vietnamese specialised economic journals articles do reflect two major 'experiential lines' reflecting two lines of experiential meanings via (1) the goings-on in the economic world, the flows of economic events, problems, situations that need dealing with, or the quantum of changes in the micro and macro-economic systems, as well as (2) the necessary impacts from the economic researchers that bring about a quantum of changes.

In both sets of the economic RAs, the major experiential resources: **Participants**, **Processes**, and **Circumstances** – are used at quite similar percentages. Corresponding to the two major experiential meanings, in both sets of the corpora, the **Participants** (whether

being central participants as Actor, Senser, Sayer, Be-er 1, Existent, the Goal, the Phenomenon, or the Be-er 2) are (1) economics factors/indicators/events, and (2) the economic researchers/authors in general or the proper names of several economic researchers. In both sets of corpora, the **Processes** that unfold through time are realized by verbs denoting the *Happenings* in the economies, the *Doings* (creatings, changings) by economic agents or by the researchers, the *Sensing* (saying, thinking, feelings, seeing) by the economic participants in the macro and microeconomics or researchers, the **Beings** (having attributes, having an identity), unfolding inertly of the economic factors/agents/ issues or the research, and *Havings* (relationships with) of the economic factors/agents/ issues or the research. The **Circumstances** are the settings for economic processes as well as the settings for the research activities.

Both sets of corpora use ergative structures, at similarly low percentages, to express the changes in economic situations or the changes of economic indicators/factors which are beyond the expectations and controls of anyone in the economy, including the economic researchers. This is a technique used by both groups of researchers in English and Vietnamese to maintain the distance from him/her and the happenings in the research and the economy.

Both sets of economic journal articles use high frequency of relational and material processes. As mentioned earlier, relational structures with inanimate subjects and a finite verb enable the high objectivity, generalisations, evaluation and interpretation, and impersonality of the writing. Material processes are also used at high frequency, with the use of passive agentless structures or inanimate structures being another way that both English and Vietnamese economic researchers express their doings without mentioning their roles, as well as the goings-on in the economy. Material processes with active animate structures are found relatively frequent at work in certain sections like in the Abstract, Introduction, and Methodology, where there is a necessity of interpersonal interactions and negotiation between the writers and readers, and here the economic researchers confirm the responsibility they take.

In both sets of corpora, verbal and mental processes are second mostly used to introduce what is said or thought as reports. Verbal processes are applied to state the aims/purposes and methodology of the research and to provide findings and suggestions while mental processes are to express the researchers' perception and cognition of the existing economic

situations/problems, the future economic perspective, that of the previous research methodologies, or the previous research results. Both use similarly low frequency of existential processes for similar purposes and extremely low behavioural processes as behavioural processes are to express feelings, emotions which are not typical in research articles.

Both sets of corpora have specific economic issues (tax, employment, labor market, inflation, monetary policies, or government policies) or economic problems as the subject matter of studies and these subjects matter of studies play various participants roles in the various processes.

It is interesting to note that to report their empirical economic studies and discussions on the economic issues, both English and Vietnamese researchers use a high frequency of jargon and specific terms without any further definition of the terms and jargon. However, this is understandable since the communicators in the same generic community are economic scholars, thus the reports and discussions certainly focus on the specific research experiences and happenings in the economies rather than explaining the meanings of the terms.

Both sets of corpora strive to maintain the qualities of research articles, which are rich in information, precise, full of arguments and justification, objective and referenced-based. This can be seen in the way the economic researchers of both languages use Circumstances of location of space and time (to answer the question where and when a process unfolds), Circumstance of causes (to answer the question why and for what a process unfolds), Circumstance of manner (to answer the question how a process unfolds), of contingency (to answer the question under what circumstance or in which condition a process unfolds), Circumstance of stance/angle (to answer the question which sources provide the information. From which perspective an economic issue is viewed/ considered).

Differences can be found when the analysis comes to more delicate levels, i.e. in terms of specific percentages of processes, structures reflecting central participants, and circumstances. For example, to discuss the intentions and the purposes of what is to be done in the research, Vietnamese researchers choose to use verbal processes like *generalise, suggest, present, show, discuss…* the English researchers choose mental processes like *find, note, assume, estimate*... In another example in terms of the use of circumstances, Vietnamese writers tend to choose to persuade the readers of the credibility, reliability and

validity of their research by using more referenced-based information via Circumstances of angle and stance, while English writers prefer to show precision by an exceptionally higher percentage of Circumstances of location (of time and place). All these may be due to culture-specific reasons, but to pursue these issues seems to go beyond the scope of this study.

In short, though differences are found in the types and frequency of specific processes, structures, and circumstances, both corpora utilise all possible experiential resources to express the goings-on, the flows of events in the micro and macro-economic systems, and the experiences of their research activities. At the same time, all researchers of both corpora tend to make attempts to use the experiential resources in the ways that enable them to maintain the informativeness, objectivity, validity, impersonality, argumentation, and justification- the qualities of research papers- in their own RAs.

2. Implications of the study

The study has a number of implications in terms of the theory, the application of analytical framework, methodology, application of computational tools and the findings. Additionally, the study has also implications for new researchers, interpreters and economics students as well.

Theoretically, the use of SFL as a framework for the analysis of both English and Vietnames has proved that SFL provides a flexible framework for the description and analysis of language as its aim: describing the systems of language as a whole. This means it can be applied for the analysis of many other languages. At the same time, SFL is a comprehensive and strictly logical framework serving for both the general analysis and comparison of languages and delicate aspects of languages.

It is also realized that, the author 'inherit' the studies on generic structure and other features of RAs from genre theory by Swale and use SFL theory to explore how researchers use experiential resources in the RAs to achieve their aims in their research. Though seen from a different angle, the features of RAs can still be perceived rather than a clash between the two frameworks.

In terms of methodology, the steps taken for this current study can also be applied to other descriptive, comparative studies. Corpus-based approach, especially specialised

corpus (as the one used in this research) has proved to work well in describing and comparing languages in terms of their features, functions and purposes.

In terms of the application of computational tools, SysFan has proved to be effective in separating clauses, and its components, storing, calculating for final description and comparison. This tool has enabled the time and energy savings as well as higher accuracy in the process of storing and calculating the data.

In terms of findings, the similarities between ESEJs and VSEJs in terms of schematic structures and the use of experiential resources by economics scholars to achieve their aims show that the research genre seem similar across the languages and the ways the researchers employ experiential resources to express their research experience and to maintain objectivity, impersonality and validity are similar. Differences can be realized when the analysis and comparison come to a more delicate level and these differences may originate from the language itself or the culture of the writers.

As for new researchers, this study can be of some help in the understanding and reporting of the experiences they may undergo or the general purposes they may want to achieve by means of experience resources.

Economics students who have inspiration for reading, understanding and reporting such economics research (either in English or Vietnamese) can be more aware of the language of RAs in their area, and how to interpret the experiential resources in the RAs they come up with.

3. Limitations of the research

The scope of the study is limited to ten journal articles from each language, causing one limitation of the study. It would be ideal if the corpus includes 20 or more for each type of language since a larger corpus may reveal further similarities and differences between the two sets of data that have not been discovered from this research.

Second, as a text can have three ways of interpretation, from three angles of meaning, including interpersonal and textual meanings, the current study focuses merely on the analysis and comparison of the corpus from the two languages in terms of ideational meanings, particularly how experiential meanings are expressed via the transitivity resources rather than an investigation into the other meanings.

Next, this study has focused only on the clause as the core unit. Further exploration into clause complexes, and logico-semantic relations of the clause complexes in the text, or

an investigation into rank-shifted clauses (which account for quite a large number) may indicate further features and meanings of these types of texts.

Other aspects related to the exploitation of transitivity resources in economics RAs is grammatical metaphor, and experiential metaphor which are worth exploring but have not been touched on due to the limitation of the time and expertise of the researcher.

Moreover, it is a wish that a computational tool similar to SysFans could be available to the researcher for the separation, calculation and storing of data for time saving, and possibly, a further accuracy in the separation and calculation processes and circumstances in the Vietnamese corpus.

4. Recommendation for further research

The current research focuses on the experiential meanings in specialised economics journal articles in English and Vietnamese. Hopefully, further research can be carried out on a wider range of articles from both languages. Other research into the interpersonal and/or textual meanings expressed in these Journal articles can also be worth considering. It is also a hope that an analysis into the application of grammatical metaphor in the corpus is made, which will further enlighten the deep meanings hidden in such information-rich texts.

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