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**A STUDY ON THE SYNTACTIC FEATURES OF
ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE LYRICS ADOPTING
THE FUNCTIONAL GRAMMAR APPROACH -
CLAUSE AS A MESSAGE**

Field: THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. RATIONALE

Language is one of the most prominent factors that make human beings different from other creatures. We express our ideas through language, which is considered the most effective means of communication. To achieve effective and coherent communication, we have to combine vocabulary and wording. This is because of the association grammar rules, forms and structures with aspects of meaning or semantic functions over the lexical meaning of individual word. In other words, we cannot separate the structure of a language from its functions and meanings. Therefore, it is extremely necessary to study grammar- the mechanism of the combination.

Therefore, language and its mechanism have been taught at school as part of the curriculum. However, teachers and students pay much more attention to the vocabulary and grammar of a language than to the making use of grammatical knowledge in order to have effective communication. A typical example of this is the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language at Vietnamese school: even though the Communicative approach to language teaching and studying has been introduced for quite long, it is still very common that we focus on grammar as simply a set of rules rather than an effective means of communications. The result is that after some years of English studying, all the learners can do is working with exercises repeatedly and still find it difficult to use English in

communication. It is true that grammatical competence is a part of communicative competence for one cannot learn and speak well a foreign language without knowing anything about its grammar, however, the teaching and studying of grammar solely is not sufficient for communicative purposes. Thus, what matters most is to decide which approach to grammatical analysis to adopt and how to transfer it at school.

On the other hand, if the communication is to be successful then organization is a major problem, which must be solved. One of the constraints on the speaker/writer when producing their message is that they can produce only one word at a time. Therefore, they have to choose a beginning point for their utterance. The initial place has an enormous importance in the clause and in discourse. Whatever is at the first place will influence the hearer/reader's interpretation on everything that comes next in the discourse since it will constitute the initial textual context for everything that follows.

There are many different approaches to language studying. One of the most noticeable branches of modern linguistics is functional grammar, which provides insights into not only the meaning but also the effectiveness of a text or a discourse. "It sees language first and foremost as a system of communication and analyzes grammar to discover how it is organized to allow speakers and writers to make and exchange meanings." The tendency to approach a functional analysis in language is inevitable since language has developed for

the satisfaction of human needs and the way it is organized is functional with respect to these needs.

As a teacher at Danang Vocational training College, we have realized that almost Vietnamese students like English songs. They have chance to “encounter” them from any kind of public media as well as every corner of cafeteria or cell phone bell. Therefore, to create the conditions for create teaching, the use of popular culture is a key to effective teaching and learning because it provide learners with some forms of meaning in a relevant and concrete way. Authentic materials, such as western movies and songs are good resources to lead learners to develop a genuine interest in learning a language and which can sustain long-term learning. Since popular song appeals to learners, they are motivated to become active and are eager to know the meaning of the lyrics and sing the songs repeatedly themselves.

Beside, as we live the global era, an age of information, there are many channels that audiences can turn to get news or information to suit their needs. Since the interest in Vietnam and Vietnamese language has increase considerably in the last few years. Sometimes surprisingly, we meet people from Japanese, England, or other Western countries present Vietnamese songs successfully. Most of foreign people, who would like to discover Vietnamese culture through Vietnamese songs, all approach to Trịnh Công Sơn’s music.

Thus, being aware of the importance of popular songs to language learners as well as how to comprehend and catch the lyrics

meaning in the best way adopting the light of Functional grammar, we attempt to make an investigation into the Theme-Rheme structure from English and Vietnamese popular lyrics.

1.2. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

We hope that this research gives benefit in some aspects as follows:

1. The researcher gives information to the reader about the thematic structure in English and Vietnamese popular songs.
2. The research can give some benefits to for another researcher as the next referent for further research, especially in the thematic structure in song lyrics.

1.3. AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.3.1. Aims

Consider the lyrics in the light of Functional grammar we will study the Theme-Rheme structure of pop lyrics in fifty English songs and fifty Vietnamese songs, classify them into different types, and draw out the possible similarities and differences in semantic, cultural and pragmatic features.

1.3.2. Objectives

There are three objectives to guide the study:

1. To describe, compare and identify the similarities and differences between the thematic structures of the two languages.
2. To draw out illocutionary acts realized through the thematic structure.

3. To suggest some implications for English learning and teaching through songs

1.3.3. Research questions

The following questions are posted to guide the research process:

1. What is the Theme-Rheme structure of English lyrics?
2. What is the Theme-Rheme structure of Vietnamese lyrics?
3. What are the similarities and differences in the semantic, syntactic aspects in the Theme-Rheme structure of English-Vietnamese lyrics?

1.4. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This research will study the semantic, pragmatic and cultural aspects as well as the characteristics of the Theme-Rheme structures in fifty English popular songs and fifty Trinh Cong Son's songs.

1.5. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

There are five chapters in this study.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Chapter 3: Methods and Procedures

Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Implication

1.6. DEFINITION OF TERMS

1.6.1. Definitions of Theme and Rheme

1.6.1.1 English

- **Theme**

Theme is realized in English by first position in a clause. The definition of Theme given by Halliday [24, p.38] is that Theme is the given information serving as “the point of departure” of a message.

Halliday also defines Theme as the element, which serves as the point of departure of the message. It is that with which the clause is concerned. Therefore, the Theme is not necessarily a nominal group. It may be an adverbial group or preposition phrase.

- **Rheme**

“Rheme is the remainder of the message except the Theme. It is all that is left over in the clause after we pick up the Theme.”

1.6.1.2. Vietnamese

- **Theme**

Nguyễn Văn Hiệp [54, p.61] states that that the only subordinate components that take the position before the nucleus of the sentence are the Topic. (Khởi ngữ).

- **Rheme**

Trần Ngọc Thêm [63, p.50] states that “A sentence often has two parts: one is the syntactic centre (organizing centre) of the sentence, called the Theme; the other is the semantic centre of the sentence, called the Rheme. It always stands after the Theme. “When people speak out a sentence they create a Theme and then they say something about the Theme or within the scope suggested by the Theme.”(by Cao Xuân Hạo) (Sơ thảo ngữ pháp chức năng) or

1.6.2. Definitions of lyrics

1.6.3. Definition of popular songs

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. LITERATURE REVIEW ON SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL LINGUISTICS

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is a theory of language. It focuses on language function. SFL grew out of the work of JR Firth, a British linguist of the thirties, forties and fifties, after which it was mainly developed by his student Michel Halliday. Halliday developed the theory in the early sixties. In 1994, his ideas were gathered together in his book “An introduction to Functional grammar” (second edition, 1994). On the next ten years, in 2004, the third edition of “An introduction to Functional grammar” was published; Michael Halliday and Christian Matthiessen (third edition, 2004) reviewed this editor. In addition, SFL theory has been explored and taken further by JR Martin, Christian Matthiessen, and Clare Painter [28]. Many other linguists had followed Halliday’s theory and further studied them in many other works including the Bloor [4], David Butt’s [13], Simon Dik’s [40], Susan Eggins’ [14], Tamin Givón [20], Graham Lock’s [22], Martin’s [34] and so on. Nowadays, SFL is especially influential in areas of language development, education linguistics, literacy, stylistics and it has spread to a number of institutions throughout the world.

In Vietnam, during the 70s and 80s, there were notable discoveries of Vietnamese sentence structures and their corresponding functional semantic features. Diep Quang Ban [50]

and Tran Ngoc Them [63] both use the Theme-Rheme concepts to describe the core of Vietnamese sentence. From 70s, Luu Van Lang [59] tended to analyze sentences on the basis of hierarchic phrase with the Theme-Rheme core. In the early 1990s, Cao Xuan Hao blew a new life into national linguistic with the launching of the book “Tiếng Việt- Sơ thảo ngữ pháp chức năng- Tập 1” [Vietnamese language-preliminary of functional grammar, Volume 1]. Cao Xuan Hao’s viewpoint is supported by several studies in international linguistics, for example, applying findings by Li and Thomson about subject-prominent or topic-prominent languages to Vietnamese.

In recent years, functional grammar theory in both English and Vietnamese has been studied widely. To some extent, these studies contribute to the Vietnamese grammar, such as Nguyen Thi Anh [49] with the study on the realization of Theme in English and Vietnamese sentences; Phan Van Hoa [56] with the study on sentence structures with unusual order in English and Vietnamese. Nguyễn Thị Thìn studies the thematic structure as a cohesive device of creating textual in English and Vietnamese; Nguyen Thi Phuoc Tra master thesis on the Thematic structure in English and Vietnamese on functional and pragmatic aspects [45] Siriporn Woochaiyaphum [41] analyzes the textual metafunction of Vietnamese online news reports. Tran Le Nghi Tran [46] master thesis on the Theme-Rheme structure of English and Vietnamese proverbs, and so on.

2.2. THEORETICAL CONCEPTS

2.2.1. The three aspects of meaning of a clause

Halliday [24] has defined the three different modes of meaning inside the clause:

The Subject is a function in the CLAUSE AS AN EXCHANGE. The element is held responsible: in which is vested the success of the clause in whatever is its particular speech function.

The Actor is a function in the CLAUSE AS A REPRESENTATION. It is the active participant in the process: the one that does the deed.

The Theme is function in the CLAUSE AS A MESSAGE. It is what the message is concerned with: the point of departure that the speaker is going to say.

2.2.2. The metafunctions and three meanings in a clause

Halliday developed a theory of the fundamental functions of language, in which he analyzed lexicogrammar into three broad metafunctions: ideational, interpersonal and textual. Each of the three metafunctions is about a different aspect of the world, and is concerned with a different mode of meaning of clauses. The ideational metafunction is about the natural world in the broadest sense, including our own consciousness, and is concerned with clauses as *representations*. The interpersonal metafunction is about the social world, especially the relationship between speaker and hearer, and is concerned with clauses as *exchanges*. The textual metafunction is about the verbal world, especially the flow of information in a text, and is concerned with clauses as *messages*. It seems clear here: the ideational metafunction relates to the context of

culture, the interpersonal metafunction relates to the context of situation, and the textual metafunction relates to the verbal context. The textual metafunction [24, p.30] is one of three concepts in systemic functional linguistic that relates to two metafunctions: interpersonal and ideational. It is relevance to the context of situation. The textual function of the clause is that of constructing a message. Its major grammatical system is THEMATIC structure.

2.2.3. The information and Thematic structure in English

A sentence expresses a statement made about how the speaker perceives a state of affairs, and his perception may be stated more than one way, depending on how it is reorganized in his thought.

2.2.4. The information and Thematic structure in Vietnamese

In CaoXuanHao book [55], he states, “The theme is the domain of applicability of the Rheme, it may represent an entity, a space, a time, or a condition frame within which it makes sense to say what follows. The role of the Theme is to restrict the limits of relevancy of the statement (the Rheme), to give it a framework without which the sentence could not have a truth-value, and hence, a communicative efficiency.

In a discourse, sentences have the communicative function, which means they express messages (and not represent a proposition); therefore, sentence syntactic structure should be identified in conformity with this function. Accordingly, we support the view that sentence syntactic structure is organized in terms of

thematic structure, in which Theme is the part which expresses “what is talked about” or the “starting point” of the message (and not only subject of the logical proposition) and Rheme is the part which contains information the speaker wants to talk about the theme (and not only predicate of the logical proposition). This Theme-Rheme analysis could be applied to all types of sentences (narrative, interrogative, request, exclamative) which are different from many researchers who think it could be applied only to narrative sentences.

In conclusion, the notion of Theme in English and Vietnamese is, basically, quite similar, as the “point of departure of a message”, or, “starting point of a judgment”. They are all about what the message is concerned.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS AND PROCEDURE

3.1. RESEARCH DESIGN

3.2. RESEARCH PROCEDURE

3.3. DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLE

3.3.1. *English songs*

3.3.2. *Trịnh Công Sơn's songs:*

3.4. VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. THE THEME-RHEME STRUCTURE OF ENGLISH LYRICS

4.1.1. The identification of Theme-Rheme and their boundary in the English clause

4.1.2. The types of Theme in English clauses

4.1.2.1. *Textual, interpersonal, topical/ideational Theme*

- Topical or Ideational Theme

Complement and Subject as topical Theme

Adjunct as topical Theme

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Deep as sea, wide as sky | the beauty of our love paints rainbows [94] |
| Adjunct | |
| Topical Theme | Rheme |

- Interpersonal Theme

Vocative as interpersonal

ThemeModal Adjuncts as interpersonal Theme

Finite verb also is used as interpersonal Theme

- Textual Theme

Conjunction as textual Theme

Conjunctive Adjunct as textual Theme:

Wh-element as textual Theme

4.1.2.2 *Halliday's division*

A. Simple Theme of more than one constituent

| | | |
|--------------|--------------------------|------|
| Sweet deceit | come calling. | [92] |
| All I can do | is just think about you. | [86] |
| Theme | Rheme | |

B. Unmarked and Marked Theme:

Subjects are most Unmarked Theme

Preposition phrase as Marked Theme

Complement as high Marked

- Interrogative
- Theme in imperative sentences Verbal group

C. Multiple Themes

D. Clause as a Theme

E. Predicated Theme

F. Theme in dependent, minor and elliptical clauses

Dependent clauses as Theme

Embedded clauses as Theme

Minor clauses

Elliptical clauses

G. Thematic equative

4.1.3. The summary of Themes in English

4.1.4. The types of Theme in English lyrics:

4.1.4.1. The distribution rate of thematic patterns in English lyrics based on the Theme choice:

4.1.4.2. The distribution rate of thematic patterns in fifty English songs based on the Theme range

4.1.4.3. The distribution rate of thematic patterns in English lyrics based on the Theme selection in fifty songs

Table 4.7 Statistics of thematic structure in fifty English songs

| Song | Number of clauses | Total | Intrapersonal | Topical Addressation 1 | Markedness (a/b/c/d/e/f/g) | Unmarked | Embedded, minor and elliptical | Simple Theme (Hom/Verb/Obj/Adv) | Multiple Theme | Clause or Theme | Predicated Theme | Thematic equative | Abolish Theme |
|-------|-------------------|-------|---------------|------------------------|----------------------------|----------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| 1. | 18 | 3 | 2 | 18 | 4(0/0/4) | 12 | 0 | 10(10/0/0/0) | 8 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2. | 10 | 3 | 0 | 10 | 2(0/2/0) | 8 | 2 | 10(8/0/0/2) | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 3. | 10 | 1 | 0 | 9 | 3(1/2/0) | 4 | 1 | 6(5/1/0/0) | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 4. | 11 | 3 | 1 | 10 | 0 | 9 | 2 | 6(6/0/0/0) | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 5. | 15 | 11 | 4 | 15 | 0 | 15 | 1 | 0 | 14 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 6. | 17 | 2 | 1 | 17 | 2(0/1/1) | 15 | 1 | 10(9/0/1/0) | 4 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 7. | 13 | 3 | 2 | 12 | 0 | 13 | 1 | 3(3/0/0/0) | 5 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 8. | 14 | 3 | | 10 | 1(1/0/0) | 13 | 3 | 9(9/0/0/0) | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 9. | 12 | 0 | 3 | 12 | 0 | 12 | 1 | 4(4/0/0/0) | 0 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 10. | 24 | 3 | 5 | 23 | 1(0/0/1) | 20 | 0 | 11(9/0/1/1) | 9 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 11. | 25 | 7 | 4 | 22 | 2(0/2/0) | 23 | 3 | 10(9/0/1/0) | 11 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 12. | 17 | 3 | 7 | 16 | 0 | 16 | 1 | 8(5/3/0/0) | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 13. | 14 | 1 | 6 | 12 | 2(0/2/0) | 7 | 2 | 7(6/1/0/0) | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 14. | 20 | 3 | 2 | 20 | 1(1/0/0) | 19 | 3 | 6(6/0/0/0) | 3 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 15. | 12 | 2 | 2 | 12 | 1(0/0/1) | 11 | 0 | 8(8/0/0/0) | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 16. | 18 | 6 | 4 | 16 | 2(0/0/2) | 15 | 3 | 4(4/0/0/0) | 12 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 17. | 19 | 6 | 3 | 19 | 1(0/0/1) | 18 | 0 | 7(6/1/0/0) | 10 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 18. | 10 | 1 | 1 | 8 | 0 | 8 | 2 | 9(9/0/0/0) | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 19. | 21 | 3 | 8 | 21 | 0 | 21 | 0 | 9(9/0/0/0) | 9 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 20. | 17 | 6 | 1 | 17 | 0 | 17 | 2 | 5(5/0/0/0) | 4 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 21. | 19 | 3 | 1 | 19 | 0 | 19 | 11 | 13(13/0/0/0) | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 22. | 9 | 3 | 1 | 9 | 0 | 9 | 3 | 1(1/0/0/0) | 1 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 23. | 18 | 2 | 2 | | 1(0/0/1) | 17 | 2 | 10(5/4/1/0) | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 24. | 15 | 5 | 2 | 14 | 1(0/1/0) | 14 | 2 | 6(4/2/0/0) | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 25. | 13 | 3 | 0 | 13 | 3(0/1/2) | 10 | 2 | 10(6/1/2/1) | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 26. | 19 | 8 | 1 | 19 | 5(1/2/2) | 16 | 0 | 4(4/0/0/0) | 17 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 27. | 10 | 1 | 1 | 10 | 3(0/0/3) | 7 | 1 | 6(4/0/1/1) | 4 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 28. | 10 | 5 | 2 | 10 | 1(0/1/0) | 10 | 0 | 2(0/0/1/1) | 7 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 29. | 18 | 1 | 3 | 17 | 3(0/0/4) | 14 | 1 | 8(7/1/0/0) | 5 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 30. | 16 | 2 | 2 | 16 | 5(1/2/2) | 11 | 1 | 8(8/0/0/0) | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 31. | 21 | 0 | 2 | 21 | 0 | 22 | 7 | 10(4/6/0/0) | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 32. | 15 | 3 | 3 | 15 | 7(2/0/1) | 12 | 1 | 8(8/0/0/0) | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 33. | 15 | 3 | 3 | 15 | 2(1/0/1) | 13 | 1 | 3(1/1/1/0) | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 34. | 19 | 7 | 0 | 17 | 0 | 19 | 4 | 7(7/0/0/0) | 7 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 35. | 28 | 13 | 1 | 25 | 3(2/0/1) | 25 | 2 | 9(8/1/0/0) | 11 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 36. | 17 | 3 | 1 | 17 | 0 | 17 | 1 | 12(11/1/0/0) | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 37. | 26 | 1 | 1 | 18 | 1(0/1/0) | 25 | 8 | 11(5/6/0/0) | 2 | 6 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 38. | 21 | 7 | 1 | 21 | 1(1/0/0) | 20 | 1 | 10(10/0/0/0) | 8 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 39. | 25 | 3 | 0 | 25 | 5(1/0/4) | 20 | 0 | 8(8/0/0/0) | 5 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 40. | 16 | 1 | 12 | 3 | 0 | 16 | 0 | 3(3/0/0/0) | 13 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 41. | 24 | 7 | 4 | 24 | 5(2/0/3) | 19 | 2 | 9(9/0/0/0) | 7 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| 42. | 23 | 10 | 5 | 23 | 0 | 23 | 1 | 7(7/0/0/0) | 12 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 43. | 12 | 3 | 1 | 12 | 0 | 12 | 0 | 7(7/0/0/0) | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 44. | 22 | 5 | 6 | 22 | 0 | 22 | 0 | 7(6/1/0/0) | 8 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| 45. | 19 | 6 | 0 | 17 | 1(0/0/1) | 18 | 3 | 6(6/0/0/0) | 4 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| 46. | 22 | 8 | 3 | 22 | 1(0/0/1) | 21 | 0 | 7(7/0/0/0) | 9 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 47. | 7 | 2 | 1 | 7 | 2(2/0/0) | 5 | 0 | 4(4/0/0/0) | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 48. | 22 | 4 | 2 | 22 | 2(0/2/0) | 20 | 0 | 10(10/0/0/0) | 5 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 49. | 23 | 5 | 1 | 21 | 1(1/0/0) | 20 | 2 | 12(12/0/0/0) | 5 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 50. | 14 | 5 | 0 | 14 | 0 | 14 | 0 | 7(7/0/0/0) | 5 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 858 | 199 | 118 | 787 | 75 | 766 | 84 | 371(326/30/9/6) | 288 | 118 | 9 | 2 | 6 |

4.2. THE THEME-RHEME STRUCTURE OF VIETNAMESE LYRICS

4.2.1. Theme-Rheme boundary markers in Vietnamese

4.2.1.1 “Thì” as Theme-Rheme boundary marker

4.2.1.2 “Là” as Theme-Rheme boundary marker

4.2.1.3. “Mà” as Theme-Rheme boundary marker

4.2.2. Classification of Theme in Vietnamese

4.2.2.1. The classification of Theme into topical, interpersonal and textual Theme

4.2.2.2. The classification of Theme into Marked and Unmarked

Nửa đêm sáng chói // hòa châu trên núi. [162]

Mùi hương phấn người // một hôm nhớ lại Hẹn ngày sau sẽ mua vui
[154]

4.2.2.3. The classification of Theme into predicated and not-predicated

4.2.2.4. The classification of Theme into Exposition Topic and Internal Topic

- *Internal Topic:*

Exposition Topic

4.2.2.5 Complex sentences

4.2.3. The Theme-Rheme structure of Vietnamese lyrics

4.2.3.1. The classification of Theme into textual, interpersonal and topical Theme

4.2.3.2. Cao Xuân Hạo’s ranking patterns of Theme-Rheme structure

Summary

Table 4.7 Statistics of thematic structure in fifty English songs

| Song | Number of clauses | Textual | Interpersonal | Topical / Ideational | Marked (nom/adv/verb/pp) | Unmarked | Embedded, minor and elliptical | Simple Theme (nom/Vverb/Pp/adj) | Multiple Theme | Clause as Theme | Predicated Theme | Thematic equivalent | Absolute Theme |
|-------|-------------------|---------|---------------|----------------------|--------------------------|----------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| 1. | 18 | 3 | 2 | 13 | 4 (0/0/4) | 12 | 0 | 10 (10/0/0/0) | 8 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2 | 10 | 3 | 0 | 10 | 2 (0/2/0) | 8 | 2 | 10 (8/0/0/2) | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 3 | 10 | 1 | 0 | 9 | 3 (1/2/0) | 4 | 1 | 6 (5/1/0/0) | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 4 | 11 | 3 | 1 | 10 | 0 | 9 | 2 | 6 (6/0/0/0) | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 5 | 15 | 11 | 4 | 15 | 0 | 15 | 1 | 0 | 14 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 6 | 17 | 2 | 1 | 17 | 2 (0/1/1) | 15 | 1 | 10 (9/0/1/0) | 4 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 7 | 13 | 3 | 2 | 12 | 0 | 13 | 1 | 3 (3/0/0/0) | 5 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 8 | 14 | 3 | | 10 | 1 (1/0/0) | 13 | 3 | 9 (9/0/0/0) | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 9 | 12 | 0 | 3 | 12 | 0 | 12 | 1 | 4 (4/0/0/0) | 0 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 10 | 24 | 3 | 5 | 23 | 1 (0/0/1) | 20 | 0 | 11 (9/0/1/1) | 9 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 11 | 25 | 7 | 4 | 22 | 2 (0/2/0) | 23 | 3 | 10 (9/0/1/0) | 11 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 12 | 17 | 3 | 7 | 16 | 0 | 16 | 1 | 8 (5/3/0/0) | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 13 | 14 | 1 | 6 | 12 | 2 (0/2/0) | 7 | 2 | 7 (6/1/0/0) | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 14 | 20 | 3 | 2 | 20 | 1 (1/0/0) | 19 | 3 | 6 (6/0/0/0) | 3 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 15 | 12 | 2 | 2 | 12 | 1 (0/0/1) | 11 | 0 | 8 (8/0/0/0) | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 16 | 18 | 6 | 4 | 16 | 2 (0/0/2) | 15 | 3 | 4 (4/0/0/0) | 12 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 17 | 19 | 6 | 3 | 19 | 1 (0/0/1) | 18 | 0 | 7 (6/1/0/0) | 10 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 18 | 10 | 1 | 1 | 8 | 0 | 8 | 2 | 9 (9/0/0/0) | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 19 | 21 | 3 | 8 | 21 | 0 | 21 | 0 | 9 (9/0/0/0) | 9 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 20 | 17 | 6 | 1 | 17 | 0 | 17 | 2 | 5 (5/0/0/0) | 4 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 21. | 19 | 3 | 1 | 19 | 0 | 19 | 11 | 13 (13/0/0/0) | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 22. | 9 | 3 | 1 | 9 | 0 | 9 | 3 | 1 (1/0/0/0) | 1 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 23 | 18 | 2 | 2 | | 1 (0/0/1) | 17 | 2 | 10 (5/4/1/0) | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 24. | 15 | 5 | 2 | 14 | 1 (0/1/0) | 14 | 2 | 6 (4/2/0/0) | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 25 | 13 | 3 | 0 | 13 | 3 (0/1/2) | 10 | 2 | 10 (6/1/2/1) | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 26 | 19 | 8 | 1 | 19 | 5 (1/2/2) | 16 | 0 | 4 (4/0/0/0) | 17 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 27 | 10 | 1 | 1 | 10 | 3 (0/0/3) | 7 | 1 | 6 (4/0/1/1) | 4 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 28 | 10 | 5 | 2 | 10 | 1 (0/1/0) | 10 | 0 | 2 (0/0/1/1) | 7 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 29 | 18 | 1 | 3 | 17 | 3 (0/0/4) | 14 | 1 | 8 (7/1/0/0) | 5 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 30 | 16 | 2 | 2 | 16 | 5 (1/2/2) | 11 | 1 | 8 (8/0/0/0) | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 31 | 21 | 0 | 2 | 21 | 0 | 22 | 7 | 10 (4/6/0/0) | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 32 | 15 | 3 | 3 | 15 | 7 (2/0/1) | 12 | 1 | 8 (8/0/0/0) | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 33 | 15 | 3 | 3 | 15 | 2 (1/0/1) | 13 | 1 | 3 (1/1/1/0) | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 34 | 19 | 7 | 0 | 17 | 0 | 19 | 4 | 7 (7/0/0/0) | 7 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 35 | 28 | 13 | 1 | 25 | 3 (2/0/1) | 25 | 2 | 9 (8/1/0/0) | 11 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 36 | 17 | 3 | 1 | 17 | 0 | 17 | 1 | 12 (11/1/0/0) | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 37 | 26 | 1 | 1 | 18 | 1 (0/1/0) | 25 | 8 | 11 (5/6/0/0) | 2 | 6 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 38 | 21 | 7 | 1 | 21 | 1 (1/0/0) | 20 | 1 | 10 (10/0/0/0) | 8 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 39 | 25 | 3 | 0 | 25 | 5 (1/0/4) | 20 | 0 | 8 (8/0/0/0) | 5 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 40 | 16 | 1 | 12 | 3 | 0 | 16 | 0 | 3 (3/0/0/0) | 13 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 41 | 24 | 7 | 4 | 24 | 5 (2/0/3) | 19 | 2 | 9 (9/0/0/0) | 7 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| 42 | 23 | 10 | 5 | 23 | 0 | 23 | 1 | 7 (7/0/0/0) | 12 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 43 | 12 | 3 | 1 | 12 | 0 | 12 | 0 | 7 (7/0/0/0) | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 44 | 22 | 5 | 6 | 22 | 0 | 22 | 0 | 7 (6/1/0/0) | 8 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| 45 | 19 | 6 | 0 | 17 | 1 (0/0/1) | 18 | 3 | 6 (6/0/0/0) | 4 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| 46 | 22 | 8 | 3 | 22 | 1 (0/0/1) | 21 | 0 | 7 (7/0/0/0) | 9 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 47 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 7 | 2 (2/0/0) | 5 | 0 | 4 (4/0/0/0) | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 48 | 22 | 4 | 2 | 22 | 2 (0/2/0) | 20 | 0 | 10 (10/0/0/0) | 5 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 49 | 23 | 5 | 1 | 21 | 1 (1/0/0) | 20 | 2 | 12 (12/0/0/0) | 5 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 50 | 14 | 5 | 0 | 14 | 0 | 14 | 0 | 7 (7/0/0/0) | 5 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 858 | 199 | 118 | 787 | 75 | 766 | 84 | 371 (326/30/9/6) | 288 | 118 | 9 | 2 | 6 |

4.3. THE SEMANTIC ASPECT OF THE THEME-RHEME STRUCTURE IN ENGLISH-VIETNAMESE LYRICS

4.3.1. The semantic role of Theme and Rheme in the clause

4.3.2. The semantic role of Theme and Rheme in the English lyrics

4.3.3. Some properties of Theme in Vietnamese

4.3.3.1. Semantic relationships with the Rheme

4.3.3.2. Convert Theme (or zero thematic syntagms)

4.3.3.3. Syntactic privileges of the Theme

4.4. THEMATIC PROGRESSION IN ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE LYRICS

4.4.1. Theme reiteration or constant Theme pattern

4.4.2. A zigzag or linear Theme pattern

4.4.3. A multiple Theme or slip Rheme pattern

4.5. THE PRAGMATIC ASPECT OF THE THEME-RHEME STRUCTURE IN ENGLISH - VIETNAMESE LYRICS

4.5.1. The pragmatic aspects of the thematic structure in the clause

4.5.2. The pragmatic characteristics of the thematic structure in English and Vietnamese lyrics

4.5.3. The affect of songs in life

4.6. THE CULTURAL ASPECT OF THE THEME-RHEME STRUCTURE IN ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE LYRICS

4.6.1. The cultural characteristics of English and Vietnamese lyrics

4.6.1.1. The common topics of English and Vietnamese songs

4.6.1.2. The stylistic features and construction of English and Vietnamese lyrics

4.6.2. The cultural aspect of the thematic structure of English and Vietnamese lyrics

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. CONCLUSIONS

In this thesis, we study the syntactic features of English and Vietnamese lyrics adopting the functional grammar approach. It means we consider the clause as a message. At clause rank, the major textual system is THEME. It is a resource for organizing the interpersonal and ideational meanings of each clause in the form of a message. The system of THEME sets up a local environment, providing a point of departure by reference to which the listener interprets the message. We support Halliday's and Cao Xuan Hao's views concerning matters such as the characteristics of theme and Rheme, the ways to identify Theme-Rheme boundaries, the Theme-Theme structure of English and Vietnamese sentences. The study is mainly concentrate on the fifty popular English songs and fifty Vietnamese Trịnh Công Sơn's songs. The data have been classified according to types, classes and groups to be described and analyzed Theme-Rheme structure and then the thematic structure in both languages has been clarified in terms of semantic, pragmatics and cultural. Similarities and differences have been shown. The findings of the study were stated and discussed in chapter 4.

5.1. SIMILARITIES

Theme in English and Vietnamese shares many common characteristics

Firstly, both languages have some similar types of Theme and are used to express various meaning such as Author, Instrument.

Secondly, in terms of pragmatics, reference, presupposition, implicature, inference meanings are realized by thematic structure in both languages. On the other hands, the pragmatic aspects are also included in this part.

Lastly, in term of cultural aspects, the style of Theme in both English and Vietnamese in some aspects is the same for songwriters get along by the message they want to put across, and at the same time concentrate on making their point at the expense of subtlety, elegance, poetic quality, or fit with the melody.

However, thematic structure in the two languages contains some certain differences that are presented in the next part

5.2. DIFFERENCES

Syntactically, in English, we find out some types of Theme that do not exist in Vietnamese, such as predicated Theme. Marked and unmarked Theme is also a problem that needs further consideration. Moreover, Theme in Vietnamese has some special properties. (i) It has a free semantic relationship with Rheme. (ii) Zero thematic syntagms causes in “impersonal” cases. In addition, (iii) Syntactic privileges Theme, in which Theme is treated as a complement.

In fact, English prefers the first person as Theme while Vietnamese employs many other images to relate or compare instead

of using “I” or “We”. Meanwhile, among all of the Vietnamese Theme investigated we find a low rate of the case.

In short, although thematic structure in English and Vietnamese share a lot of similarities and differences in terms of semantic, pragmatic and cultural features, they have the same purposes: Theme introduces and intends the audience to the topic of the message as well as clauses in a discourse

5.2. TEACHING ACTIVITIES IN CLASSROOM

5.2.1. Raising students’ awareness of the thematic structure in English and Vietnamese sentences

To convey information effectively, speaker must be able to control the flow of given and new information in developing the argument in the text. A focus on Theme and Rheme structure in a clause can have startling and immediate results in teaching. Once a language teacher shows learners how properly arrange old and new information, the students have gained a powerful tool for managing the meanings of their writings. The learners can be drawn consciously and strategically on this knowledge to construct cohesive writing. The cohesion in students’ writings can be improved dramatically if attention is given to Theme selection and thematic progression in texts.

Nevertheless, in fact, the problems of inappropriately handling the flow of Theme and Rheme are quite common among inexperienced writers. The students may misuse Theme in their writing. The problem of a brand new Theme is extremely common in

the work of inexperienced writers, who put new information in Theme position. Here 'The illiteracy rate' is in Theme position in the sentence; however, this is the first mention of this information. Where this goes wrong, the communication can suddenly break down at the sentence level.

The relationship between Theme and Rheme is essential in creating a cohesive text. However, the insights gained from Theme and Rheme pattern are valuable in teaching writing as well as in teaching literacy. The notion of Theme can show students how to read effectively by paying attention to the first part of a sentence or paragraph, the topic sentence of each paragraph, and Theme of each clause.

5.2.2. Recommendation for further teaching activities

Songs are the most motivating materials of listening for many language learners. Many learners of English love listening to English songs and think that they can improve their English in this way. This is not always true. Listening to songs without any activity or careful selection does not contribute much to their proficiency. One reason for this is that in many popular songs which young people listen to, the language is somewhat distorted. It is far from the language needed by students. Another reason is that the reductions use very commonly in songs cannot be understood easily by students, for example, listening to hip-hop. One further reason is that the syntax and style used in songs do not reveal the meaning as easy as prose style. Despite these disadvantages, carefully selected songs are "one

of the most enchanting and culturally rich resources that can easily be used in language classrooms" and they "can also be used to teach a variety of language items such as sentence patterns, vocabulary, pronunciation and thus students' motivation increases. Second, songs also present opportunities for developing automaticity, which is the main cognitive reason for using songs in the classroom. Moreover, some songs are excellent examples of colloquial. Therefore, using songs can prepare students for the genuine language with which they will be faced.

As stated above, not all songs are suitable for use in language teaching. We choose songs with slow rhythm and clear English. Teachers can carry out many exercises using song lyrics. Some of them are as follows

- a. Some words are written in the wrong way and students are asked to correct them while listening.
- b. Some deleted words are replaced by the students. The words can be given as a list in accordance with the level of the students and the difficulty of the song.
- c. The lyrics of the whole or one part of the song is given in a jumbled form. The students are asked to put them into the correct order.
- d. Some grammatical words are deleted from the lyrics and the students are asked to fill them in.
- e. Students are asked to rewrite some lines of the song, which have some misplaced words.

f. After listening to the songs, some speaking activities can be carried out. The students are asked questions about the theme of the song. Song lyrics can be a spring point for further class discussions.

g. An alternative exercise for high intermediate and advanced students is a dictation exercise. Students try to dictate a part of the lyrics while listening to the song many times.

h. Some rhyming words are given in pairs and students are asked to find out the correct one while listening to the song.

These exercises are only a few of what can be done. A lot of useful and colloquial vocabulary can also be taught while listening. One great advantage of songs is that since students love listening to them, they listen to them many times and this provides students a lot of input. A last technique to be mentioned is the use of "YouTube" website to listen to songs with lyrics and relevant visual aids, objects to be looked at that help the viewer to understand or remember something. There are really a great number of songs with their lyrics streaming on the screen while they are being played and this enhances understanding.

5.3. LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

5.3.1. Limitations of the study

Owning to a limited time and source of materials relating to the problem under investigation, there are some unavoidable weaknesses in this study. This topic interests us for long time; especially we have found the perfect way to explain Vietnamese structure. However,

because of the constraint of time, the study was focused on the "surface" Thematic structure of each sentence in song corpus. The pragmatic and cultural aspects of thematic structure as well as the thematic progression of the same samples have not been deeply studied yet.

5.4.2. Suggestions for further research

Obviously, we are just on the way to complete the so-called analysis of thematic structure in English and Vietnamese. We try our best to point out the similarities and differences between English and Vietnamese syntactic structure in terms of semantic, pragmatics and cultural. In spite of our strong ambition and passion for further research, due to the limitation of time, the lack of references and materials as well, there are some other aspects that have not been dealt with in this paper. The following points should be taken into consideration for further researches:

- The way of classification Vietnamese Theme into marked and unmarked is not adequate enough therefore it needs deeper studying.
- The further research should be done with the discourse to clarify its inside thematic progression. Besides, the thematic structure in Vietnamese is worth investigating further not only at sentence level but also at discourse level. Moreover, the role of initial non-topic elements in Vietnamese sentences should be taken into consideration.