

VIETNAM NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, HA NOI
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**RECONSTRUCTING WAR REALITY IN TWO ENGLISH
VERSIONS OF BAO NINH'S *THE SORROW OF WAR***

**(Tái kiến tạo hiện thực chiến tranh trong hai phiên bản tiếng Anh
Nỗi Buồn Chiến Tranh của Bảo Ninh)**

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TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC NGOẠI NGỮ

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DECLARATION

I, Vu Thi Thu Thuy, hereby declare that this thesis, titled:

Reconstructing war reality in two English versions of Bao Ninh's *The Sorrow of War*

is my original work. It has not been submitted, either in whole or in part, for a degree or any other qualification at any other university or institution.

All material from other sources, including published and unpublished works, has been properly acknowledged and referenced in accordance with the academic conventions of the University of Languages and International Studies, Vietnam National University, Hanoi.

I confirm that this thesis represents my own research and that all information and ideas from external sources have been correctly cited.

To my dearest father, in loving memory.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates how war reality is discursively constructed in Bảo Ninh's *Nỗi Buồn Chiến Tranh* and how it is subsequently reconstructed through two stages of English-language mediation: Phan Thanh Hào's translation (TT1) and Frank Palmos's mediated English version (TT2). While previous studies of literary translation have largely focused on equivalence, stylistic comparison, or cultural adaptation, relatively little attention has been paid to how experiential representations of war are systematically reconstructed as literary texts move across languages and successive stages of mediation. Addressing this gap, the study examines how war reality is represented in the Vietnamese source text and subsequently reconstructed through translation and editorial rewriting.

Drawing on a constructivist view representation, the study operationalises war reality as a linguistic and narrative construct rather than a direct reflection of historical events. To operationalize this concept, four experiential domains were identified: Physical Brutality, Psychological Trauma, Collective Memory, and Geopolitical Conflict. The thesis addresses three research questions: (1) How is war reality construed in the Vietnamese source text through transitivity patterns across these four representational domains? (2) How are these experiential patterns reconstructed in TT1 and subsequently reconfigured in TT2? (3) How can the recurrent shifts be interpreted in relation to translational norms, narrative framing, and broader orientations towards adequacy/acceptability and foreignization/domestication?

The study integrates Descriptive Translation Studies, Systemic Functional Linguistics, Baker's narrative framing theory and Venuti's domestication – foreignization continuum. Methodologically, a purpose-built tri-text corpus comprising the Vietnamese source text and its two English versions was analysed through two mediation comparative trajectories: ST to TT1 and TT1 to TT2. Clause-based units were aligned and coded for process types, participant configurations and circumstantial elements. Recurrent shifts were subsequently interpreted through

narrative framing strategies and synthesized to reconstruct translational norms and orientations.

The findings reveal that the Vietnamese source text constructs war reality through the interaction of physical violence, traumatic consciousness, memorial recurrence, and geopolitical positioning, producing a fragmented and historically situated representation of war. TT1 largely preserves this experiential architecture, maintaining transitivity distributions and representational priorities while introducing selective explicitation and clarification. The translation demonstrates a predominantly adequacy-oriented and foreignising tendency, preserving much of the source text's experiential and historical specificity. TT2, by contrast, exhibits substantially greater editorial intervention through omission, addition, condensation, segmentation and narrative recomposition. Through participant relabelling, historical contextualisation, explanatory additions, and temporal-spatial framing, TT2 reconstructs war reality as a more explicit, historically anchored, and narratively organized representation. These interventions reflect stronger acceptability-oriented and domesticating tendencies and position TT2 closer to mediated rewriting than conventional translation.

The thesis contributes the first systematic transitivity-based comparison of the two English versions of *The Sorrow of War* and proposes an integrated framework linking experiential meaning, translational norms, narrative framing, and cultural orientation. More broadly, it demonstrates that literary translation and rewriting function not as neutral transfers of meaning but as culturally situated processes through which war, memory, trauma, and geopolitical conflict are reconstructed for different readerships and historical contexts.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CM	Collective Memory
DTS	Descriptive Translation Studies
GC	Geopolitical Conflict
PB	Physical Brutality
PT	Psychological Trauma
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
RQ	Research Question
SFL	Systemic Functional Linguistics
SL	Source language (the language the text was originally written in)
ST	source text (the original text)
TL	target language (the language of the translation)
TS	Translation Studies
TTs	target texts (the translated texts)
TT1	(the translation by Phan Thanh Hao)
TT2	(the English version by Frank Palmos)

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background and Rationale of the Study

Vietnamese war literature has undergone a significant transformation since the period of *Đổi Mới*, shifting from collectivist, heroic and epic-oriented representation of war toward forms of writing that foreground memory, loss, ambiguity and psychological interiority. Earlier literary narratives often emphasized national sacrifice and ideological unity, whereas post-*Đổi Mới* writers increasingly turned to the experiential and existential dimensions of war, exploring trauma, alienation, fragmented remembrance and the long-term consequences of conflict on individuals and communities (T. H. A. Nguyen, 2021; P. H. Nguyen, 2022) . Within this development, Bảo Ninh's *Nỗi buồn chiến tranh* (*The Sorrow of War*) has been widely recognized as a landmark work that reorients the representation of war from heroic reconstruction toward deeply introspective, emotionally fractured and memory-based narration. The novel's treatment of war reality through dispersed temporal structure, haunted recollection and affective dislocation marks a decisive departure from earlier literary modes and has contributed to its status as one of the most influential Vietnamese post-war novels of the late twentieth century (A. V. Nguyen, 2016; A. D. Doan & N. L. Le, 2017).

Translation plays an essential role in global circulation of literary memory, serving as both a linguistic and ideological link between cultures. In contemporary Translations Studies, translation is increasingly understood not merely as transfer of meaning but as a space for cultural negotiation and rewriting, where power relations, identity, and representation are continually reconstituted (Bassnett & Lefevere, 1998; Lefevere, 2016; Baker, 2018). This perspective foregrounds the translator as a mediator who reinterprets, reframes, and often reconstructs the source text for new readers within specific historical, cultural, and political contexts.

Existing studies within Vietnamese translation research have predominantly focused on questions of equivalence, stylistic transfer, and translation quality assessment (Luong, 2014; Trieu, 2018, 2019; Pham, 2021; Vu, 2023). While such

work has generated valuable insights into linguistic and functional aspects of translation, comparatively little attention has been paid to how translation reconstructs experiential meaning, narrative representation, and ideological positioning. Research examining Vietnamese literary works in English translation remains particularly limited. As a result, there is still insufficient understanding of how Vietnamese narratives are mediated for international readerships and how such mediation may reshape the representation of culturally and historically significant experiences such as war.

Alongside its literary significance within Vietnam, Bao Ninh's *The Sorrow of War* has also played an important role in the international circulation of Vietnamese literature (Vu, 2021). The existence of an English version has influenced how Anglophone readers perceive and understand Vietnamese experiences of war, memory, and post-war suffering (Moore, 2017; Oktaviani, 2022a). The novel is regarded as a distinct account of the war which is different from other works at the time, not only because of its distinct fragmented narrative on war trauma but also the implicit perspective of the narrators who were insiders of the war. Departing from socialist realism, it portrays war not as heroism but as existential devastation and psychological ruin, employing a fragmented narrative that mirrors trauma and disillusionment (Ha, 2016; Rísquez, 2017).

However, the translational trajectory of Bao Ninh's *The Sorrow of War* is unusually complex. Rather than existing in a single English rendering, the novel currently circulates in two distinct English versions, each reflecting a different mode of textual mediation and production. The first version, translated by Phan Thanh Hao, is an interlingual translation produced directly from the Vietnamese source text. The second version is associated with Frank Palmos, who did not work from Vietnamese, but reworked and reconstructed Hao's English text, resulting in a text better characterized as an editorially mediated rewriting or adaptation rather than a direct translation from the source language (Pillière, 2024). The availability of two distinct English versions of *The Sorrow of War* provides a unique opportunity for analysing how translational and editorial choices contribute to differing reconstructions of war reality.

There is a plentitude of literary critical writings on *The Sorrow of War* in both Vietnamese and English (D. H. Nguyen, 1995; Skinnell, 2009; Ngo, 2011; A. Ng, 2014; Quan Manh Ha, 2016; Moore, 2017; Parsapour et al., 2017; Inani, 2018; Oktaviani, 2022a; Tran & Nguyen, 2024). However, these studies almost exclusively engage with the English version associated with Pamos (Bao Ninh et al., 1998) largely because it has become the internationally circulated and critically recognized text. Moreover, existing scholarship has primarily examined the novel from literary, historical, cultural, or trauma-oriented perspectives, paying little attention to the translational processes through which the text reached Anglophone readers. From a Translation Studies perspective, this situation reveals a significant gap. As indicated in the paratexts of Pamos's edition, and acknowledged in subsequent accounts, his version was not produced directly from the Vietnamese original but was based on Phan Thanh Hao's English translation. Consequently, it cannot be regarded as an independent "interlingual translation" in Jakobson (1959)'s terminology. In contrast, Phan Thanh Hao's translation, the first English rendering produced directly from the Vietnamese source text, has received limited scholarly attention and remains largely absent from discussions of the novel's international reception. As a result, the translational relationship between the Vietnamese source text, Phan Thanh Hao's translation, and Pamos's edited version has remained insufficiently examined.

Existing studies generally treat the Pamos's edited version as the novel's sole English representative, overlooking the fact that the two English texts emerged through different modes of mediation and therefore potentially embody different translational norms, narrative framing, and representational choices. Since the two English versions have not been examined comparatively as distinct products of translational and editorial mediation, an important dimension of how war reality is reconstructed, reframed and circulated across linguistic and cultural boundaries remains underexplored. Preliminary comparative examination across the three texts suggests that the two English versions diverge in several significant respects, particularly in relation to textual orientation, condensation, and expansion patterns, experiential redistribution, and narrative perspective. These observations raise

important questions about the extent to which translation and editorial mediation contribute to the reconfiguration of the war reality represented in the source text, and thus provide the impetus for a more systematic descriptive investigation.

Although the concept of ‘war reality’ has been central to the discussion of literary critiques of *The Sorrow of War* (Nguyen, 2016), there has been no empirical investigation based on micro-level linguistic analysis capable of demonstrating how war reality is reconstructed through changes in clause structure, process configuration, participant roles or experiential patterns. Without such analysis, claims about mediation, rewriting or reframing remain only partially grounded in textual evidence. This study, therefore, attempts to provide clarification for the concept of ‘war reality’ by offering a definition for it.

In the present study, the construct of “war reality” is not treated as a subjective thematic category or a direct reflection of historical events, but as a discursively constructed experiential representation realized through recurrent linguistic patternings. More specifically, war reality is operationalized through the ways experience is reconfigured at clause level via processes, participants, and circumstances within Hallidayan transitivity. This position reflects the view that literary representations of war are not merely “about” war, but actively construe war experience through patterned choices in action, perception, attribution, agency, temporality, and spatial anchoring. The operationalization of war reality in this thesis is also informed by recurring representational tendencies identified in critical discussions of post-*Đổi Mới* war narratives, trauma and memory studies, and existing scholarship on *The Sorrow of War* (Skinnell, 2009; Wood, 2011; Anh Duong Doan & Nguyen Long Le, 2017; Nguyen, 2020; Nguyen & Mai, 2022). Repeated close readings conducted during the corpus familiarization and coding stages expose that recurrent experiential patterns consistently clustered around four major representation concerns: physical destruction and violence, psychological suffering, collective remembrance, and the broader political-military context of the war. These recurring patterns subsequently operationalised as the four experiential domains of Physical Brutality, Psychological Trauma, Collective Memory and Geopolitical

Conflict. These domains were seen to represent the most prominent and recurrent ways in which reality is construed throughout the novel.

These domains are therefore not treated as abstract themes, but as analytically motivated experiential categories through which recurrent transitivity configurations can be systematically identified and compared through two successive stages: ST – TT1 and TT1 – TT2. Specifically, Physical Brutality is operationalized through recurrent configurations of bodily action, injury, destruction, and material violence; Psychological Trauma through patterns of cognition, perception, affect, and internal fragmentation; Collective Memory through the way the past is narrated and remembers, i.e. retrospective narration, recollection, haunting, and temporal dislocation; and Geopolitical Conflict through participant labelling, and the spatial-political positioning of actors and events. Together, these domains provide a theoretically and analytically grounded framework for examining how war experience is linguistically construed in the source text and subsequently reconstructed through translation and mediated rewriting. Within each dimension, the study goes beyond impressionistic thematic level by examining how these experiential domains are linguistically realized through transitivity patterns in the source text and subsequently reconfigured in the two English versions. The four dimensions therefore serve as the basis for corpus sampling, clause-process coding, and domain-based comparative analysis, which ensures that the analysis remains both text-sensitive and conceptually accountable.

Considered in the light of these developments, the case of *The Sorrow of War* becomes particularly significant. The contrast between Phan Thanh Hao's interlingual translation and Frank Palmos's rewriting of that translation raises important questions about how different forms of mediation, particularly translation and editorial rewriting, participate in the reconstruction of war reality for Anglophone readers. Accordingly, this study, titled "**Reconstructing war reality in two English versions of Bao Ninh's *The Sorrow of War***", tries to uncover how linguistic shifts, translation strategies, and narrative framing collectively shape the reconstruction of Vietnamese war experience for global readerships, thereby contributing to the

broader understanding of how translation mediates cultural memory in post-war literary discourse.

1.2. Aims, Research Questions and Objectives of the Study

The study aims to provide a descriptive and comparative account of how war reality is reconstructed through two successive stages of English-language mediation in Bao Ninh's *The Sorrow of War*: Phan Thanh Hao's translation (TT1) and Frank Palmos's mediated version (TT2). Rather than evaluating the text in terms of fidelity, the study seeks to examine how translation and editorial mediation reshape the experiential meanings of the source text through observable linguistic and representational shifts. The study further investigates how these shifts may be interpreted in relation to narrative framing and translational orientation, particularly in connection with the representational dimensions through which war reality is conceptualized in this thesis.

In line with these aims, the study is guided by the following research questions:

1. How is the war reality construed in the Vietnamese source text through transitivity patterns across its representational domains of physical brutality, psychological trauma, collective memory, and geopolitical conflict?
2. How are the transitivity patterns and experiential meanings identified in the Vietnamese source text reconstructed in TT1 and subsequently reconfigured in TT2?
3. How can the identified recurrent shifts in the two mediation stages (ST – TT1 and TT1 – TT2) be interpreted in relation to narrative framing and translational orientations (adequacy/acceptability; domestication/foreignisation)?

These questions are descriptive in nature and seek to account for systematic patterns of mediation rather than to determine the superiority of one version over the other. To address the above research questions, the study pursues the following objectives:

- To identify and code transitivity patterns in the Vietnamese source text and in the two English versions with particular attention to processes, participants and circumstances.

- To examine how these patterns realise different aspects of war reality across the four representational dimensions: physical brutality, psychological trauma, collective memory, and geopolitical conflict.
- To compare similarities and differences in experiential construal across the three texts, including tendencies of condensation, expansion, process-type shift, participant and circumstantial reconfiguration.
- To describe how translational and editorial mediation contribute to the redistribution and narrative framing (Baker, 2018) of experiential meanings in the two English versions.
- To interpret recurrent textual tendencies with reference to Toury (2012)'s descriptive orientation toward norms, and Venuti (2017)'s notions of domestication and foreignisation.

Through these objectives, the study seeks to develop an empirically grounded account of how war reality is reconstructed in translation and rewriting.

1.3. Methods of the Study

This thesis employs a qualitative-dominant mixed-methods approach, with close, text-driven analysis as the core and frequency-based description as supporting tool. The analysis focuses on how “war reality” is experientially construed in the Vietnamese source text (*Nỗi Buồn Chiến Tranh*) and reconstructed across two English versions: TT1 (Phan Thanh Hao's interlingual translation) and TT2 (Frank Palmos's edited version). Quantitative frequencies are used descriptively to identify recurrent transitivity tendencies (e.g. process-type distribution, addition/omission patterns and process-type shifts) and to support pattern-based interpretation rather than statistical generalization or predictive modelling.

Methodologically, this study adopts a descriptive and comparative orientation grounded in Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS). Toury (2012, p. 19) fundamentally argues that “no translation can be fully (or accurately) accounted for outside of its position in history. Therefore, it is impossible for two translations whose textual-linguistic make-up is identical but which were produced in different socio-cultural and historical environments to ever count as a single translation”. DTS then

emphasizes that translation is never merely a linguistic transfer, but a culturally and historically situated form of mediation. To genuinely understand a translation, one must consider the specific socio-cultural and historical environment in which it was produced. This insight is central to the present study, which examines how Bao Ninh's "war reality" is construed in the source text and reconstructed in its two English versions. Rather than evaluating the English versions in terms of fidelity or correctness, the study treats them as instances of mediation, or historically situated products of mediated rewriting, and examines how each version reconstructs the experiential world of the source text through observable textual regularities. Toury's notion of translational norms provides a systemic perspective or the broader explanatory framework for interpreting recurrent patterns, while Venuti's concepts of domestication and foreignisation are employed descriptively to characterise tendencies of cultural alignment across the two target texts.

The study is designed as a descriptive, comparative, product-oriented case study, structured around two analytical trajectories: ST to TT1 (examining the movement from the Vietnamese source text to Phan Thanh Hao's English translation as a process of interlingual translation) and TT1 to TT2 (examining the transformation of Phan Thanh Hao's translation into Frank Palmos's edited English version as a second-stage mediated rewriting). This design reflects the documented production history of the two English texts and allows each stage of mediation to be analysed on its own terms rather than treating the two English versions as parallel retranslation of the Vietnamese original.

The primary data consist of the published texts: the Vietnamese source text and TT1 from the NXB Phụ nữ (Women's Publishing House) bilingual edition (2005), and TT2 from the Secker and Warburg, Vintage edition (1998). All texts were digitalized into a consistent plain-text format and manually aligned at clause-complex level. To ensure analytical focus and representational relevance, the corpus was selectively constructed from passages containing recurrent linguistic representations of war experience. Drawing on critical discussions of post-*Đổi Mới* war literature, trauma, memory, and *The Sorrow of War*, the study examines war reality through

four experiential domains: physical brutality, psychological trauma, collective memory, and geopolitical conflict. To provide a linguistic ground for comparison, the analysis adopts the transitivity system within the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) as its primary analytical framework. Accordingly, clause-process units are examined as experiential configurations of processes, participants, and circumstances, allowing the study to ground interpretation in observable lexico-grammatical evidence rather than theme-based interpretive comments. In this way, experiential meaning is realised through recurrent patterns of action, cognition, attribution, agency distribution, and circumstantial anchoring. To put it another way, this provides an empirically replicable way to track how experiential meaning is preserved, redistributed, condensed, or reframed across the two stages of mediated rewriting.

Building on this transitivity-based analysis, the study further incorporates structural and narrative-functional analysis. Structural analysis focuses on recurrent transformations such as segmentation, condensation, expansion, reordering, omission, and addition. These shifts are then interpreted through Baker's (2018) narrative framing strategies, particularly selective appropriation, labelling, participant repositioning, and temporal/spatial framing. This combination enables the thesis to relate micro-level linguistic shifts to broader changes in narrative alignment, reportability, experiential salience, and reader positioning.

The overall analytical pathway follows Toury's three-stage DTS model which was described by Munday (2022). First, each target text is situated within its target-cultural and publishing context in order to reconstruct preliminary and initial norms. Second, systematic paired comparison is conducted to identify recurrent textual-linguistic and matricial shifts across ST – TT1, and then TT1 – TT2. Finally, cross-text patterns are synthesized to infer operational norms and broader translational orientations. These findings are subsequently discussed in Chapters 4 and 5 in relation to narrative framing and the reconstruction of war reality across the two-stage mediation process.

1.4. Scope of the Study

This study focuses on the Vietnamese original text *Nỗi Buồn Chiến Tranh* and its two English-language versions: the translation associated with Phan Thanh Hao

(2005) and the version published under the editorial mediation of Frank Palmos (1998). The three texts are treated as parallel narrative artefacts within a two-stage process of mediated rewriting, rather than as isolated works, and are examined comparatively in order to describe how war reality is reconstructed across successive stages of mediation.

The analysis does not attempt to account for the entire novels at the level of global discourse structure. Instead, the scope is delimited to those segments in which war reality is most prominently foregrounded. In line with the conceptual framework of the study, war reality is not treated as a thematic category, but as a discursively constructed experiential representation realised through recurrent transitivity configurations. Accordingly, war reality is examined through four experiential domains: physical brutality, psychological trauma, collective memory, and geopolitical conflict. These domains serve as analytically motivated criteria for corpus selection and comparative analysis.

To ensure transparency and analytic rigour, data selection proceeds in two stages. First, the Vietnamese source text was read in full to identify passages that denote the experiential meanings associated with these four domains. Each selected passage was indexed by chapter and paragraph number to facilitate subsequent alignment and comparison with the corresponding passages in TT1 and TT2. Second, the corresponding segments in TT1 and TT2 are located and aligned manually at clause-complex level. This alignment produced a three-text dataset that records the distribution and segmentation of corresponding textual material across ST, TT1 and TT2 while supporting the two analytical comparisons undertaken in the study: ST – TT1 and TT1 – TT2. Passages that do not engage with the experiential dimensions of war reality, or that are primarily explanatory, descriptive or conversational without relevance to these domains, fall outside the analytical scope and thus are not included in the corpus.

Within the selected dataset, the analysis focuses primarily on micro-level experiential representation rather than literary stylistics, while broader narrative and ideological implications are considered at the interpretive stage of the analysis. Specifically, the study examines transitivity patterns, participant configurations,

circumstantial anchoring, and selected narrative framing strategies in the two analytical comparisons undertaken in this study: ST – TT1 and TT1 – TT2. Through these linguistic and narrative features, the study traces how war reality is reconstructed across two stages of mediation: interlingual translation (from ST to TT1) and editorial rewriting (from TT1 to TT2).

Finally, while the primary focus of the study is on the published textual forms of the three novels, the analysis also draws selectively on paratextual materials, including interviews, statements by the translator and editor, and publishing remarks where relevant to understanding the mediation process. In line with Descriptive Translation Studies, such materials are used to contextualise initial and preliminary norms rather than to provide independent evidence for interpretive claims. Claims regarding translational orientation or rewriting decisions are therefore not inferred solely from paratextual evidence. Rather, they are examined in conjunction with operational norms, particularly matricial and textual-linguistic norms identified through transitivity analysis and narrative framing. In this way, the study remains fundamentally text-based while situating its findings within a broader account of the norms shaping the two English versions.

1.5. Significance of the Study

This study is significant in several respects. First, it contributes to research on the translation of Vietnamese literature by providing one of the few systematic, text-based comparative analyses of *The Sorrow of War* and its two English versions. Whereas existing scholarship tends to discuss the novel primarily as a cultural or historical artefact, or to treat the English version of Frank Palmos as the sole English version available, the present study distinguishes between Phan Thanh Hao's translation as an interlingual rendering of the Vietnamese source text and Frank Palmos's version as a later stage of editorial rewriting derived from that translation. Rather than treating the two English texts as parallel retranslations, the thesis examines them as successive stages of mediation and investigates how each stage reshapes the experiential representation of war. By adopting a descriptive rather than evaluative approach, the study provides a linguistically grounded account of how war

reality is reconstructed first through interlingual translation and subsequently through editorial rewriting.

Second, the study contributes to the wider field of translation studies by demonstrating how a combined framework of Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS), Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) transitivity analysis, narrative framing, and the translational orientations of domestication and foreignisation can be used to examine shifts in experiential meaning at the micro-linguistic level. Rather than focusing on isolated lexical differences or general thematic tendencies, the study shows how translational shifts can be systematically examined through recurrent patterns of process types, participant configuration, agency distribution, and circumstantial anchoring. In this way, the thesis demonstrates that war reality is not treated as pre-existing thematic content, but as a discursively constructed experiential representation realised through patterned transitivity configurations. This approach highlights the role of translators and editors not merely as transmitters of linguistic content but as mediators who actively participate in reshaping narrative perspective, experiential salience, and reader alignment.

Third, the study contributes to scholarship on Vietnamese post-war literature and war narratives more broadly. By examining war reality through the experiential domains of physical brutality, psychological trauma, collective memory, and geopolitical conflict, the thesis provides a structured and replicable model for investigating how war experience is linguistically represented in translation and subsequently reframed through editorial mediation. Importantly, these domains are not treated as thematic categories, but as analytically motivated experiential configurations that can be systematically traced through clause-level transitivity analysis. The study therefore contributes methodologically to literary translation research by demonstrating how literary representation may be examined through observable linguistic evidence while remaining sensitive to trauma, memory, and historical experience.

Concerning Vietnamese literary studies and intercultural communication, this research addresses a critical gap in scholarship. As highlighted in the background of

the study, Vietnamese literary works remain under-represented in English translation, with relatively little research examining how translation and editorial mediation shape the global reception of Vietnamese literary narratives. By focusing on *The Sorrow of War*, a seminal Vietnamese war novel circulating through two distinct English versions, the present study demonstrates how literary translation functions as a form of intercultural re-presentation rather than neutral transfer. More specifically, it shows how different translational orientations and rewriting strategies may reshape the ways Vietnamese war memory, trauma, and historical experience become intelligible to Anglophone readerships. In this sense, the thesis contributes not only to Translation Studies, but also to broader discussion of cultural mediation, intercultural understanding, and the global circulation of post-war memory.

Finally, the study offers important practical and methodological implications for translators, editors, and scholars in translation pedagogy. By systematically distinguishing between the translational and editorial interventions associated with Phan Thanh Hao and Frank Palmos in reconstructing the war reality of Bao Ninh's *The Sorrow of War*, the research provides a concrete model for examining how different mediation strategies reshape experiential meaning and narrative framing. This has particular relevance for translation pedagogy, as the study demonstrates how decisions concerning agency, lexical specification, condensation, omission, and narrative accessibility may substantially alter the representation of historically and ideologically sensitive material. The analysis of TT2, in particular, highlights how editorial rewriting may move beyond linguistic revision toward the re-authoring of narrative experience under target-system pressures. In doing so, the study foregrounds the ethical implications of mediation in the translation of trauma narratives, especially where processes of international readability and cultural accessibility risk simplifying, intensifying, or redistributing the experiential complexity of the source text.

More broadly, the study demonstrates the value of examining multiple versions of a translated literary work within a single comparative framework. It shows that differences between versions are not merely textual variations, but may amount to distinct ways of reconstructing and narrating the same experiential world. In doing

so, the thesis contributes to ongoing discussions concerning mediated rewriting, narrative framing, and the role of translation in shaping how literary representations of war circulate across languages, institutions, and cultures.

1.6. Structure of the Study

This thesis is structured into six chapters as follows:

Chapter 1 introduces the study by outlining its background and rationale, aims, research questions, objectives, methodological orientation, scope, significance, and overall structure.

Chapter 2 reviews the theoretical and conceptual foundations of the study. Its first discusses war literature and the representation of war reality, with particular attention to the Vietnam War and Bao Ninh's *The Sorrow of War*. It then examines literary translation as a form of cultural mediation and norm-governed rewriting through Descriptive Translation Studies, domestication and foreignization, and the role of translated literature within target literary systems. The chapter further reviews Baker's narrative theory and narrative framing strategies before introducing Systemic Functional Linguistics, particularly transitivity analysis, as a framework for investigating experiential meaning. The chapter concludes by identifying the research gaps and presenting the theoretical framework adopted in the study.

Chapter 3 presents the methodological design of the research. It describes the research paradigm, research approach, and overall design, followed by procedures for data preparation, corpus construction, coding, and analysis. The chapter also explains the analytical framework that integrates Descriptive Translation Studies, transitivity analysis, and narrative framing theory, and discusses ethical considerations relevant to the study.

Chapter 4 investigates the reconstruction of war reality in TT1, the English translation produced by Phan Thanh Hao and collaborators. Drawing on Toury's framework of translational norms across four representational domains: Physical Brutality, Psychological Trauma, Collective Memory, and Geopolitical Conflict. The chapter then interprets the identified patterns in relation to translational orientations, particularly adequacy and acceptability, as well as foreignization and domestication.

Chapter 5 examines the reconstruction of war reality in TT2, the mediated English version, edited by Frank Palmos. Following the same analytical procedures adopted in Chapter 4, the chapter analyses the initial, preliminary, and operational norms governing TT2 and investigates how experiential meanings are reconfigured through processes of mediated rewriting. The chapter concludes by discussing how the observed shifts relate to broader rewriting orientations and patterns of narrative intervention.

Chapter 6 synthesises the findings from the two analytical chapters and discusses how war reality is reconstructed across the two English versions. It compares the representation of Physical Brutality, Psychological Trauma, Collective Memory, and Geopolitical Conflict, before examining the role of narrative framing, translational orientations, and rewriting practices in shaping the two versions. The chapter then addresses the study's contributions and implications for literary translation, indirect translation, and retranslation studies, outlines its limitations, proposes directions for future research and concludes the thesis.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter reviews the bodies of scholarship that inform the thesis's investigation of how war reality is constructed in Bao Ninh's *Nỗi Buồn Chiến Tranh* and reconstructed across two English versions (TT1 by Phan Thanh Hao and TT2 as Frank Palmos's edited version). The chapter first situates the study within debates on war literature and the representation of war reality, with specific attention to Vietnamese war writing and *The Sorrow of War*. It then establishes translation as culturally mediated and norm-governed rewriting, introducing the systemic rationale for why texts are translated, circulated, and recalibrated for new readerships. Next, the chapter reviews Descriptive Translation Studies and the domestication-foreignisation continuum as macro lenses for recognizing orientation tendencies, before outlining Baker's narrative approach to translation as re-narration and framing. Finally, it presents SFL transitivity as the core linguistic framework for modelling experiential representation through process types, participant configuration and circumstantial anchoring. The chapter concludes by identifying key research gaps and consolidating the integrated framework that underpins the analysis.

2.2. War Literature and The Representation of War Reality

2.2.1. *The Nature of War Literature*

War literature, broadly understood as writing about armed conflict, is one of the oldest and most diverse bodies of writing, spanning genres such as poetry, drama, short stories, novels, journals, diaries, oral histories, memoirs, and letters (Calloway, 2013). Rather than merely recounting events, it explores the multiple impacts of war on soldiers and civilians, and examines the ways in which war is transformed through literary representation (Dawes, 2009).

Brosman (1992) argued that war literature performs multiple functions. A foundational function is aesthetics: writers impose narrative and stylistic order on chaos, rendering violence and fear intelligible through imagery, rhythm, and narrative structure. Yet this artistic shaping carries an inherent risk, since formalization may

inadvertently glorify war. A second, historically dominant function is heroic-national, rooted in epic traditions: war narratives commemorate military deeds, reinforce national identity, and often present war as a site of courage, sacrifice, and maturation, sometimes even supporting patriotic mobilization. Alongside this public function, war writing also has a psychological role for both writers and readers: for veteran-authors, it can provide a medium for processing trauma, guilt, and haunting memories; for readers, it can offer mediated experience and collective emotional release, especially in postwar contexts. Brosman (1992) also highlighted a powerful demystifying function that becomes prominent in twentieth-century war writing: texts reject heroic illusion and expose combat's brutality, futility, and ideological deception, often through naturalistic detail and irony, thereby supporting anti-war or pacific orientations. More broadly, war literature remains a sustained site of moral and social reflection, interrogating conduct under fire, sacrifice, civic responsibility, and communal values. Even when it critiques militarism, it frequently draws on enduring mythic patterns such as initiation, sacrifice, death, and rebirth, since the transformation of violent experience into narrative itself tends to re-inscribe war within culturally recognizable story forms. All in all, these functions show that war literature cannot be reduced to mere historical record or fictional entertainment. It is simultaneously aesthetic, heroic, psychological, pacifist, moral, social, and mythic, and it endures because it negotiates the tension between destruction and meaning, violence and art. In this sense, war literature constitutes one of the most persistent and powerful modes of cultural expression.

Studies of war literature have long emphasized its memorializing and critical functions. Brosman (1992), for example, identifies war literature as a form of cultural testimony that preserves memory, offers moral reflection, and critiques the human cost of conflict. Similarly, Fussell (2009) examines how literary traditions emerging from World War I shaped later representations of war as disillusioning and fragmented rather than heroic. Burns (2006) focuses on the Vietnam War specifically, arguing that allegory became a preferred narrative strategy to capture the conflict's ambiguity, as seen in Robert Stone's *Dog Soldiers* and Joe Haldeman's *The Forever*

War. Boyle's (2014) edited collection, summarized by Rísquez (2017), expands the scope by bringing together American and Vietnamese perspectives. In her analysis of Vietnamese authors such as Bao Ninh (Frank Palmos's version) and Dưòng Thu Hương, Boyle shows that their works not only contest American canonical accounts but also critique North Vietnamese official historiography, foregrounding disillusionment, trauma and memory.

These studies are invaluable in identifying the representational centrality of brutality, trauma, and ideology in war literature, yet they remain primarily literary-critical in method. Their focus is on representational interpretation rather than systematic linguistic analysis, leaving a methodological gap in understanding how war reality is constructed in language. They also reveal a contextual gap, as scholarship on war literature continues to privilege Western texts over Vietnamese narratives.

2.2.2. Representation of War Reality

Representation can be understood in general terms as the communicative act of portraying individuals, concepts, and lived experience through language and other expressive forms (Webb, 2008). In 'War and Representation', Jameson (2009) traced how European aesthetics have evolved through realist and post-realist approaches to depicting war and asks which mode – realist authenticity or post/ anti-realist defamiliarization – more effectively conveys war's truth. He identified eight recurring patterns that structure Western representation of war: existential experience, communal experience, leaders and military institution, technology, enemy landscape, atrocities, attacks on the homeland, and foreign occupation. These templates, whether realist or estranging, form dominant paradigms through which war becomes narratable and culturally legible. In this sense, "war reality" is not simply reproduced in texts but is mediated or shaped through presentational conventions that make war intelligible within particular cultural and narrative frameworks. While Jameson's discussion is grounded primarily in Western literary traditions, it highlights a broader insight that extends beyond particular historical contexts: representations of war are shaped by recurring narrative and aesthetic conventions rather than direct access to historical reality.

Young (1999) argued that representation requires intentionality and recognizability: a work must be created to stand for something and be identifiable as “about” that object. Literature can represent reality even when fictional because it often represents types, i.e. patterns of behaviour, emotion, and social reality, rather than historical particulars. Young distinguished semantic representation, which states facts (typical of history/science), from illustrative representation, which depicts rather than asserts (typical of literature). Literary texts achieve illustrative representation through verbal depiction (speech/thought), descriptive depiction (actions/settings), and formal depiction (rhythm, structure, imagery), offering knowledge not as factual truth but as exemplified understanding of moral, emotional, and existential realities.

From a broader theoretical standpoint, literary presentation is therefore constructive rather than imitative. Carroll (1999) and Neumann (2008) both emphasised that texts do not mirror reality but actively shape it through linguistic, cognitive, and cultural mediation. Carroll (1999) foregrounded how authors build “configurations of meaning” through grammatical, semantic, and ideological patterning that organizes perception into a coherent form; presentation is thus conditioned by language and conceptual framing. Neumann (2008), while similarly rejecting naïve imitation, situated this constructive work within memory and discourse, arguing that literature produces “memory worlds” through narrative and stylistic techniques that weave recollection and forgetting. Despite differences in emphasis, these accounts converge in rejecting an imitative understanding of literature. Representation is viewed not as the reproduction of an external reality but as a process through which reality is selected, organized, and rendered meaningfully. This shared constructivist position provides an important foundation for the present study, which treats war reality as a representational construct rather than a fixed historical reality that is simply reflected in texts.

This constructivist view is further supported by scholarship on historical and epistemic representation. Christodoulou (2013), for example, showed that historical narrative is not a neutral record but a constructed presentation through Thucydides’ portrayal of Pericles which is shaped through narrative and rhetorical techniques to

guide audiences' understanding of reality. This example highlights how reality may be reconstructed through deliberate textual choices. Davidsen (2018) similarly argued that literary representation works through a semio-cognitive process: texts select elements of the world and transform them into hypotheses that are formalized as cognitive models or networks that define conceptual content. Literature thus represents reality at a conceptual level, linking perception and conception and enabling both recognition of established concepts and new ways of understanding them. Together, these perspectives support the view that war reality is constructed through recurring textual choices that shape how readers understand and interpret war experience.

A similar argument can be found in Baker (2019)'s narrative approach, which treats narrative as a primary means through which individuals and communities make sense of experience or organize experience into meaningful forms. From this perspective, war reality does not simply exist as a collection of historical events but becomes intelligible through the narratives that organize, interpret, and assign meaning to those events.

This emphasis on construction rather than reflection also informs scholarship on collective memory and cultural trauma. Eyerman et al. (2017) contended that collective memory is not a passive record of historical events; rather, it is an active process through which communities interpret and assign meaning to the past. Importantly, collective memory is represented and reproduced through narrative forms, including literature, film, memorials, and commemorative practices. The implication of this discussion is that competing communities may construct fundamentally different understandings of the same conflict. Consequently, war narratives should not be viewed merely as reflections of historical events but also as sites where collective memories and responsibilities are negotiated. Different communities may therefore generate different versions of war reality, depending on the historical experiences, cultural values, and narrative frameworks through which the conflict is remembered. This observation is particularly relevant to the Vietnam War, which has been variously remembered as a struggle for national liberation, a

traumatic military defeat, or an experience of exile and displacement by different collectivities (Eyerman et al., 2017).

These insights become particularly visible in literary representations of war. If war reality is shaped by narrative and collective memory, different literary traditions may foreground different aspects of conflict and assign different moral meanings to warfare. Within the constructivist understanding of representation, war itself is widely theorized as a multifaceted social and political phenomenon, rather than a single event type, and its complexity is reflected in cultural representation (Fabiszak, 2007). Comparative discussion also suggests that national traditions may foreground different moral and affective framings: Fabiszak (2007) noted that Polish narratives often link war with patriotism and virtue, while British literature more often presents suffering and death without heroic idealisation. According to Martin (2012), war memoirs frequently seek to convey the disorienting and unfamiliar nature of frontline experience. War narratives, therefore, recurrently stage survival, moral conflict over killing, the effects of political decisions on ordinary soldiers, and the difficulty of representing combat as an “alien” experiential reality.

Scholarship on war and trauma narratives further emphasizes the importance of memory and subjective experience in literary representations of conflict. Studies of Lebanese, Eastern African, and other post-conflict literatures suggest that fiction frequently functions as a discursive space through which traumatic experiences are processed, narrated, and transmitted across generations (Mostafa, 2009; Roland & Arva, 2014; Abubakar & Abubakar, 2017; Tembo, 2017). Although these studies differ in their theoretical orientations, they share the same view that literature mediates trauma not simply by recording violent events but by transforming them into meaningful narrative forms. However, their analyses remain largely interpretive and thematic, focusing on literary representation rather than the linguistic mechanisms through which trauma and memory are constructed. Consequently, they provide important insights into the significance of trauma and memory in war narratives but offer limited tools for examining how such experiences are linguistically realised and subsequently reconstructed through translation.

The difficulty of representing war experience raises a broader question concerning the relationship between historical events and narrative truth. If combat is frequently experienced as disorienting, fragmented, and resistant to ordinary description, then factual accuracy alone may be insufficient to convey its experiential reality. This issue is addressed explicitly in Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried*. Middleton (2008) noted that O'Brien recognizes two distinct types of truth: 'story-truth' and 'happening-truth'. While 'happening-truth' relies on factual events, 'story-truth' is concerned with emotional, psychological, or experiential realities. O'Brien emphasizes that a narrative can be entirely fictional yet still convey 'story-truth', repeatedly highlighting its significance over factual accuracy throughout his work. Consequently, O'Brien prioritises fiction as the method for revealing truth about Vietnam, even suggesting that sometimes one must 'make up a few things to get at the real truth' when a story is not working (Middleton, 2008). O'Brien's distinction challenges the assumption that representational accuracy depends primarily on factual correspondence. Instead, it suggests that literary narratives may depart from historical exactness in order to communicate psychological and experiential dimensions of reality. The significance of this position lies in its reconceptualization of truth as an effect of narrative representation rather than a simple reflection of historical events.

A related perspective emerges from trauma studies, Pillemer (2016) argued that experience of extreme violence often challenge conventional linguistic representation and require processes of translation and mediation before they can be articulated through language and communicated beyond the immediate experience of survivors. From this perspectives, traumatic realities are not simply transmitted through language but are continually reconstructed through representational practices. This view resonates with translation-based studies of trauma narratives. Examining the English translation of Yan Lianke's *The Four Books*, Yang (2022) demonstrated that translation does not merely transfer trauma from one language to another but actively participates in its reconstruction. Through shifts in perspective, characterization, metaphor, and imagery, traumatic experience may be rendered, transmitted, and

transformed in the target text. Taken together, these studies reinforce the view that representations of violence and trauma are mediated constructions rather than direct reflections of experience. This observation further supports the present study's adopted view that war reality is mediated rather than directly accessible in narrative form.

In summary, the scholarship reviewed in this section converges on a broadly constructivist understanding of representation. Across literary theory, memory studies, trauma studies, and narrative theory, reality emerges not as an objective phenomenon directly reproduced in texts but as a product of selection, interpretation, and mediation. War narratives therefore do more than recount historical events; they organize experience into meaningful forms through which violence, suffering, memory, and identity become intelligible. This understanding is central to the present study, which approaches war reality as a discursively constructed experiential representation and investigates how that representation is subsequently reconstructed through translation and editorial mediation.

2.2.3. The Vietnam War in Literature

The Vietnam War is repeatedly characterized as a conflict of contested memory, representation, and cultural meaning, and literature is a central site where these struggles are articulated and preserved (McInerney, 1981; Rollins, 1984; Lomperis & Pratt, 1987; Ringnalda, 1994; Sambanis, 2002; Taylor, 2003; Heberle, 2009; Q. M. Ha, 2016; Wood, 2016; Calloway, 2017; Herzog, 2017). Representations vary not only across national traditions but also across narrative forms, including realism, testimony, trauma narrative, allegory, and transnational critiques (Hawkins, 2012). A key comparative pattern contrasts American literary representation, which is often structured around trauma, ethical judgement, and national identity, with Vietnamese writing that foregrounds memory, disillusionment, and the cultural costs of war (Nguyen, 2013; Pham, 2016). This cross-tradition field therefore reveals how the same war is narratively constructed through different ideological and experiential perspectives (Phan, 2012; Rentschler, 2016; Bates, 2023). Taken together, these studies suggest that the Vietnam War cannot be understood as a singular historical narrative but rather as a site of competing

representations shaped by different national, ideological, and experiential positions. The significance of this observation lies not simply in the existence of diverse narratives, but in the fact that literary texts actively participate in constructing those narratives through particular modes of remembering, interpreting, and evaluating the war.

Beyond demonstrating different perspectives on the war, scholarship has also highlighted the diverse cultural functions performed by Vietnam War literature. Rather than serving merely as historical testimony, war narratives may simultaneously commemorate, critique, mythologise, or contest dominant understandings of the conflict. For instance, Brosman (1992) situated Vietnam War writing within longer war-literature traditions and used Vietnam texts to illustrate how war narratives can perform multiple functions at once. She highlighted O'Brien's *The Things They Carried* as a fragmented, metafictional account that exposes war's aesthetic intensity alongside moral devastation. She contrasted this with explicitly anti-war narratives, for example, Berry's *Saigon Cemetery*; and noted the persistence of heroic-masculinising myth patterns in other Vietnam novels that frame war through camaraderie, duty, courage, and manhood. Complementing this functional account, Baky (1994) underscored the scale of American Vietnam War fiction, which embraces over a thousand novels within two decades, interpreting the corpus as a cultural diary of trauma and fractured national identity rather than a search for one definitive "great war novel". Similarly, Gryzyb's (2000) veteran testimonies further show how geopolitical framing is embedded in language choice, for example, "Vietnam" often functions as shorthand for (South) Vietnam, while "North Vietnam" marks the communist enemy, revealing internalized wartime separation and ideological alignment. Collectively, these studies demonstrate that literary representations of the Vietnam War are inseparable from broader questions of memory, ideology, and cultural positioning. Even seemingly neutral linguistic choices may reveal assumptions about national identity, political allegiance, and historical responsibility.

At the level of public memory and discourse, McMahon (2002) described Vietnam as a "zone of contested meaning" shaped by contested memories and official

rhetoric from 1975 to the early 2000s. He traced how presidential discourse shifted from attempts to present the war as a finished chapter toward more heroic and reconciliatory portrayals of the conflict by regularly emphasising patriotism and national healing while little attention was paid to Vietnamese suffering and the moral complexities of the war. This perspective highlights the ideology built into cultural narratives, including literature and film, in reconciling defeat with national identity. McMahon's discussion is particularly relevant because it demonstrates that narratives of the Vietnam War are never politically neutral. Rather, they are shaped by ongoing struggles over how the conflict should be remembered, explained, and morally evaluated. This observation suggests that the international circulation of Vietnam War narratives, including through translation, may involve not only linguistic transfer but also the negotiation of competing memory frameworks.

Critiques of Western representation further highlight how Western narratives often prioritise some experiences of war while dismissing others. Kleinen (2003) argued that Western media and film have often marginalized Vietnamese perspectives and reproduced Orientalist stereotypes, reducing Vietnamese characters to faceless or dehumanized figures within American-centred narratives. Against this representational regime, *The Sorrow of War* is positioned as a rare counter-memory that reveals fear, moral decay, and trauma among Northern soldiers, exposing "the internal wounds of the victors" (Kleinen, 2003). In American writing, the challenge of representing the Vietnam War often leads authors to experiment with literary form. The marginalization of Vietnamese voices in Western representations also raises broader questions about the adequacy of conventional narrative forms for representing the war. If dominant representations privilege particular experiences while excluding others, writers may turn to alternative literary strategies to challenge established ways of seeing the conflict. Burns (2006) showed that devices such as allegory, fable, science fiction, and realist allegory are used to express the moral ambiguity of the war when conventional realism seems insufficient.

Studies comparing American, Vietnamese, and diasporic narratives demonstrate that the Vietnam War is remembered and interpreted in markedly different ways across cultural communities. Boyle's edited volume, as summarized

by Rísquez (2017), juxtaposes American-centred texts focused on combat ethics and traumatic afterlife with Vietnamese and Vietnamese American writing that challenges both American-centred and official state framings through emphases on trauma, memory, disillusionment, exile, and gendered experience (Boyle, 2014; Rísquez, 2017). Eyerman et al. (2017) similarly framed Vietnam as a cultural trauma but show divergent memorial trajectories: in the United States it persists as unresolved defeat; in Vietnam it is more often commemorated as national liberalization; and in diaspora it is frequently remembered as loss and exile. Related critiques also notes American metonymic usage, for example “Vietnam” as shorthand for “the American war in Vietnam”, and the instability of “Vietnam-the-war” as a cultural sign across competing interpretations (Christopher, 1995; Middleton, 2008). These studies collectively suggest that the Vietnam War functions as a translational memory site whose meaning varies across cultural communities. Rather than producing a shared narrative of the conflict, literary and cultural representations generate competing frameworks through which the war is remembered and interpreted. The implication is that any movement of Vietnam War narratives across linguistic and cultural boundaries necessarily involves processes of reinterpretation and reframing.

Literary scholarship has also highlighted the role of Vietnam War literature in challenging dominant public narratives and reconstructing the human dimensions of the conflict. From a pedagogical perspective, Johannessen (1992) argued that Vietnam War literature provides a corrective to media-generated myths and enables readers to engage with the psychological and moral complexities of warfare. While primarily concerned with teaching rather than literary analysis, Johannessen’s discussion is relevant to the present study because it draws attention to the linguistic dimension of war representation. His observations suggest that the experiential force of Vietnam War literature is partly realised through specific lexical and discursive choices, such as military jargon, euphemism, and colloquial expressions, which provides an insight that resonates with the present study’s focus on the linguistic construction of war reality.

Ha (2016) approaches Vietnam War literature as a site of transnational remembrance in which Vietnamese and Western systems of memory interact and contest one another. Through comparative readings of Vietnamese and American texts, he argued that the war has become a shared yet unevenly remembered historical experience shaped by different cultural and moral frameworks. While American narratives often foreground psychological trauma and national self-reflection, Vietnamese works such as *The Sorrow of War* place greater emphasis on collective suffering, displacement, and the enduring social consequences of war.

While Ha (2016) approaches *The Sorrow of War* primarily as a participant in broader transnational debates about memory and representation, other scholars have focused more directly on the novel's place within the development of Vietnamese war literature itself. Such studies examine how Bao Ninh's work departs from earlier modes of war representation and contributes to the transformation of postwar literary discourse in Vietnam. Duong (2016), for example, identified *The Sorrow of War* as a key post-*Đổi Mới* text that departs from earlier heroic and collective representations of warfare by foregrounding individual memory, psychological trauma, and subjective experience. In this reading, Bao Ninh replaces the certainty and idealism characteristic of earlier war fiction with fragmentation, ambiguity, and the enduring consequences of violence. This interpretation is important because it situates the novel within a broader transformation of Vietnamese literary responses to war. However, the analysis remains primarily concerned with thematic and narratological developments rather than the linguistic resources through which such representations are constructed. Nor does it consider how these representations may be reshaped through translation and editorial mediation. Consequently, while Duong helps establish *The Sorrow of War* as a landmark postwar narrative, questions concerning the linguistic construction and translational reconstruction of war reality remain largely unexplored.

Overall, the scholarship reviewed in this section demonstrates that Vietnam War literature is characterized by competing and often incompatible constructions of the conflict. Across American, Vietnamese, and diasporic traditions, the war is

remembered through different moral frameworks, narrative priorities, and cultural memories. Rather than functioning as stable historical referent, “Vietnam” emerges as a contested representational space in which trauma, identity, responsibility, and memory are continually negotiated. This insight is particularly important for the present study because it suggests that the translation and circulation of Vietnam War narratives may involve not only linguistic transformation but also the mediation of competing understandings of the war itself (Middleton, 2008; Hawkins, 2012; Eyerman et al., 2017).

2.2.4. *The Sorrow of War - A Vietnamese War Narrative*

Post-1975 Vietnamese war fiction is often described as undergoing a marked shift in artistic thinking, particularly from *Đổi Mới* (1986) onwards, when war writing began to be approached through more diverse angles and a more novelistic mode of representation (Duong, 2016). Against this literary-historical backdrop, Bao Ninh’s *Nỗi Buồn Chiến Tranh* (*The Sorrow of War*) has become a central text in Vietnamese war narrative for its decisive departure from celebratory or epic-oriented war representation toward an inward, trauma-inflected account of war and its afterlife (Nguyen, 2015, 2016).

Bao Ninh’s own wartime experience has frequently been cited as an important context for understanding the novel’s representation of war. Having served in the Glorious 27th Youth Brigade, of which only a small number of members survived, he later drew upon these experiences in producing *Nỗi Buồn Chiến Tranh*. The novel initially attracted controversy in Vietnam because of its departure from conventional heroic war narratives but subsequently gained international recognition through translation.

First published in 1990 under the title *Thân phận tình yêu* (*The Destiny of Love*) and later released in 1991 as *Nỗi Buồn Chiến Tranh* (*The Sorrow of War*), the novel quickly attracted critical attention for its unconventional representation of war. Critics have frequently highlighted its fragmented narrative structure, its focus on memory and trauma, and its portrayal of war as an enduring psychological condition rather than a completed historical event (Qui-Phiet, 2019). Centred on Kien, a veteran

struggling to reconcile wartime memories with postwar life, the narrative rejects linear chronology and heroic resolution in favour of a recursive reconstruction of loss, guilt, and survival. This narrative architecture has been widely regarded as central to the novel's challenge to conventional representations of the Vietnam War.

Despite extensive critical attention, scholarship on *The Sorrow of War* remains overwhelmingly literary in orientation. Existing studies have generated important insights into issues such as trauma, memory, narrative structure, identity and postwar consciousness, yet these concerns are typically explored through thematic or interpretive approaches (Nguyen, 1995; Skinnell, 2009; Nguyen, 2010; Ngo, 2011; A. Ng, 2014; Q. M. Ha, 2016; Moore, 2017; Parsapour et al., 2017; Inani, 2018; Qui-Phiet, 2019; Oktaviani, 2022a; Tran & Nguyen, 2024). Relatively little attention has been devoted to the novel from a Translation Studies perspective. Moreover, the English-language scholarship largely treats the internationally circulated version associated with Frank Palmos (Bao Ninh et al., 1998) as the novel's representative English text. The existence of two distinct English versions and the mediating role of editorial have received remarkably limited attention. Consequently, the processes through which the novel's representation of war has been reshaped during its international circulation remain insufficiently understood.

A major critical consensus emerging from Vietnamese scholarship is that the novel's distinctive contribution lies in its focus on the characteristics of the war and its destructive consequences on the human soul rather than on military achievement or national triumph which is a focus that has sustained considerable scholarly attention in Vietnam (A. Ng, 2014; A. V. Nguyen, 2016; A. D. Doan & N. L. Le, 2017; T. H. A. Nguyen, 2021; Nguyen & Mai, 2022). Across a range of studies, scholars have emphasized themes of trauma, memory, loss and psychological fragmentation as central to Bao Ninh's representation of war. Nguyen (2016), for example, highlighted that Bao Ninh construes a war of brutal destruction and death, with 'war reality' being conveyed through character psychology and through sustained streams of memory that function as trauma for those who experienced it. While these critical perspectives highlight the thematic and psychological dimensions

of war in the novel, they also point to the need for a more explicit account of how such war reality is discursively constituted within the text itself.

An exception to this narrow focus is Nguyen and Nguyen (2025)'s study, which investigates metaphysical and near-death experience (NDEs) as culturally embedded responses to war trauma in Bao Ninh's *The Sorrow of War* and Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried*. Drawing on trauma theory and narrative theory, they argued that both novels function not only as representations of trauma but also as forms of narrative healing and cultural remembrance. Particularly relevant is their observation that Bao Ninh's novel foregrounds collective memory and an ethical obligation to remember the dead. However, the study remains concerned primarily with trauma representation rather than with the translational reconstruction of such representations.

Generally, scholarship on *The Sorrow of War* has established the novel as a major intervention in Vietnam War literature, particularly through its emphasis on trauma, memory, loss, and the enduring consequences of violence. Existing studies have generated valuable insights into its literary, psychological, and cultural significance, yet they remain largely concerned with thematic interpretation and narrative form. Comparatively little attention has been devoted to the linguistic construction of war reality or to the ways in which such representations are mediated through translation and editorial intervention. These unresolved issues provide the immediate point of departure for the present study.

2.3. Translation as Cultural Mediation and Norm-Governed Rewriting

2.3.1. Definition of Literary Translation

Tymoczko (2014) argued for the centrality of literary translation to Translation Studies, noting that the discipline was largely shaped by scholars whose work originated in literary translation research, including Jiří Levy, Anton Popovič, James Holmes, Jose Lambert, André Lefevere, Theo Hermans, Itamar Even-Zohar and Gideon Toury. For Tymoczko (2014), literary translation is a particularly productive model for translation theory and practice because literary texts are intrinsically complex and therefore foreground core translational problems such as

fidelity and equivalence, aesthetic and ethical considerations, and cultural transfer. Precisely because literary works intensify these issues, the challenges and solutions encountered in literary translation illuminate broader questions relevant across translation types, including translator agency, the transformative nature of translation as recreation for new audiences, the interaction between source and target cultural systems (e.g. polysystem theory), and the ethical implications of representation choices. In this sense, literary translation serves not merely as a specialized branch of translation practice but as a particularly revealing site for examining how meaning, culture, and representation are negotiated across languages.

Literary translation is also considered as a distinctive kind of translation due to its intrinsic connection with literature, a unique kind of text (Hermans, 2007; Boase-Beier, 2014). In Reiss (1981)'s text typology, literary works exemplify the "expressive" type, where the author's aesthetic intent and the form of the message are foregrounded. Such texts therefore place particular demands on translators because meaning is realised not only through propositional content but also through stylistic and formal organization. Accordingly, literary language often prioritises connotation, stylistic patterning, ambiguity, and imaginative or affective experience rather than transparent information transfer (Leech & Short, 2007).

Koster (2014) further characterized literary translation as a hybrid and complex practice that mediates between literary system and cultural traditions. The translator operates within multiple constraints, including the norms of source and target literary systems and wider ideological and aesthetic conventions; literary translation thus becomes a site of cultural exchange in which distinctiveness must be negotiated against the expectations of the receiving culture. This systemic positioning means that literary translation is not simply linguistic substitution but a form of intercultural re-creation shaped by the interaction between local and global literary environment.

A complementary perspective is offered by Boase-Beier (2014) who approached literary translation from a cognitive and stylistic standpoint. Particularly, he claimed that the distinction between literary and non-literary texts matters because

that changes how texts are read and how translation should be performed. Literary translation is not adequately captured by approaches that allow target-language function to override the formal and stylistic characteristics of the source text (Boase-Beier, 2023). Instead, its aim is to enable target readers to perceive the source text's intended effects, even if these cannot be replicated identically across cultures (Boase-Beier, 2014). This difference is also cognitive: where a text is received as "literary", readers' attention tends to shift from what is described to how it is expressed, guided by textual cues that invite a specifically literary mode of interpretation and distinctive mental representations (Boase-Beier, 2014).

While Koster (2014) and Boase-Beier (2014) emphasised literary and cognitive dimensions of translation, functionalist approaches have similarly recognized the dual orientation of literary translation toward both source and target contexts. A functional account of this dual orientation is provided by Nord (1997), whose distinction between instrumental and documentary translation helps explain how literary translations may simultaneously operate within the target literary system while maintaining a meaningful relationship with the source text. This dual orientation also implies that literary translation cannot be understood as a process of simple transfer. Because translators must negotiate between source-text meanings and target-culture expectations, literary translation inevitably involves acts of interpretation and decision-making that shape how the source text is re-presented in a new cultural environment.

It is this interpretive dimension that becomes central in later discussions of literary translation as rewriting. Bassnett (2013) argued that literary and non-literary translation constitute different communicative modes. Unlike many non-literary texts, literary translations form a particular kind of literary text whose interpretive relation to the source is constitutive, and its translated status is often overt and explicit rather than concealed. From a structuralist perspective, she conceptualized literary texts as complex systems embedded within broader cultural systems, claiming that translation is inevitably interpretive with translators, as readers, decoding and reshaping the source text. Accordingly, literary meaning is not fixed but continually reconstructed through acts of interpretation.

If Bassnett (2013) foregrounded interpretation, subsequent scholars extend this argument by emphasizing the transformative consequences of such interpretation. Ece (2015), for instance, described literary translation as a trajectory from interpretation to rewriting, whereby the translated text acquires a “new life” within the receiving literary environment. This perspective shifts attention from the preservation of source-text meanings to the ways in which translated texts are reconfigured to function within new cultural and literary contexts. The notion of rewriting further highlights the influence of extra-textual factors on literary translation. As Giraldo (2018) and Rossi (2018) observed, translated literary texts are shaped not only by linguistic choices but also by power relations, literary norms, ideological expectations, and aesthetic conventions operating within the receiving culture. Literary translation thus emerges as a negotiated and transformative practice rather than a neutral act of reproduction.

Taken together, these perspectives support a definition of literary translation as an interpretive, culturally situated practice that re-creates a literary text within a new literary system under aesthetic, ideological, and norm-governed constraints. Although the scholars reviewed above differ in the extent to which they emphasise source-text effects, target-culture functions, cognitive reception, or systemic constraints, they share the view that literary translation involves interpretive intervention rather than mechanical transfer. This conceptualisation provides the foundation for the next section, which examines translation not only as text transfer but as cultural mediation and mediated rewriting, particularly relevant to war narratives such as *The Sorrow of War* and to the patterned shifts analysed in Chapters 4 and 5 of the present study.

2.3.2. Literary Translation as Mediated Rewriting

The shift from viewing translation as linguistic equivalence to viewing it as cultural practice is central to the “cultural turn” in translation studies in which Bassnett and Lefevere (1998) argued that translation must be studied as part of a wider system of literary, cultural, political, and institutional forces that influence the production, circulation, and reception of texts. These scholars redefined literary

translation as a culturally and ideologically mediated act of rewriting. This concept was developed by Lefevere (2016) who claimed that rewriting serves as an umbrella term encompassing all forms of textual mediation, including translation, editing, adaptation, each shaped by a complex interplay of ideological, poetological and institutional constraints. In Lefevere's formulation, rewriting is "the adaptation of a work of literature to a different audience, with the intention of influencing the way in which that audience reads the work" (Lefevere, 1982, p. 4). Translation therefore cannot be analysed in isolation from the systems of production, support, propagation, and opposition in which texts circulate (Lefevere, 1985). Translators, now as rewriters, inevitably intervene to some degree in order to align texts with dominant ideological and poetological currents of their time.

Lefevere's understanding of translation as rewriting is particularly relevant to the international circulation of literature from culturally peripheral contexts. Discussing Vietnam War literature, Ha (2016) observed that when Vietnamese narratives enter Anglophone literary space, they do not simply travel unchanged across linguistic boundaries. Rather, translators and publishers participate in shaping how Vietnamese experiences of war are presented to new audiences, making translation an important site of memory negotiation. This observation supports the view that translation functions as more than linguistic transfer and may contribute to the reframing of war narratives. However, Ha's discussion remains primarily concerned with cultural memory and transnational circulation rather than the textual mechanisms through which such reframing occurs. Consequently, questions concerning how representations of war experience are linguistically reconstructed across different stages of mediation remain unresolved.

Within this broadened view, Bassnett (2013, p. 84) criticized the unproductive debates concerning the distinction between "translations, versions, adaptations" which is based on a hierarchy of 'correctness', believing that such a judgement might be made regarding scientific documents, where facts are set out and presented in unqualifiedly objective terms for the reader of SL and TL text alike, but with literary texts the position is different. This is especially relevant to cases in which a later

publication is presented as an “English version” derived from a prior translation: the issue is not simply fidelity at sentence level but the systematic reconfiguration of a text for a new readership and literary environment.

While Lefevere’s concept of rewriting explains why translators and other mediators intervene in texts under ideological and institutional pressures, it offers limited terminology for describing the forms that such intervention may take at the textual level. Bastin (2009, in Baker & Saldanha, 2009)’s account of adaptation provides a more specific descriptive vocabulary for examining cases in which a text remains recognizably connected to its source while being substantially reshaped for a new readership. Bastin (2009, in Baker & Saldanha, 2009) conceptualised adaptation as a set of translative operation that produce a text which may not be institutionally accepted as a translation yet is still recognized as representing a source text, often through forms of rewriting and imitation. This is useful for translation situations in which a later version is presented as an “English version” derived from an earlier translation, since the product can remain source-representative while being shaped by target-oriented communicative priorities. Bastin (2009, in Baker & Saldanha, 2009) also highlighted the differences between local adaptation, which is limited to parts, intrinsic, and aimed at effectiveness, and global adaptation, which is a systematic strategy applied to the text as a whole and sometimes imposed by external forces such as publisher policy, potentially sacrificing formal or semantic features in order to reproduce function. Adaptation, in this view, signals a shift in evaluative priority from strict accuracy toward relevance and effect, encouraging analysis of intervention as purpose- and norm-driven rewriting rather than purely technical editing.

Jeon and Shoiria (2024)’s discussion of literary transediting resonates with Lefevere’s conception of translation as rewriting. However, whereas Lefevere theorised rewriting primarily at the level of ideological and poetological manipulation, these scholars demonstrated how such rewriting may be manifested through concrete textual interventions, including additions, deletions, annotations, and paragraph-level restructuring. Their analysis suggests that macro-level

interventions, particularly those involving the omission or modification of entire paragraphs and chapters, reflect not merely linguistic transfer but broader efforts to adapt a text to the expectations and cultural knowledge of the target readership. While the study contributes to the relatively limited scholarship on literary transediting, its conclusions are based on a single collaboratively produced translation whose translator explicitly acknowledged substantial editorial intervention. As a result, its findings are better understood as illustrating the potential effects of editorial mediation than as evidence of a general tendency in literary translation.

Although adaptation accounts for many forms of textual intervention, it does not fully explain how translators negotiate cultural meanings between different readerships. Cultural mediation models extend this discussion by shifting attention from textual modification itself to the interpretive process through which meanings are selected, reformulated, and made accessible across cultural boundaries. Katan's (2012) account of cultural approaches to translation reframes translation as culturally contextualized intercultural communication shaped by "context of culture" assumptions that language both encodes and activates. Within this perspective, the translator occupies a mediating position between cultures, working with a text not originally designed for intercultural communication and for readers who may not recognize the communication as intercultural; mediation therefore involves more than problem-solving at the micro level, extending to relational and interpretive meaning-making that enables shared understanding. Katan (2012) further foregrounded the "cultural filter" and the notion of a "model reader" as frameworks for explaining why translators may intervene to support comprehension and coherence for target readerships, while also acknowledging the critique that such models may drift into essentializing culture and stereotyping readers.

While Katan's framework (2012) foregrounds the translator's role as a cultural mediator, it has been criticized for occasionally relying on relatively stable notions of cultural and readership, Liddicoat (2016) responded to this concern by conceptualizing mediation less as the transfer of cultural knowledge and more as an interpretive process. He argued that the first view risks treating cultural differences

as static and miscommunication as default, which is of limited value for translation. By contrast, mediation as interpretive work involves engaging with diversity and interpretive meanings “for oneself and for others”. “Mediation for the self” refers to the translator’s interpretive recognition of culturally constructed meaning in the source text, including implicit meanings, as a prerequisite for rewriting; “mediation for others”, on the other hand, concerns representing those meanings for readers who do not share the source cultural starting points. On this view, translation is fundamentally interpretive as mediation entails both analytic understanding and communicative performance. Liddicoat (2016) also identified three broad intervention strategies that operationalise mediation for others, including expansion or explanation, replacement, and reframing. Expansion supplies additional information so that meanings that were implicit in the source cultural frame become explicit for target readers. Replacement swaps a source-culture frame for a target-culture frame to enable interpretation within the target readership’s cultural framing. Reframing restructures expression so that potential cultural incompatibilities in interpretation are reconciled across languages. Importantly, these are described as purposeful distortions undertaken to make a text interpretable for new readers in a new cultural context. He further emphasised that mediation is necessarily selective. That means translators cannot realistically make explicit every implicit cultural meaning and reference, and mediation decisions are constrained by publication expectations (for example, that translations not greatly exceed the source text’s length) and by the translator’s beliefs about what target readers need. This selectively entails constructing an imagined audience of “typical readers”, estimating their knowledge of source-culture framings, and judging the salience of particular knowledge for comprehension of the text as a whole. Translation therefore involves not only the reproduction of meaning but also recontextualization through processes of linguistic and cultural mediation.

Scholarship on indirect translation has increasingly drawn attention to intermediary textual stages in processes of textual transfer (Pięta, 2014). Building on this line of inquiry, Rosa et al. (2017) distinguished between an ultimate source text,

a mediating text, and an ultimate target text, thereby acknowledging that texts may undergo successive stages of intervention and recontextualization before reaching their final readership. Subsequent discussions of indirect translation have reinforced the analytical importance of intermediary texts in processes of textual transmission. Reviewing developments in the field, Ivaska et al. (2023) noted that studies which overlook mediating texts may misinterpret the origins of translational shifts by attributing them directly to translators rather than to earlier stages of mediation. Although the present study is not concerned with indirect translation in the conventional sense, this observation underscores the importance of treating TT1 as a distinct mediating text rather than merely as a preliminary version of TT2.

Luo (2019) illustrated the implications of such mediation through examples from Chinese literary history. Discussing the transmission of Chinese classics and vernacular literature, he noted that texts may pass through a series of reformulations before reaching new readerships. In some cases, an intralingual version becomes the basis for subsequent interlingual translation, creating a chain of textual transformations rather than a direct relationship between source and target text. Luo further argued that intralingual rewriting is not merely a matter of linguistic clarification or paraphrase; it may also play a role in reshaping literary traditions, language practices, and cultural understanding. Although his discussion is illustrative rather than analytical, it draws attention to the possibility that later versions of a text may derive their form and meaning from earlier mediating texts as much as from the original itself.

A similar understanding of literary translation as mediation is offered by Núñez (2012), who described translation as a communicative act in which the translator functions as an intermediary between author and reader. Drawing on functionalist and Skopos theory, he argued that literary translation is shaped by authorial intention, target readership, and situational context, and that different communicative circumstances may legitimately produce different translation outcomes. While this account does not address issues of rewriting or ideological mediation directly, it reinforces the view that literary translation involves active

negotiation between texts, readers, and cultural contexts rather than simple linguistic transfer.

The broader understanding of mediation resonates with Ulrych (2015)'s discussion of interlingual and intralingual mediation. She argued that mediation is not confined to translation encounters but constitutes a general communicative condition in which information is routinely filtered, reformulated, and recontextualized for particular audiences. She linked this to rewriting in translation studies by treating mediation as a continuum that includes both intralingual reformulation (paraphrasing, summarizing, editing) and interlingual translation. In this framework, mediated discourse functions as an intertextual process through which texts are recontextualized to become accessible for particular audiences, and can function, for those audiences, with a communicative status comparable to non-mediated discourse. Ulrych (2015) further aligned mediation with recipient-oriented models of translation (Nida, 2021), emphasising that "adjustments" need to be made to ensure that receptor-language versions are accessible within the receiving context. Mediation is therefore not a marginal phenomenon but a routine mechanism by which texts are recontextualized for new communicative environments.

Ulrych (2015) extended the discussion of mediation by broadening its scope beyond translation proper. Drawing on Jakobson's classic typology (Jakobson, 1959) of interlingual, intralingual, and intersemiotic translation, she insisted that mediation operates across a continuum of communicative practices through which texts are reformulated, recontextualized, and made accessible for new audiences. Importantly, these processes often occur sequentially, producing chains of mediation in which one text becomes the basis for further textual transformations. Within this framework, practices such as editing, revision, copy-editing, and post-editing are treated not as peripheral activities but as socially recognized forms of intralingual mediation shaped by communicative purposes and audience expectations. Ulrych's account therefore challenges a narrow conception of translation as direct interlingual transfer and situates it within broader processes of textual recontextualization.

A particularly useful concept in this regard is transediting, which Ulrych (2015) described as a recipient-oriented form of mediation aimed at enhancing

clarity, effectiveness, and communicative accessibility. Rather than merely correcting linguistic form, transediting involves intervention in the organization and presentation of meaning so that a text functions more effectively within the receiving culture. Strategies commonly associated with such intervention include simplification, normalization, explicitation, and levelling-out, all of which tend to increase readability and acceptability. Significantly, transediting may take place after an interlingual translation has already been produced, thereby highlighting the possibility that texts continue to be reshaped through subsequent stages of mediation. This perspective shifts attention away from fidelity as the sole evaluative criterion and toward the communicative and cultural purposes that motivate textual intervention. Recent research on Lin Yutang's trans-edited *The Wisdom of Loo-tse* further illustrates the breadth of such mediation, showing that textual reconstruction may extend beyond linguistic reformulation to include text selection, structural reorganization, paratextual supplementation, and other forms of editorial intervention designed to facilitate intercultural communication (Fang & Guo, 2025).

Recent work on editorial rewriting further blurs the distinction between translation and other forms of textual mediation. As Pillière (2024) suggested, editorial intervention frequently involves the same kinds of interpretive and communicative decisions that have traditionally been associated with translation. Drawing on Jakonson's concept of intralingual translation, she conceptualised editorial rewriting as a form of rewording undertaken to meet publishing requirements, house-style conventions, audience expectations, or broader communicative goals. In this view, editorial interventions cannot be reduced to mechanical correction or stylistic polishing. Rather, it involves active negotiation of meaning and frequently employs strategies such as simplification, explicitation, normalization, and restructuring.

Empirical research has further highlighted the complex relationship between translation and editing. Specifically, Bisiada (2018), for example, examined manuscript and published versions of German translations of English business articles, demonstrating that editors systematically modify linguistic structures during

the revision processes. Importantly, he argued that features observed in published translations cannot always be attributed solely to translators, since they may emerge through subsequent stages of editorial intervention. Kruger (2012), however, arrived at a more differentiated conclusion. Comparing translated, edited, and unedited texts, she found limited evidence that translation and editing share the same mediation effects, suggesting instead that translation may involve certain processing tendencies that are not fully replicated through editorial revision. Her findings therefore point not only to similarities between translation and editing, but also to the need to distinguish between different forms of textual mediation. These observations are particularly relevant to the present study because TT2 represents a published version produced through extensive editorial mediation rather than a direct translation from the Vietnamese source text. While editorial rewriting may share certain strategies with translation, it also constitutes a distinct form of intervention with its own constraints and objectives. The distinction between translational and editorial agency therefore requires analytical attention rather than being overlooked or collapsed into a single account of textual production.

Recent discussions of mediation and rewriting also foreground the role of translator agency. As Hermans (2007) and Giraldo (2018) argued, translator agency operates within a network of literary norms, institutional structures, publishing conditions, and aesthetic conventions that both enable and constrain translational decisions and shape the forms through which texts are made available to new readerships. This perspective challenges the view of translated literature as merely a derivative reproduction of an original work. Rather, translated literature constitutes a form of cultural mediation through which texts, meanings, and narratives are selectively reinterpreted and recontextualized within new literary and cultural environments. If translation is understood in this way, attention must also be directed towards the status of the translated texts that emerge from such processes of mediation. This raises broader questions concerning the role of translated literature within receiving literary systems.

Taken together, these discussions extend earlier accounts of rewriting and cultural mediation by demonstrating that textual transformation frequently continues

beyond the stage of interlingual translation. Their analyses challenge any rigid separation between translation, editing, adaptation, and revision, instead conceptualising these practices as related forms of mediated rewriting operating within norm-governed communicative environments. At the same time, these perspectives foreground the agency of mediators, who make selective decisions about what to retain, modify, emphasise, or suppress in response to audience expectations and socio-cultural pressures. This understanding of mediation provides an important conceptual bridge to Toury (2012)'s notion of operational norms, and later in this thesis, to Baker (2018) 's account of narrative framing. More broadly, it offers a theoretical basis for examining how textual meaning may be reconfigured through successive stages of mediation rather than through a single act of translation alone.

The small body of work on Vietnamese literature in translation reinforces these limitations. Taylor's (2020) cultural study of *Truyện Kiều* traces how the text's meaning evolves across languages and historical moments, offering valuable insights into how Vietnamese classics are incorporated into world literature. Yet the study is historical and interpretive, with little concern for micro-linguistic shifts. There have been a few minor studies that have discussed Bao Ninh's *The Sorrow of War* in translation, specifically the version produced by Frank Palmos (1994/1998), (Skinnell, 2009; A. Ng, 2014; Sehnal, 2021; Oktaviani, 2022b; Ngan & Thu Hang, 2025). However, most of them look into the novel from the literary perspective or often analyse metaphor, stylistic device, or reporting strategies. These studies are conceptually useful but tend to treat the novel as a single translated text, overlooking the fact that it exists in two distinct English versions: Phan Thanh Hao's 1992 translation and Frank Palmos's 1994 edited version. This neglect points to a clear empirical gap: no research to date has conducted a systematic comparative study of the two translations, despite their importance in shaping international reception of Vietnamese war narratives. More broadly, this reflects a contextual gap in translation studies, where Vietnamese war literature remains underrepresented compared to American narratives of the same conflict.

The present study is not concerned with indirect translation in the conventional sense of a translation produced from an intermediary translation. Nevertheless,

scholarship on indirect translation remains relevant because it highlights the existence of mediation chains that challenge simple source-target models of textual transfer. Rosa et al. (2017)'s distinction between an ultimate source text, a mediating text, and an ultimate target text is relevant here. While TT2 cannot be classified as an indirect translation since it was produced through editorial rewriting within the same language rather than through interlingual translation, the distinction between source text and mediating text provides a useful conceptual parallel for understanding the relationship between the Vietnamese source text, Phan Thanh Hao's English translation, and Frank Palmos's subsequently mediated version. Following Rosa et al. (2017), TT1, therefore, can be treated not only as an interlingual translation but also as a mediating text situated between the Vietnamese source text and the later English version produced under Frank Palmos's editorial mediation.

2.3.3. The Role of Translated Literature

The recognition of literary translation as a form of mediated rewriting also raises broader questions concerning the status of translated texts within receiving cultures. If translation produces new textual configurations shaped by cultural, ideological, and literary constraints (Venuti & Baker, 2000), then translated works cannot be regarded merely as secondary reflections of source texts. Rather translated literature constitutes an active component of literary and cultural systems, participating in the circulation of narratives, the introduction of new literary models, and the negotiation of cultural values. Understanding the role of translated literature therefore requires attention not only to the processes through which translations are produced but also to the positions they occupy within the receiving literary environment.

This systemic dimension is mostly influentially theorized in Even-Zohar's polysystem theory, which conceptualizes literature as a dynamic "system-of-systems" composed of competing genres, tendencies, and cultural repertoires (Even-Zohar, 2021). Within this framework, translated literature is not peripheral by definition but forms an integral subsystem whose status depends on its relationship to other components of the target literary system. The significance of this perspective

lies in its rejection of the traditional view of translation as a derivative or marginal activity. Instead, translated literature is understood as a potentially transformative force capable of influencing literary development, introducing new models of representation, and reshaping cultural frameworks.

According to Even-Zohar (2021), translated literature may occupy either a central or peripheral position within a literary polysystem, although its position may also vary across different segments of the same system. When translated literature occupies a central position, it may function as an innovative force: boundaries between translated and non-translated writing may become blurred, leading writers may engage in translation, and translated works may contribute to new repertoires, including “new models of reality”, poetic language, and compositional techniques. Conversely, when translated literature is peripheral, it tends to rely on established target-culture models and may become more conservative, conforming to dominant literary conventions rather than challenging them.

This distinction is important because the position of translated literature has consequences for translational norms, behaviours, and policies. When translated literature is central, translators may be more willing, or more culturally enabled, to depart from domestic conventions and produce translations closer to the source text in terms of adequacy. When it is peripheral, translators are more likely to rely to ready-made target models, resulting in more acceptability-oriented outcomes (Even-Zohar, 2021). Translation therefore becomes an activity shaped by historically situated cultural relations rather than by fixed linguistic principles.

Polysystem theory has been widely regarded as one of the foundations of the descriptive turn in Translation Studies. Gentzler (2001) characterized Even-Zohar’s model as a significant advance because it shifts attention away from equivalence-based approaches that dominates earlier linguistic approaches (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1958; Nida, 1964; Catford, 1965; Newmark, 1981; Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995) to the position and function of translations within the target literary system. Although polysystem theory has been highly influential, it has not escaped criticism. Gentzler (2001) points out that the Even-Zohar’s model tends to privilege abstract systemic relationships at the expense of the concrete social, institutional, and professional

constraints that shape translation in practice. Related concerns have also been raised regarding the difficulty of empirically determining the position of translated literature within a polysystem and the extent to which the model can claim objective explanatory power. Nevertheless, its emphasis on the cultural and historical contexts of translation remains highly valuable. For the present study, polysystem theory is employed not as a predictive model but as a conceptual framework for understanding how the position of translated literature may influence translational orientations and the circulation of literary representations across cultures.

2.3.4. Descriptive Translation Studies

Building on polysystem theory's emphasis on the cultural and historical contexts of translation, Toury's Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) seeks to explain how translational behaviour is shaped by the norms operating within receiving cultures. Rather than evaluating translations against prescriptive notions of correctness or equivalence, DTS investigates what translations actually do and the regularities that characterize translational practice in particular socio-cultural contexts (Toury, 2012).

Within Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS), translation is conceptualised as a culturally embedded and historically contingent act rather than a timeless reproduction. Toury (2012) insisted that even where two translations appear linguistically identical, they differ in meaning, function, or interpretation if produced at distinct times or in varied cultures, which is a point that supports the broader view of translation as historically situated (Chesterman, 1997). DTS corresponds to a descriptive, empirical, explanatory approach that examines actual translation behavior and the underlying norms that govern it, as well as providing the methodology to investigate them. Consequently, the translation strategies, ST-TT relationships, and even prescriptive and evaluative claims about equivalence are treated as objects of investigation rather than basic assumptions to be upheld (Toury, 1981). In this respect, DTS provides the theoretical foundation for this thesis, where translation shifts are not judged as 'right' or 'wrong', but described and explained in terms of cultural and linguistic patterns.

Toury's key concepts of 'adequacy' and 'acceptability' are particularly relevant. 'Adequacy' refers to the degree to which a translation adheres to the source text and its context, focusing on fidelity and precision in representing the original text. 'Acceptability', on the other hand, refers to how well the translation adheres to the linguistic and cultural norms of the target language, ensuring that the translated text is fluent and comprehensible to its readers of the receiving system (Toury, 2012). The significance of this distinction lies in recognizing that translational decisions are shaped by competing pressures originating from both source and target systems. Adequacy and acceptability therefore function as analytical tendencies rather than mutually exclusive categories.

These concepts are pivotal in Toury's framework as they illuminate the translator's decision-making process and the strategies adopted, based on whether the priority is to remain faithful to the source text or to meet the expectations and norms of the target culture. However, Toury also asserted that a translation will never be either wholly adequate or entirely acceptable. Rather, it will exhibit mixed orientations, allowing researchers to map translation as a negotiation between source-oriented and target-oriented pressures. This continuum is central to the present study because the two English versions of *The Sorrow of War* display contrasting tendencies: Phan Thanh Hao's version is interpreted as leaning toward adequacy, while Frank Palmos's edited version is oriented more strongly towards acceptability. This distinction is conceptually comparable to Newmark's (1981, 1988) semantic versus communicative translation. Semantic translation prioritises fidelity to the source text's precise meaning, form, and cultural nuances, aiming to preserve authorial intent. Communicative translation, on the other hand, prioritises the impact on the target audience, striving to achieve an effect equivalent to that of the original. The distinction is particularly useful for analysing literary translation because it enables researchers to relate recurring linguistic choices to broader translational orientations.

Toury's methodological contribution lies in his presentation of a three-phase model for systemic Descriptive Translation Studies (Munday, 2022). First, the text is

situated within the target culture system to observe its significance or acceptability. Secondly, a textual analysis of the ST and TT is undertaken in order to identify relationships between corresponding segments, called ‘coupled pairs’ in Toury’s terms. This allows for the identification of translation shifts, whether ‘obligatory’ and ‘non-obligatory’. In the final phase, recurring patterns are generalized to reconstruct the overall process of translation for that ST-TT (coupled) pair. This systematic approach is particularly relevant to the present study, which seeks to trace how Bao Ninh’s *The Sorrow of War* is reshaped or reconfigured in English through recurring linguistic shifts, then interprets these shifts as indicators of norm-governed behaviour.

Toury (2012) further conceptualized translational behaviour in terms of norms, understood as socially shared regularities that guide decision-making throughout the translation process. He also emphasized that translators operate primarily in the interest of the culture into which they are translating, however that interest is conceived. The extent to which features of a ST are retained in a particular translation is thus shaped by the interests, norms, and expectations of the target culture. What linguistic, stylistic, or cultural features of the original text are preserved depends on the target culture’s expectations, not solely the translator’s personal choice. Whether something is deemed important to retain (e.g. metaphor, tone, stylistic style) is fundamentally a target-oriented decision.

Toury (2012) distinguished three broad categories: initial, preliminary, and operational norms. The initial norm concerns a translator’s overall orientation towards either source-text norms or target-culture norms, corresponding to the continuum between adequacy and acceptability. Rather than representing mutually exclusive categories, these orientations describe the relative weight given to source- and target-oriented pressures in particular translational situations (Lambert & Van Gorp, 2014). In this respect, DTS shifts attention away from individual preference and towards the socio-cultural conditions that shape translational behaviour. Preliminary norms operate at a more systemic level and concern translation policy and the directness of translation. They help explain why certain texts are selected for translation and under what conditions they circulate across cultures. Such norms resonate with Lefevere’s (2016) notion of rewriting by highlighting the role of

institutional, ideological, and patronage-related factors in shaping translational activity. Operational norms govern decisions within the translation process itself. Toury (2012) distinguished matricial norms, which regulate textual segmentation, omission, addition, and relocation, from textual-linguistic norms, which guide the selection of linguistic forms in the target text. These categories provide a useful analytical framework for identifying recurrent translation patterns and relating them to broader translational orientations.

The publication and subsequent editorial mediation of *The Sorrow of War* may be viewed as processes influenced by broader institutional, commercial, and cultural considerations, illustrating the kinds of factors that Toury associates with preliminary norms. While Toury's framework has been highly influential, it has also attracted criticism. Scholars have noted that norms are inferred retrospectively from textual regularities and therefore remain interpretive constructs rather than directly observable phenomena (Hermans, 2014; Munday, 2022). Others argue that DTS is particularly effective in describing what translators do but less successful in explaining why particular choices acquire specific ideological or cultural meanings (Pym, 2023). Consequently, many contemporary studies supplement DTS with interpretive frameworks capable of accounting for the broader consequences of translational behaviour.

The continuing influence of DTS can be observed in a range of empirical studies that combine descriptive translation theory with linguistic analysis to investigate translational behaviour in literary texts. Elyono's (2014) Ph.D. thesis on the English translations of Pramoedya Ananta Toer's Novel *Perburuan* serves as a prime example of a descriptive-qualitative case study in translation studies. It innovatively combines micro-level analysis using Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) with macro-level insights from descriptive theories, and translator interviews. This framework successfully establishes how macro factors influence a translator's choices and provides a new model for descriptive studies. Similarly, Yin Ng's (2009) doctoral thesis on four Chinese translations of Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* successfully integrates SFL's transitivity model with corpus analysis and sociohistorical research to provide a holistic and data-driven account of translators'

stylistic choices and ‘discursive presence’. Extending this empirical approach, Abualadas’s (2015) Ph.D. thesis, ‘*A Linguistically-oriented Approach to Literary Translation: A Comparative Pragmatic Study of Three Arabic Renditions of the English Novel Wuthering Heights*’ serves as a vital example of a descriptive-qualitative case study. By systematically analysing the pragmatic shifts in three different translations, it illustrates how to move beyond subjective analysis to provide a more scientific account of translational behavior. These studies exemplify the potential of combining descriptive translation theories with systemic linguistic analysis. However, neither focuses on war narratives or trauma, limiting their direct relevance to the present research context.

2.3.5. Domestication and Foreignisation

Cultural approaches to translation frequently conceptualise translational choices in terms of how cultural difference is managed as text move across linguistic and cultural boundaries. Katan (2012), for example, distinguished between approaches that minimize perceived difference in order to facilitate reception and those that preserve or foreground difference as a means of exposing readers to alternative cultural perspectives. Specifically, he noted that “transcreation” may involve significant addition and the strategic use of familiar cultural material, yet still aims to enable readers to enter and experience the strangeness of a new textual world rather than simply erasing foreignness; by contrast, “localization” is described as seeking to eliminate traces of the source culture through extensive adaptation of content and presentation. This formulation broadens the discussion beyond a simple binary opposition and highlights the variety of strategies through which translators negotiate cultural distance. At the same time, it points towards a more influential distinction in contemporary Translation Studies: Venuti’s domestication – foreignization continuum, which frames the management of cultural difference as both a translational and an ethical issue.

Venuti’s framework reframes target-oriented acceptability as domestication (Venuti & Baker, 2000; Venuti, 2017). Venuti posited that the meaning of a text is inherently unstable and cannot be faithfully reproduced in a different cultural context.

He argued that translation is always an intervention, a selective and interpretive act that yields not an equivalent but an approximation or representation of the foreign text, embedded within the target culture. Domestication and foreignisation are presented as ethical attitudes toward cultural difference that operate at both macro levels (selection and position of texts) and micro levels (specific strategies during translation).

Domestication, according to Venuti, represents the dominant translation strategy, particularly prevalent in British and American translation cultures. This approach involves a form of ‘ethnocentric reduction’ of the foreign text, wherein it is transformed to align seamlessly with the cultural norms, values, and linguistic conventions of the receiving culture. The goal of domestication is to produce a translation that reads as transparent, fluent, and in essence, ‘invisible’, thereby minimizing any sense of foreignness for the target audience. This strategy often encompasses the careful selection of source texts that are more amenable to such assimilation, frequently aligning with the existing literary canons and commercial interest of target culture (Venuti, 2017). Venuti critically viewed this widespread practice as a form of appropriation, arguing it subtly imposes the values, norms, and expectations of the target culture (often Anglo-American) onto the original text, thereby masking the foreign aspects and potentially contributing to a form of cultural imperialism by extending the global hegemony of English (Venuti & Baker, 2000).

Conversely, foreignization represents a deliberately resistant alternative. Rather than assimilating the source text to dominant target-culture norms, it seeks to preserve aspects of its linguistic and cultural distinctiveness. Venuti (2017) emphasized that foreignization should not be equated with literalism. Instead, it involves translation choices that maintain a degree of cultural and textual foreignness while remaining intelligible to target readers. Such choices may include the retention of culture-specific references, unconventional stylistic features, or linguistic patterns that signal the text’s foreign origin. By disrupting expectations of transparency and fluency, foreignizing translation seeks to make both the foreign text and the translator’s mediating role more visible, encouraging readers to engage critically with cultural difference rather than consume it as familiar or unproblematic.

Importantly, domestication and foreignization are not rigid binary opposites but rather exist as poles on a continuum of translation strategies. They pertain to a spectrum of ethical and ideological choices made by the translator with the aim of either expanding or conforming to the receiving culture's range of literary expression. Even foreignization, while striving for resistance, ultimately operates within the confines of the target culture's norms, as its visibility is predicated precisely on its departure from those dominant values. Nevertheless, Venuti strongly advocated for foreignizing translations, viewing them as a vital means to resist the homogenizing effects of dominant translation practices and to foster a more ethical engagement with cultural difference. Venuti himself explicitly condemned market-driven and hegemonic translation strategies in the Anglo-American world, arguing that their tendency to domesticate foreign texts by eradicating cultural specificities for a smooth reading experience helps to bolster the international power of Anglo-American values.

Despite its considerable influence, Venuti's framework has attracted criticism. Scholars have also questioned the conceptual stability of foreignization and the tendency to treat domestication and foreignization as overarching categories for describing complex translations. As Myskja (2013) observed, translations frequently combine both source-oriented and target-oriented tendencies, making any overall classification necessarily provisional. Moreover, the values associated with domestication and foreignization should be understood as culturally variable and historically contingent rather than universally fixed Munday (Munday, 2022). What appears foreignizing in one literary system or historical period may not necessarily function in the same way in another. Foreignizing strategies also do not necessarily produce resistant or anti-hegemonic effects, since they may sometimes reinforce exoticized representations of the source culture. Nevertheless, domestication and foreignization remain valuable as a heuristic tool for examining how translations negotiate cultural difference and position themselves in relation to dominant target-culture norms.

While Venuti's concepts fundamentally address broad ethical and ideological orientations, their manifestations are ultimately realised through textual choices. As

House (1997) suggested, ideological positioning in translation cannot be examined independently of linguistic analysis. Questions concerning domestication and foreignization therefore become meaningful only when linked to specific lexical, grammatical, stylistic, and discursive patterns through which cultural difference is represented, modified, or suppressed.

The usefulness of this perspective can be seen in studies that apply domestication and foreignization to literary translation. Elnaili (2014), for example, examined different translation of *The Arabian Nights* and showed how translator's decisions were shaped by audience expectations and representational objectives. The study demonstrates the relevance of domestication and foreignization for understanding translational mediation and the construction of cultural images, although it remains primarily conceptual and offers limited systematic analysis of the linguistic mechanisms through which such orientations are realised. A more empirically oriented application of Venuti's framework is provided by Alharbi (2019), who examined the Arabic translation of selected Harry Potter novels through the treatment of idioms and neologisms. Using comparative textual analysis supplemented by reader interviews, the study found that domestication and foreignization frequently coexisted within the same translation, with domestication predominating in the rendering of idioms and foreignization being more common in the translation of neologisms. The findings suggest that translational orientations are not necessarily uniform across a text but may vary according to textual features, communicative purposes, and readership expectations. The study further highlights the influence of extra-textual factors, including publishing considerations, reading habits, and educational objectives, on translators' decisions. While conducted in a different literary and cultural context, Alharbi's research demonstrates the usefulness of domestication and foreignization as analytical tools for examining how translations negotiate cultural difference through specific linguistic choices.

2.4. Translation as Re-Narration

2.4.1. Baker's Narrative Turn in Translation Studies

Building upon the understanding of the translator's discursive presence, Baker (Baker, 2014; Baker, 2018) integrated narrative theory into Translation Studies. What

distinguishes Baker's contribution is her shift from describing translational behaviour to explaining how translations participate in the construction and circulation of social meanings. Her approach responds to what she identified as a theoretical limitation in models such as norm theory or Venuti's dichotomies of domestication and foreignization. While these frameworks are valuable for describing regularities of translational behaviour and cultural positioning, they do not always capture the full interplay between texts, social contexts, institutional conditions and ideological contestation that shapes meaning in translation (Baker, 2007; Baker, 2018). Rather than focusing primarily on norms, equivalence, or textual transfer, Baker's narrative theory examines how translation contributes to the formation, maintenance, and transformation of shared understandings of events, identities, and relationships.

Baker's approach begins from the premise that conflict is not an exceptional condition but a normal feature of social life, and that people make sense of conflict through narratives. Drawing on social communication theory, she argued that narratives are dynamic entities, constantly evolving as people are exposed to new stories daily. Consequently, during the process of translation, original texts are rendered into other languages, making them inherently liable to re-narration rather than mere reproduction. In other words, the text is inevitably repositioned within new linguistic, cultural and institutional environments (Baker, 2014; 2018). This understanding shifts the focus from a problematic debate of faithfulness and neutrality towards acknowledging the translator's inevitable engagement in reshaping texts in relation to situated experiences, interpretive frameworks, and communicative pressures.

2.4.2. Narrative Features and Ethical Accountability

Baker's emphasis on the narrative consequences of translation resonates with earlier work by O'Sullivan (2003), who argued that translators are not merely transmitters of narrative but also occupy a narratorial position within the translated text. O'Sullivan advances socio-cultural dimension of narrative framing with concept of the 'voice of the narrator of the translation'. This voice represents the translator's discursive presence, distinct from the source text's narrator, and manifests through

specific textual choices. These textual interventions, according to O’Sullivan, are not arbitrary but they reflect the implied translator’s understanding of what is considered appropriate, understandable, or desirable for the target audience within their socio-cultural context.

Baker (2014) distinguished ‘narrative’ from ‘discourse’, noting that narrative is less abstract and more effective in capturing the relationship between individual and shared perspectives. This makes it particularly suitable for examining how meaning is constructed and contested in translation. In her application of narrative theory to Translation Studies, Baker (2018) drew on a set of core categories that illuminate the ways in which narratives are constructed and function: selective appropriation, temporality, relationality and causal employment.

Selective appropriation is involved in the decision to include or exclude, and to background or foreground, any narrative element, including events, details within events, and the way in which a protagonist is identified by particular attributes rather than others. For example, Muslims are often identified simply as Muslims in British media rather than by reference to their profession (Moore et al. 2008, as cited in Baker 2018). This involves a decision to foreground one aspect of identity while backgrounding others, with consequences for how the overall narrative is configured and received.

Temporality refers to the embeddedness of narratives in time and space and highlights the fact that all narratives are temporally and spatially constituted. In other words, every narrative takes place within a certain time frame and setting, and this embeddedness influences how the story is told, understood and interpreted, for example the story may unfold chronologically or non-linearly (through flashbacks, memories or time shifts).

Relationality, the third core characteristic of narrative, means that individual elements (events, characters, linguistic items, layout, imagery, etc.) derive their meaning from the overall narrative within which they are configured as building blocks. This means that meaning cannot be transferred intact, without modification, and assumed to function in the same way within another narrative. Relationality also

has practical implications for translators, such as the challenge of rendering a dialect or register as an index of social standing, level of education, or age group in a new linguistic system.

Most importantly, every narrative has a distinct pattern of causal emplotment, and it is this pattern that gives significance to the individual items and events configured within it. Narrative items take on narrative meaning only when they are emplotted, when the narrator has engaged in the crucial process of weighting them and signalling what links obtain between them rather than simply listing them randomly and ‘neutrally’, without indicating relationships such as cause and effect, praise and blame, who or what is responsible for certain events unfolding, and so on. Causal emplotment therefore provides a key mechanism through which narratives assign significance and shape readers’ interpretive orientation.

Although analytically distinct, these features are closely interconnected. Selective appropriation determines what narrative elements are foregrounded or suppressed; temporality and relationality shape how those elements are connected across time, space, and social relationships; and causal emplotment assigns significance by organizing them into meaningful patterns. Collectively, these categories demonstrate that narrative framing arises not simply from individual linguistic choices but from the relationships established among events, participants, and interpretive perspectives. For translation studies, this is important because it shifts attention away from isolated lexical equivalence and towards the broader processes through which narratives are maintained, modified, or reconfigured in new communicative settings.

Within this framework, Baker (2018) underscored the fundamental ethical dilemma faced by translators and interpreters in every assignment: whether to reinforce the dominant ideologies embedded in the narratives they are conveying, or to distance themselves from those ideologies, potentially by refusing to engage with the text or context altogether. Beyond this binary choice, practitioners adopt a range of strategies to either emphasize or subvert specific elements of the narratives they mediate. These strategies enable them to either align themselves with or detach

themselves from the ideological stance of the original speaker or author. Drawing on Harding's (2012, as cited in Baker, 2019) analysis of translated reporting on the Beslan hostage crisis, Baker noted that translation may amplify dominant narratives while weakening or eliminating more complex and multivocal account. Translation therefore has consequences not only for textual form but also for whose voices are heard and how events are understood.

Taken together, O'Sullivan's emphasis on translator positioning and Baker's account of narrative construction challenge the notion of translation as neutral transfer. Both perspectives suggest that translator inevitably participate in shaping how events, identities, and relationships are understood. Translation therefore functions not merely as linguistic mediation but as a form of narrative intervention through which meanings are reconfigured for new audiences and contexts.

The implications of this perspective extend beyond individual translation decisions. If translation is understood as a process of narrative mediation, then the circulation of literature across languages becomes a site where competing cultural memories, historical interpretations, and ideological positions are negotiated. This issue is particularly significant in the case of Vietnamese literature in English translation, where relatively limited international visibility increases the importance of translational and editorial mediation. While English literary works have been widely translated into Vietnamese, often generating multiple co-existing versions that reflect shifting norms, ideologies, and readership expectations, Vietnamese literature in English translation remains comparatively scarce, reinforcing what Even-Zohar describes as the peripheral positioning of "minor" literatures in global circulation. From a polysystem perspective, such peripheral positioning is significant not only because it affects the visibility of translated works, but also because it may influence the forms of mediation through which those works become accessible to international readers. Translation therefore carries cultural and scholarly significance for Vietnamese writing because it creates opportunities for alternative representations of the Vietnam War to circulate internationally while simultaneously exposing those representations to the interpretive pressures of global literary markets. In this respect,

The Sorrow of War may be viewed as occupying a distinctive position within the English-language reception of Vietnam War literature by introducing perspectives that differ from many established American-centred narratives of the conflict.

At the same time, attention to the role of translated literature also clarifies why translated Vietnamese war narratives may be strongly mediated in order to secure international visibility. Translation enables cultural memory to circulate beyond national boundaries and can reshape global perceptions of Vietnam, particularly where literature supplies perspectives marginalized in dominant war representations (Heberle, 2009; Pham, 2011). Yet the translated corpus also raises methodological questions for the present thesis: Vietnamese war literature in English is frequently mediated not only by translators but also by editors and publishers, creating conditions in which Vietnamese cultural memory may be reconstructed or reframed for Anglophone readership. This contextual backdrop supports treating the two English versions of *The Sorrow of War* not simply as interchangeable renderings, but as products shaped by distinct positions, functions, and constraints within receiving systems.

2.4.3. Baker's Narrative Framing Strategies

Baker (2014) argued that re-narration is realized through framing, understood as the selective organization of experience that shapes interpretation. Translators inevitably frame narratives through textual choices that foreground certain aspects of reality while backgrounding others. Baker (2018) thus positioned translators and interpreters as ethically and ideologically accountable for the texts they produce, asserting that their work, whether consciously or not, participates in the construction, negotiation, and contestation of social reality. Central to her argument is the concept of framing, which she defines as a deliberate and agentive act through which translators shape how a text is interpreted. Framing, in her view, is not simply a stylistic choice but a deliberate, ethically charged strategy that profoundly influences how reality is constructed and perceived through translation. Framing is not accidental: it reflects ideological, cultural, institutional, and communicative pressures.

In Baker's framework, framing is understood as a set of discursive strategies through which translators and interpreters re-narrate events and participants, thereby aligning the translated text with particular interpretive positions or distancing it from others. Rather than implying deliberate manipulation, framing is seen as an inherent feature of mediation, reflecting the ways in which translators inevitably foreground, background or reorganize meanings in the process of textual reconstruction. Baker (2018) identified a number of recurrent framing strategies that are particularly relevant to literary translation as the case of the present study as follows:

- (1) Temporal and spatial framing refers to the re-contextualisation of a narrative within different temporal or spatial coordinates. Through shifts in deixis, temporal reference or setting, a translated text may be positioned in closer proximity to contemporary discourse or cultural frames of relevance, even when the original narrative unfolds in a different historical or geographical context.
- (2) Framing through selective appropriation encompasses patterns of addition, omission and condensation that result in the differential foregrounding or suppression of narrative material. Such re-distribution of textual detail does not merely affect information density, but may re-orient the reader's engagement with particular aspects of the narrative world by privileging certain experiential or moral focal points over others.
- (3) Framing by labelling involves the strategic use of lexical choices in naming and referring to people, groups, institutions, places or events. Through practices such as re-naming, euphemism, specification or generalization, translators may reshape the evaluative load or social positioning attached to narrative actors, with potential implications for how relationships and alignments are constructed in the target text.
- (4) Repositioning of participants concerns shifts in the relative prominence, responsibility, and perspective assigned to narrative actors. Through changes in agency and participant configuration, translated texts may redistribute attention, responsibility, or alignment among characters and social groups.

In the present thesis, these strategies are not treated as automatic indicators of intentional ideological intervention. Rather, they function as descriptive categories

that provide an interpretive lens for understanding how textual and experiential meanings may be re-organised across successive stages of mediation in the same war narrative. While Toury's framework accounts for the regularity and direction of translational behaviours through norms, which are operationalised through transitivity analysis, Baker's model elucidates the narrative consequences of those norm-governed regularities; in other words, how war reality is re-narrated through patterned shifts that guide reader alignment, reshape agency, and restructure experiential meaning. This interpretive layering corresponds directly to the analytic movement in Chapter 5, where recurrent linguistic shifts are first synthesized as norm profiles and then interpreted in terms of framing effects (cf. Tables 5.13 and 5.14).

Because framing is realized through patterned textual choices, the present study turns to SFL transitivity as a systematic model for making re-narration empirically observable at clause level, specifically through shifts in process types, participant roles, and circumstantial configuration across a two-stage mediation.

2.5. SFL Transitivity as Experiential Representation

2.5.1. Clause as Representation

Rosenberg (1974) and Fuchs (1999) both viewed language as a representational system through which human experience is organized and interpreted. While Rosenberg emphasized the symbolic and translatable nature of linguistic representation, Fuchs highlighted the role of language-specific semantic and cognitive structures in shaping how reality is construed. Generally, these perspectives support a constructivist understanding of language in which meaning is not a direct reflection of reality but a culturally and cognitively mediated representation of experience.

Halliday and Matthiessen (2013) asserted that language functions as a resource for construing human experience through the ideational metafunction. At clause level, experience is represented through configurations of processes, participants, and circumstances, which together model events, actions, states, perceptions, and relationships. Processes constitute the centre of experiential representation since the ideational meta-function addresses the fundamental question: "*what is happening?*",

while participants and circumstances specify who or what is involved and under what conditions experience unfolds. In this sense, the clause functions as a representation of reality and experiential meaning becomes analytically accessible through transitivity analysis. The element of process is typically realized by verbal group, participant by nominal group and circumstance adverbial group or prepositional phrase. These are organized in configurations or clauses that provide the models or schemata for construing our experience of what goes on. For the purposes of the present study, the importance of this model lies in its capacity to make experiential representation analytically observable at clause level. Rather than treating war as a thematic category alone, transitivity provides a systematic means of examining how actions, perceptions, identities, and circumstances are linguistically construed. This experiential model can be summarized through Simpson's (2003) formulation of transitivity as the question of "who or what does what to whom or what?".

Grounded in this view of linguistic representation, this study treats meaning as contextually and culturally mediated rather than as a transparent mirror of reality. Halliday's SLF transitivity system operationalises this constructivist notion at the clause level by modelling how human experience is linguistically encoded through processes, participants, and circumstances. It provides a systematic means of examining how language constructs events, actions, and relationships rather than merely reflecting them. Halliday's clause-based modelling of transitivity system is therefore particularly significant for war narratives because war reality is not only a representational content but also a patterned way of construing experience: brutality, trauma, memory, and conflict become legible through recurrent choices about what is presented as action versus state, whose consciousness is foregrounded, who is assigned agency, and how time/space is staged. This is particularly important for the present study, which examines how physical brutality, psychological trauma, collective memory, and geopolitical conflict are linguistically construed from the Vietnamese source text to successive stages of English mediation rather than simply reworded.

In the present study, transitivity is treated as a lexico-grammatical system in which experiential meaning emerges from the interaction between grammatical

configuration and lexical choice. Accordingly, shifts in process type, participant roles or circumstantial framing are analysed in relation to both structural patterning and semantic specification. This perspective is particularly relevant to war narratives, where subtle differences in the representation of violence, perception, responsibility, and temporality may significantly affect the interpretation of events across languages.

The usefulness of transitivity as a model of experiential representation has been demonstrated in translation research. For example, Liu and Li (2022) examined the translation of classical Chinese poetry and prose cited in political texts, using transitivity analysis to explore how experiential meaning is reproduced and modified in translation. Huang (2013), meanwhile, examined English-Chinese translations of literary texts, showing how shifts in process and participant configurations may alter the representation of agency, narrative perspective, and experiential meaning. While the study is primarily concerned with literary style and translator attitude rather than broader socio-cultural representation, it illustrates the value of transitivity as a tool for investigating how meaning is reconfigured in translation.

2.5.2. Representing Action, Event, and Violence: Process Types

Within SFL, the transitivity system is not restricted to the traditional grammatical sense of verbs taking objects; rather, it is concerned with how languages encode different types of processes, along with their characteristic participants and circumstances, thereby offering insight into how texts construe social and physical realities. Within war narratives, this question becomes particularly important because the experiential force of the narrative often depends upon how violence, suffering, memory, and responsibility are represented through different kinds of processes.

Halliday and Matthiessen (2013) distinguished six process types in the transitivity system: Material, Mental, Relational, Verbal, Behavioral, and Existential processes. Among these, Material, Mental and Relational processes constitute the principal resources for construing experience. For the purpose of the present study, these process types can be understood as alternative grammatical means of representing different dimensions of war reality.

Material processes construe actions and events in the physical world and therefore provide the most direct grammatical resource for representing combat,

bodily harm, destruction, movement, and military activity. Following Simpson (2003), material processes may be realised either as actions involving animate actors or as events in which change appears to occur without deliberate agency. This distinction is particularly relevant in war narratives, where violence may be represented either as the outcome of human action or as an impersonal occurrence. While material processes are especially important for representing physical brutality and military action mental and relational processes provide crucial resources for construing psychological trauma, memory, identity, and moral evaluation. Together, these process types allow war experience to be represented not only as external action but also as subjective and social reality. The subsidiary types of Behavioral, Verbal and Existential processes are analytically valuable as boundary or additional resources. Specifically, Behavioral processes can construe embodied manifestations that bridge internal response and external action, while Existential and Verbal processes offer resources for staging presence or absence (“there is/are”) and reporting (“saying”). These process options provide a systematic account of how war experience is distributed across action, consciousness, evaluation, embodiment, existence, and discourse, which is an account essential for tracking process-type shifts as a core component of translation and rewriting patterns. This is useful for translation analysis because shifts in process type may redistribute agency, foreground different aspects of experience, or alter the balance between action, perception, and evaluation. In this study, such distinctions are treated as lexico-grammatical, since the identification of process type depends not only on grammatical configuration but also on the lexical-semantic properties of the verb and its interaction with participants and circumstances.

Al Herz (2016) provided a useful illustration of how systematic linguistic analysis can be related to broader narrative effects in translation. Examining two Arabic translations of Coetzee’s *Waiting for the Barbarians*, the study demonstrates that recurrent shifts in linguistic patterning may reshape the representation of narrative participants, events, and perspectives. Although its primary concern is narrative viewpoint rather than experiential representation, the study highlights the

importance of linking micro-level linguistic choices to larger textual transformation. This insight is particularly relevant to the present study, which investigates how shifts in transitivity contribute to the reconstruction of war reality across stages of mediation.

In conclusion, the transitivity system provides a systematic framework for examining how different dimensions of war experience are linguistically construed through process choices. Rather than comparing two independent translations of the same source text, the present study traces the reconstruction of experiential meaning across a chain of mediation. Specifically, it examines how representation of violence, trauma, memory, and conflict are first translated from the Vietnamese source text into English, and then subsequently reshaped through editorial intervention. This perspective allows process-type shifts to be interpreted not only as translational choices but also as evidence of later rewriting and re-framing in narration.

2.5.3. Participant Configuration and the Distribution of Agency

If process type answers what kind of experience is being construed, participant configuration addresses who is made responsible for that experience and how agency and affectedness are distributed. Participants are the entities involved in the process of the clause, and each process type tends to be associated with characteristic participant roles. Material processes typically involve configurations such as Actor and Goal, Mental processes involve Senser and Phenomenon, while Relational processes are commonly realised through Carrier/ Attribute or Token/ Value relationships. In war narrative discourse, these configurations are not merely descriptive: they shape whether violence is construed as agentive (someone does something), as impersonal happening (things occur), or as a condition that settles on subjects (someone is something/ has something). Changes in participant configuration may therefore redistribute responsibility, victimhood, authority, and moral evaluation, particularly in narratives that represent violence, conflict, and political antagonism.

This participant-level modelling also provides the most direct linguistic route into analysing war reality as geopolitical conflict, where the naming and grammatical

positioning of collective actors may sharpen, soften, or obscure lines of opposition. Choices concerning whether participants are specified, generalized, collectivised, anonymized, or assigned particular participant roles influence how conflict relationships are represented and how readers are invited to interpret responsibility and alignment. By tracing patterns of who is repeatedly positioned as Actor versus Goal, when agency is backgrounded, and when actors are anonymised or collectivised, transitivity analysis becomes a systematic method for identifying how experiential meaning is lexically specified, generalized, or redistributed across successive stages of translation and editorial mediation. This is also the point at which Hallidayan transitivity intersects most directly with Baker's (2018) notions of participant repositioning and framing by labelling. Changes in participant configuration provide a formal linguistic basis for explaining shifts in alignment, responsibility, and perspective while the lexical specification of participants contributes to framing effects through naming and categorization. Together, these resources help account for narrative shifts that emerge in translated and rewritten texts.

2.5.4. Circumstantial Framing in Experiential Account

While process types and participant configurations determine the core representation of experience, circumstantial elements organize the experiential scene by specifying when, where, how, and under what conditions processes unfold. In Halliday and Matthiessen's (2013) transitivity model, circumstances occur freely across process types and contribute additional layers of experiential meaning by anchoring actions, perceptions, and states within particular temporal, spatial, and situational contexts. A circumstance can be thought of as a mini-process that attaches itself to a main process. In other words, a circumstantial process does not stand alone, but expands on the main action. Their significance is especially evident in war narratives, where representation depends not only on actions and actors but also on how events are situated in time and space through battlefield settings, postwar environments, recurring sites of memory, and shifts between past and present.

Circumstantial choices are particularly important for the representation of psychological trauma and collective memory, where temporal anchoring may

construe recurrence, persistence, and retrospective recollection, while spatial anchoring may materialize subjective experience through landscapes, locations, and sites associated with violence, loss, and remembrance. Circumstances therefore function not merely as background information but as resources for framing experience and directing readers' attention toward particular dimensions of reality.

The significance of circumstantial patterning can also be understood from the perspective of critical stylistics. Simpson (2003) argued that transitivity plays an important role in shaping textual worldviews by foregrounding certain aspects of experience while backgrounding others. Circumstantial choices contribute to this process by directing attention towards particular temporal, spatial, and situational dimensions of events, thereby influencing how readers interpret the experiential world constructed by a text.

For the present study, circumstantial patterning is treated as an experiential framing resource realised through lexical choices such as place naming, temporal specification, and evaluative modifiers. These resources operate alongside process selection and participant configuration to construct the four domains of war reality identified in this thesis. Temporal and spatial circumstances are particularly relevant to the representation of collective memory, psychological trauma and geopolitical conflict, while circumstances of location, extent, and manner may contribute to the construction of physical brutality. Examining circumstantial shifts therefore makes it possible to identify how experiential scenes are anchored, intensified, specified, or rendered more ambiguous across successive stages of translation and editorial mediation.

To sum up, process type, participant configuration, and circumstantial framing provide a coherent framework for analysing experiential representation through transitivity. These dimensions enable the systematic tracing of how experiential meaning is construed in the source text, reconstructed through interlingual translation and subsequently reshaped through editorial rewriting. This provides the analytical foundation for examining how war reality is represented and re-narrated across the Vietnamese source text, Phan Thanh Hao's English translation and Frank Palmos's edited version.

2.6. Research Gaps and Implications for the Present Study

Although the limitations identified above are evident in international translation scholarship, similar tendencies can also be observed in Vietnamese Translation Studies. Existing research has predominantly examined semantic, syntactic, stylistic, and functional correspondences between source and target texts. Research has examined issues such as grammatical equivalence, passive constructions, stylistic device, overt and covert translation strategies, and functional-pragmatic appropriateness (Luong, 2014; Trieu, 2018, 2019; Pham, 2021; Vu, 2023). While these studies provide valuable insights into translational decision-making and textual correspondence, they remain largely concerned with evaluating translation quality or identifying local shifts. Comparatively little attention has been devoted to how translation reconstructs experiential meaning, narrative representation, and ideological positioning, particularly in literary texts that have undergone successive stages of mediation. Moreover, the translation of Vietnamese literature into English remain underexplored, leaving important questions concerning the international circulation and reframing of Vietnamese cultural narratives insufficiently addressed.

These limitations are particularly evident in scholarship on *The Sorrow of War*. Existing studies have primarily examined the novel's treatment of trauma, postwar consciousness, and its significance withing Vietnamese and Vietnam War literature. While such research has generated important insights into the novel's thematic, historical, and cultural dimensions, little attention has been paid to the ways in which such representations are reconstructed through translation. The relationship between the Vietnamese source text, Phan Thanh Hao's translation, and Frank Palmos's edited version has received especially limited investigation. Consequently, there is a need for research that combines systematic linguistic analysis with translation-oriented frameworks to examine how representations of war reality are reproduced, modified, or reframed across successive stages of mediation. The present study addresses this gap through the integration of transitivity analysis, Descriptive Translation Studies, and narrative framing.

2.7. Integrated Framework of the Study

In response to the research gaps identified in the existing scholarship, this study develops an integrated framework for the present study. It first outlines the conceptual relationships between war reality, linguistic representation, translation, and rewriting before presenting the theoretical architecture through which these relationships are operationalised analytically.

Figure 2.1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

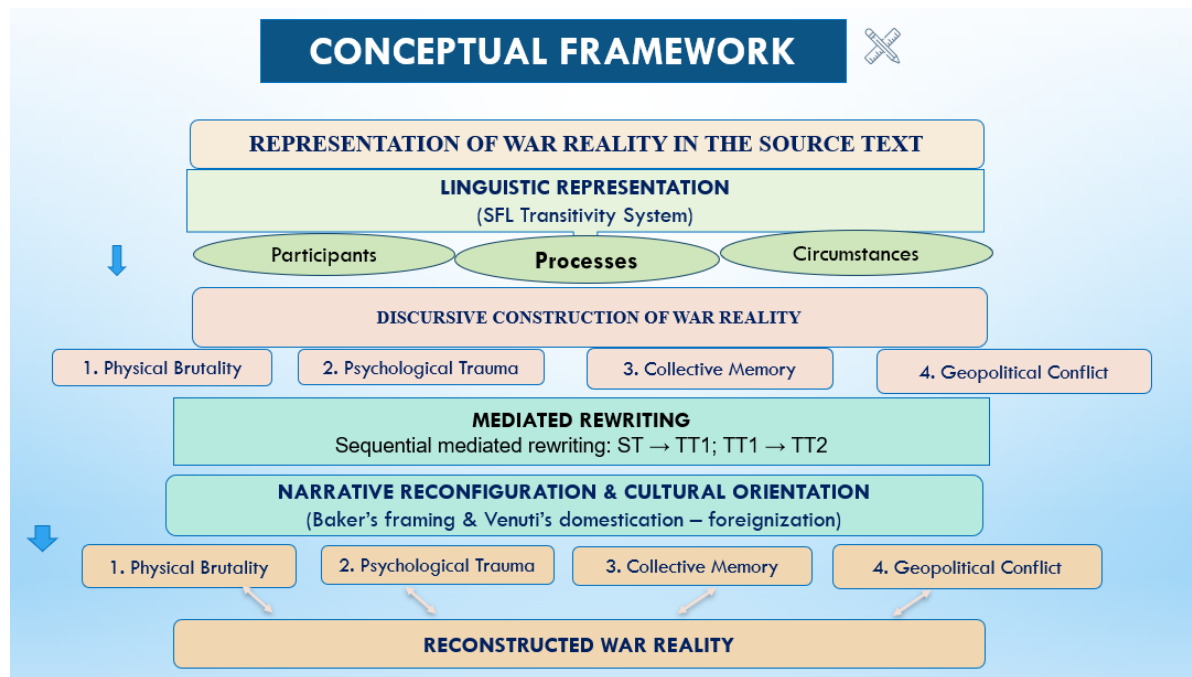


Figure 2.1 synthesizes the key constructs underpinning the study, modelling the representation of war reality in *Bảo Ninh's The Sorrow of War* across four experiential domains: physical brutality, psychological trauma, collective memory, and geopolitical conflict. These domains are treated as analytical abstractions of recurring representational patterns rather than pre-given thematic categories. War reality is conceptualised as a discursively constructed phenomenon that is initially realised through linguistic representation (SFL transitivity) in the source text and subsequently transformed through translation and editorial intervention. These mediating processes are treated as forms of rewriting that may reconfigure experiential meaning, narrative framing, and cultural orientation, resulting in reconstructed versions of war reality in TT1 and TT2.

While Figure 2.7.1 outlines the key conceptual relationships underpinning the study, it does not specify how these constructs are operationalized analytically. To address this, the following section develops a stratified theoretical framework that models how war reality is examined across the two stages of mediated rewriting.

Figure 2.2. Theoretical Framework of the Study

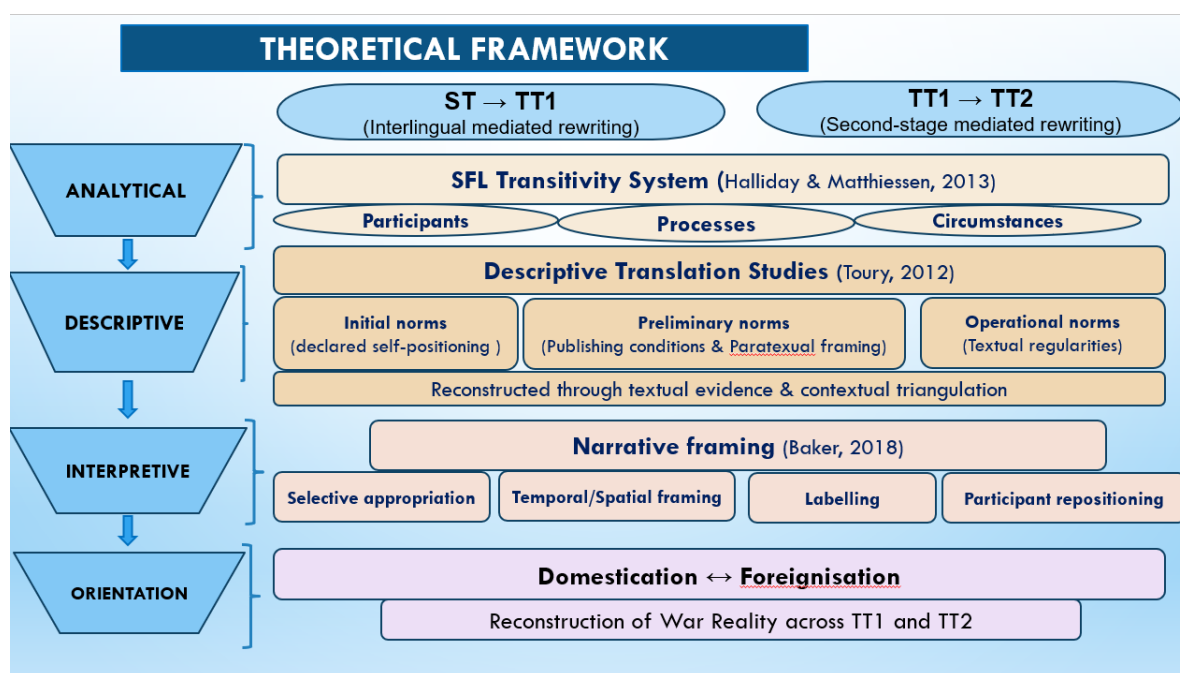


Figure 2.2 presents the layered analytical architecture guiding the study. It distinguishes two subsequential but analytically distinct trajectories: ST to TT1 (interlingual translation understood as a form of mediated rewriting) and TT1 to TT2 (second-stage mediated rewriting). Analysis proceeds through Systemic Functional Linguistics (transitivity) (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2013), Descriptive Translation Studies (Toury, 2012), narrative framing (Baker, 2018), and cultural orientation (Venuti, 2017) in order to account for the reconstruction of war reality across TT1 and TT2.

To clarify the integration of theoretical perspective, the study adopts a stratified architecture, as illustrated in Figure 2.7.2. At the highest level, the analysis is organized into two sequential but distinct trajectories: ST to TT1, conceptualised as ‘interlingual mediated rewriting’ (translation proper), and TT1 to TT2,

conceptualised as second-stage mediated rewriting (editorial intervention or transediting). These trajectories reflect the methodological position that TT2 is not analysed as a direct translation from the Vietnamese source text, but as a mediated rewriting of an already translated English version. At the analytical layer, the study draws on the transitivity system of Halliday and Matthiessen (2013) within Systemic Functional Linguistics to examine how experiential meaning is linguistically realised. Analysis focuses on processes, participants, and circumstances, through which war reality is construed and subsequently re-patterned across the two trajectories.

These micro-level patterns are then interpreted within the descriptive framework of Toury's Descriptive Translation Studies. Within this framework, Toury's concepts of norms provide a means of explaining recurrent translational behaviours. Initial, preliminary, and operational norms are reconstructed from textual and contextual evidence in order to account for the regularities underlying representational shifts across the two stages of mediation. Toury's model provides tools for identifying regularities of translational behaviours and reconstructing operational norms, whereas Baker's socio-narrative approach offers a means of interpreting the representational and ideological implications of those shifts. As Baker (2019) noted, socio-narrative theory is concerned less with recurring linguistic patterns than with how narratives are constructed, circulated and contested. Therefore, particular attention is paid to framing strategies, including selective appropriation, temporal and spatial framing, labelling, and participant repositioning, through which experiential meaning and narrative perspective are reconfigured across versions. The two frameworks then operate at complementary analytical levels: Toury explains recurring translational behaviours, whereas Baker provides a means of interpreting the narrative and ideological consequences of those behaviours. Finally, at the level of orientation, Venuti's domestication – foreignization continuum is employed to describe the cultural alignment of each version. Rather than functioning as a prescriptive dichotomy, this continuum serves as a descriptive lens for interpreting the degree to which each mediated version aligns with source-oriented or target-oriented norms.

Taken together, these layers enable a systematic account of how war reality is reconstructed across a chain of mediation extending from the Vietnamese source text to Phan Thanh Hao's translation and subsequently to Frank Palmos's edited version. This integrated framework demonstrates how experiential representation, norm-governed translational behaviour, narrative framing and cultural orientation interact across successive stages of rewriting, thereby providing the analytical foundation for the investigation presented in Chapters 4 and 5 of the present study.

2.8. Chapter Summary

This chapter has established the conceptual and theoretical foundations for investigating how war reality is represented, translated, and re-narrated across the Vietnamese source text and its two English versions of *The Sorrow of War*. The review has shown that war reality cannot be understood as a self-evident historical phenomenon but as a discursively constructed representation shaped by linguistic, narrative, cultural, and ideological choices. Scholarship on war literature, trauma narratives, memory, and Vietnam War writing has demonstrated that literary texts do not simply record conflict but actively construct particular understandings of violence, suffering, remembrance, and identity. Within this context, *The Sorrow of War* has been situated as a significant post-*Đổi Mới* war narrative whose representation of physical brutality, psychological trauma, collective memory, and geopolitical conflict provides the basis for the four experiential domains examined in the present study.

The chapter has further demonstrated that literary translation is most productively understood as a form of cultural mediation and rewriting. Drawing on polysystem theory, rewriting theory, mediated translation, Descriptive Translation Studies, and narrative theory, the review has shown that translated texts are not passive reproduction of source texts but sites of interpretation, negotiation, and recontextualization. Particular attention has been paid to the distinction between interlingual translation and subsequent editorial rewriting, establishing the methodological position that Phan Thanh Hao's translation and Frank Palmos's edited version constitute successive stages of mediation rather than two independent

translations of the Vietnamese source text. This perspective provides the rationale for analysing the trajectories of ST to TT1 and TT1 to TT2 as analytically distinct but interconnected processes of reconstruction.

The chapter has also established the integrated analytical framework adopted in the thesis. Toury's Descriptive Translation Studies provides the descriptive basis for identifying recurrent translational behaviour and reconstructing translational norms, while Baker's socio-narrative framework offers a means of interpreting the representational and ideological consequences of such shifts through processes of re-narration and framing. Venuti's domestication-foreignisation continuum further contributes an interpretive perspective on the cultural orientation of translated and rewritten texts. At the linguistic level, Hallidayan transitivity has been justified as the principal analytical framework for examining how experiential meaning is construed through process types, participant configurations, and circumstantial framing. Together, these dimensions provide a systematic means of tracing how war reality is first represented in the Vietnamese source text, reconstructed through interlingual translation, and subsequently reshaped through editorial rewriting.

Finally, the chapter has identified a number of interconnected gaps in existing scholarship. Previous research has rarely combined linguistic analysis with theories of rewriting and narrative framing. Studies of mediated translation and editorial intervention are also relatively limited. In addition, little attention has been paid to how war reality is reconstructed across the Vietnamese source text and its English versions. To address these limitations, Section 2.7 proposed an integrated framework that combines transitivity analysis, Descriptive Translation Studies, narrative framing and cultural orientation. This framework provides the conceptual and analytical foundation for the methodological procedures outlined in Chapter 3 and the empirical analyses presented in Chapters 4 and 5.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter sets out the methodological foundation of the study and explains how the analysis was designed, operationalised and implemented. It outlines the research paradigm and analytical orientation, the overall research design, the procedures for data selection and preparation, and the integrated analytical framework combining Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS), Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) transitivity analysis, narrative framing and cultural orientation.

3.2. Research Paradigm

A research paradigm provides the philosophical foundation that underpins all stages of an inquiry from the formulation of research questions to data interpretation (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Saunders, 2019). It encompasses assumptions about the nature of reality (ontology), the nature of knowledge (epistemology), and the appropriate ways of generating and investigating knowledge (methodology) (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Lincoln et al., 2011). The present study adopts an interpretivist paradigm, which aligns with the qualitative nature of the research and its focus on understanding how meaning is constructed, mediated and recontextualized through translation and rewriting.

Ontologically, reality is understood as socially and linguistically constructed rather than objectively given. Accordingly, this study does not treat “war reality” as a fixed historical referent, but as a discursive and experiential construct shaped through narrative organization and linguistic choices. War reality, as examined in this thesis, is therefore approached as a discursive construct that is textually construed in the Vietnamese source text and reconstructed across two English versions produced under different translational and editorial conditions. Accordingly, the study investigates two analytically distinct processes of mediation. The first concerns how war reality is reconstructed from the Vietnamese source text in Phan Thanh Hao’s interlingual translation. The second examines how that translated representation is subsequently modified, reorganised, and reframed through Frank Palmos’s editorial rewriting.

Within this paradigm, the two English versions of *The Sorrow of War* are not treated as derivative replicas of the source text, but as distinct textual artefacts with their own representational profiles, textual orientations, and narrative framings. This position is fully aligned with the descriptive orientation of the study: rather than evaluating translations in terms of accuracy or fidelity, the analysis seeks to explain how experiential meanings are redistributed and reframed through observable linguistic and structural shifts.

Epistemologically, interpretivism assumes that knowledge is contextual, situated, and dependent upon interpretation rather than direct observation of an objective reality. The aim of the study is therefore not to produce statistically generalizable findings, but to provide a systematic and empirically grounded interpretation of how mediation operates in specific textual instances. The interpretivist orientation is consistent with the use of transitivity analysis, which treats linguistic patterns not as objective indicators of reality but as resources through which experience is represented and interpreted within particular textual and cultural contexts. Interpretation in this study is evidence-driven: claims about textual orientation, narrative framing, and mediation are grounded in recurring clause-level patterns identified through SFL transitivity analysis, close textual comparison, and subsequently interpreted through the lenses of Descriptive Translation Studies, rewriting theory, and narrative framing. This stance justifies the integration of micro-linguistic analysis with macro-level explanatory and interpretive frameworks adopted in the study.

Finally, the researcher's bilingual and bicultural competence, familiarity with Vietnamese and Anglophone literary traditions, and awareness of the historical and ideological contexts of the Vietnam War constitute important interpretive resources for analysing culturally specific representations of war and their reconstructions across languages. Within an interpretivist paradigm, such positionality is not viewed as a threat to validity but as a condition for producing contextually sensitive and analytically informed interpretations. Reflexive awareness of this positionality supports a fine-grained reading of how war reality is linguistically and narratively mediated across languages and versions.

3.3. Research Approach and Design

3.3.1. Research Approach

This study adopts a predominantly qualitative research approach supplemented by descriptive quantitative techniques (Creswell & Clark, 2017; Litosseliti, 2024). Its primary orientation is qualitative and interpretive, grounded in close textual analysis of how war reality is experientially construed in the Vietnamese source text and subsequently reconstructed through interlingual translation and editorial rewriting.

Qualitative inquiry, as noted by many researchers (Dörnyei, 2007; Saldanha & O'Brien, 2014; Litosseliti, 2024; Tisdell et al., 2025), is particularly suited to research that aims to explore complex textual phenomena in depth and to understand how meaning is shaped within socio-cultural and discursive contexts. This qualitative emphasis is essential for examining how experiential meaning is patterned, reorganized and represented at clause level through process types, participant configurations, and circumstantial anchoring and for tracing how these micro-textual choices contribute to broader narrative organization and framing effects.

Quantitative techniques are employed in a supporting descriptive capacity, rather than as an end in themselves. Frequency counts and proportional distributions are used for a number of purposes. They help identify recurrent tendencies in transitivity patterning, map the relative prominence of process types and shift categories, and establish cross-domain regularities across the four operationalized domains of war reality (Physical Brutality, Psychological Trauma, Collective Memory, and Geopolitical Conflict). These numerical summaries are not treated as inferential evidence, nor are they used for statistical testing or prediction. Instead, they serve as descriptive indicators that support qualitative interpretation by foregrounding patterns that warrant closer analytical attention and by validating claims about norm-governed regularities across the two stages of mediation examined in the study.

Overall, this research adopts a theoretically informed and textually grounded approach in which analytical categories are derived from established frameworks

while interpretations are closely tied to the textual evidence. Qualitative analysis constitutes the primary mode of inquiry, while descriptive quantitative techniques are employed to identify recurrent patterns and support interpretive claims. This combination enables a systematic movement between detailed textual analysis and broader pattern identification, thereby enhancing analytical transparency while preserving interpretive depth. The approach is therefore fully aligned with the study's interpretivist paradigm and its emphasis on explaining how meaning is mediated, reframed, and redistributed through translation and editorial rewriting.

3.3.2. Research Design

The research design provides the structural plan that links the theoretical framework to the empirical analysis. To operationalize the theoretically informed and textually grounded approach adopted in this study, a descriptive, comparative and product-oriented case study research design (Saldanha & O'Brien, 2014; Creswell & Clark, 2017) is employed. The design treats the three separate cases of the Vietnamese source text (ST), Phan Thanh Hao's translation (TT1), and Frank Palmos's edited version (TT2) as interconnected stages within in a bounded system of textual mediation. It enables a systematic examination of how representations of war reality are reconstructed through interlingual translation and subsequently reshaped through editorial rewriting.

The study is descriptive in the sense articulated within Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS). Translation shifts are not evaluated as "correct" or "incorrect"; rather, they are systematically identified, treated as empirical observations, and interpreted as regularities of translational/editorial behaviour shaped by cultural, institutional, and communicative conditions. This stance is particularly important for the present design, which treats both interlingual translation (ST to TT1) and editorial rewriting (TT1 to TT2) as norm-governed practices.

The design is comparative, involving two stages of systematic comparison: ST to TT1 (interlingual literary translation) and TT1 to TT2 (editorial rewriting/mediated recontextualization). The two comparisons are treated as analytical distinct because they involve different forms of mediation: interlingual translation in the first stage and editorial rewriting in the second.

The design also incorporates a corpus-based component within an overall qualitative orientation. A small-scale purpose-built parallel corpus is employed from selected war-related passages of the Vietnamese source text and its two English versions. The corpus is aligned at clause-complex level and segmented into clause-process units, enabling systematic comparison of experiential representations across the two stages of mediation.

Within this design, analysis proceeds in a structured, multi-layered manner:

1. Micro-level identification of lexico-grammatical transitivity patterns and shifts (processes, participants, circumstances);
2. Descriptive generalization of recurrent patterns across representational domains;
3. Narrative-functional interpretation using Baker's framing strategies;
4. Interpretation of these patterns in terms of translational norms and cultural orientation (adequacy/acceptability; domestication/foreignization).

By combining descriptive, comparative, and corpus-based elements, this research design provides a transparent and systematic framework for operationalizing the theoretical model developed in Chapter 2 and for generating the empirical analyses presented in Chapters 4 and 5.

3.4. Research Method

3.4.1. Corpus Construction

The three texts were collected in their published forms. The Vietnamese ST and TT1 were both taken from the bilingual edition published in Vietnam by NXB Phụ nữ/Women's Publishing House (2005). This edition was selected because it provides the textual basis for the ST – TT1 comparison undertaken in the study. TT2 was taken from the Secker & Warburg/Vintage edition (1998). These editions were treated as the primary textual basis for analysis.

All three texts were first digitalised from their published editions. Printed copies were scanned into PDF format using a photocopier, after which the PDF files were converted into editable Microsoft Word documents through Adobe Acrobat. The resulting files were manually checked against the published editions to minimize

conversion errors and ensure textual accuracy. Only after the digital texts had been prepared was close reading undertaken to identify passages containing dense representations of war reality across the four domains of physical brutality, psychological trauma, collective memory, and geopolitical conflict.

The selected passages were then imported into Microsoft Excel, with one sentence per row to facilitate initial alignment. This served as the primary platform for corpus preparation, and data management. Text alignment was carried out manually rather than through automated corpus-alignment software. Subsequent segmentation was then carried out at clause-process level in accordance with the transitivity framework adopted in the study. TT1 and TT2 were subsequently aligned within a three-column parallel corpus structure (Column 1: ST; Column 2: TT1; Column 3: TT2). Given the relatively small size of the purpose-built corpus and the study's emphasis on clause-process level analysis, manual alignment enabled precise matching across the two stages of mediation (ST – TT1 and TT1 – TT2) and facilitated subsequent transitivity coding and comparative analysis.

While the corpus preserves correspondence across all three versions at clause-complex level, analytical comparison was conducted through two coupled pairs: ST – TT1 for the examination of interlingual translation and TT1 – TT2 for the examination of editorial rewriting. This alignment established the basis for subsequent clause-process segmentation and coding. Each clause-process unit was assigned a unique identifier and traced across the relevant paired comparisons. This enables a systematic examination of transitivity patterns, translation shifts, and editorial interventions. Similar procedures of corpus preparation and qualitative comparison were employed in an earlier pilot study (Vu, 2023).

Figure 3.1. Corpus design and data coding procedure (from data preparation to domain categorization)

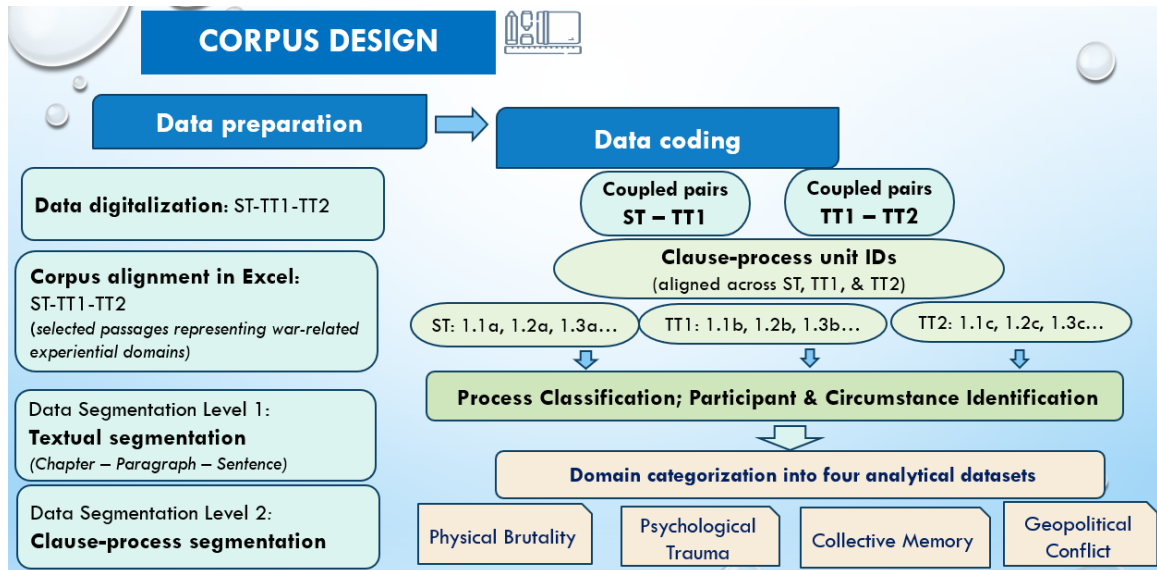


Figure 3.1 illustrates the corpus design and data coding workflow, showing how the texts were prepared, aligned, segmented, and coded into clause-process units across the two stages of mediation represented by the three textual versions. Following the clause-process coding, the extracted data were categorized into four analytical datasets corresponding to the four operationalised domains of war reality: physical brutality, psychological trauma, collective memory, and geopolitical conflict.

3.4.2. Corpus Scope

The four domains of war reality were identified through close reading of the source text informed by scholarship on war representation, trauma, memory, and Vietnam War literature discussed in Chapter 2. These domains were identified through close reading of the source text and provide the organizing framework for corpus selection and analysis. Rather than representing predetermined thematic categories, they function as analytical abstractions through which recurring patterns of experiential meaning can be systematically identified and compared across the two stages of mediation examined in this study.

To ensure methodological transparency, the corpus selection is purposively-built. Specifically, passages are selected from across the novel where the linguistic

construal of war experience is particularly dense and salient, as indicated by recurring lexical semantic cues, for example, “chết” (died/killed) and “bom” (bomb) in violence, “nhớ” (remembers) in memory, “attacked” in combat, and “soldiers”, “army” in political reference. These cues serve only as preliminary indicators for locating potentially relevant segments. However, the entire contents of these paragraphs were not automatically included in the corpus. Instead, only those clause complexes that demonstrate one or more of the four operationalised domains of war reality (physical brutality, psychological trauma, collective memory, and geopolitical conflict) were extracted and imported into the Excel-based parallel corpus for analysis. Thus, the four domains were identified through the ways war experience is construed in discourse rather than through the occurrence of particular keywords. This approach ensures that the dataset remains both analytically focused and theoretically grounded, while maintaining adequate coverage of the novel’s principal representation of war reality.

The aim of this sampling strategy is therefore not to represent the novel statistically in its entirety, but to capture analytically significant instances in which war reality is discursively constructed through transitivity patterns. As such, the dataset is designed to achieve analytical representativeness, ensuring that each domain is sufficiently instantiated to support systematic comparison across the two trajectories: ST – TT1; TT1 – TT2.

Overall, the Vietnamese source text comprises a total of 628 paragraphs, while TT1 and TT2 contain 656 and 1517 paragraphs respectively. Through close reading of the source text, 59 paragraphs were identified as containing dense representations of war-related experiences relevant to the study’s analytical focus. However, the entire contents of these paragraphs were not automatically included in the corpus. Instead, only those clause complexes that demonstrate one or more of the four operationalised domains of war reality (Physical Brutality, Psychological Trauma, Collective Memory, and Geopolitical Conflict) were extracted and imported into the Excel-based parallel corpus for analysis. This procedure ensured that corpus inclusion was determined by analytical relevance rather than by paragraph boundaries alone,

thereby maintaining a focused dataset while preserving adequate coverage of the novel’s principal representations of war reality.

Table 3.1. Distribution of Clause Complexes and Clause-Process Units across Experiential Domains in the ST, TT1 and TT2

Domain	Paragraphs			Clause complex			Clause-process units				
	ST	TT1	TT2	ST	TT1	TT2	ST	TT1	% ST	TT2	% TT1
<i>Total</i>	59	59	59	167	178	183	485	489	100.8%	449	91.8%
Physical brutality	11	11	11	38	38	38	103	99	96.1%	100	101%
Psychological trauma	11	11	11	35	40	42	105	104	99%	104	100%
Collective memory	16	16	16	65	68	72	211	221	104.7%	176	79.6%
Geopolitical conflict	14	14	14	29	32	31	66	65	98.5%	69	106.2%

Note: Domain counts are not mutually exclusive. A single paragraph may contribute data to more than one analytical domain. Consequently, the sum of domain-specific paragraph counts does not equal the total number of selected paragraphs.

Table 3.1 provides a transparent overview of the corpus scope across the three textual versions and the four analytical domains. From a total of 628 paragraphs in the Vietnamese source text, 59 paragraphs (approximately 9.4%) were identified as containing dense representations of war-related experiences relevant to the study’s analytical focus. These paragraphs formed the basis of the purpose-built corpus. Their selection was determined by analytical relevance, specifically the presence of dense experiential representation of one or more of the four domains of war reality. Consequently, the corpus was designed to provide analytical coverage of the study’s central construct rather than proportional coverage of the novel.

The selected paragraphs yielded 167 clause complexes in the source text, compared with 178 in TT1 and 183 in TT2. This indicates that both stages of mediation involved a degree of structural reorganization at clause-complex level. Following clause-process segmentation, the corpus comprised 485 clause-process

units in the source text, 489 in TT1, and 449 in TT2. Since clause-process units constitute the primary analytical units in the study, these figures provide the empirical basis for subsequent transitivity analysis. The distribution of clause-process units across the four domains further demonstrates that the corpus captures a broad range of experiential representations of war reality. Collective memory constitutes the largest domains (211 units), followed by psychological trauma (105 units), and physical brutality (103 units), while geopolitical conflict forms a smaller but analytically important subset (66 units). This distribution reflects the representational priorities of the source text rather than a predetermined sampling balance.

The table also provides preliminary indications of how the two stages of mediation affect different domains. While TT1 remains broadly comparable to the source text in overall volume (100.8%), TT2 shows a decline to 91.8% of TT1. At domain level, collective memory undergoes the most substantial reduction (79.6%), whereas geopolitical conflict shows modest expansion (106.2%). These figures do not constitute findings in themselves but indicate areas that warrant closer qualitative investigation in Chapters 4 and 5.

3.4.3. Data Coding

The coding procedure was designed to reflect the two analytically distinct stages of mediation examined in this thesis. The first stage investigates how experiential meanings are reconstructed through interlingual translation from the Vietnamese source text (ST) to Phan Thanh Hao's English translation (TT1). The second stage investigates how those translated representations are subsequently modified through Frank Palmos's editorial rewriting (TT1 – TT2). Although all three versions are aligned within the same corpus structure, analytical comparison is conducted through the coupled-pair relationships ST – TT1 and TT1 – TT2. TT2 is therefore not treated as a direct translation of the Vietnamese source text, but as a rewritten version derived from TT1.

Analysis proceeded in two stages to reflect the thesis's two mediation steps: ST – TT1 (interlingual translation), and TT1 – TT2 (editorial rewriting). Clause-process alignment enabled additions, omissions, condensations, and expansions to be

identified within each paired comparison (ST – TT1 and TT1 – TT2), while process identification supported systematic examination of participant configuration and circumstantial framing. Specifically, process additions and omissions are registered with different colors. Where lexical-semantic shifts affected experiential configuration (process, participant, circumstance), they were flagged using an asterisk (*) for visibility during synthesis.

Since the study examines representation of war reality at clause level across four operationalised domains, only clause complexes containing relevant instances of physical brutality, psychological trauma, collective memory, or geopolitical conflict were extracted from the initial corpus and imported into the Excel database for analysis. As a result, the location coding system records only the source-text position of each extracted instance, using the identifiers CP (Chapter), P (Paragraph), and S (Sentence number within the paragraph). Following extraction, each clause complex was segmented into clause-process units.

Each clause-process unit was assigned a unique identifier. For representation purposes, identifiers are reported as ST.1.1a, TT1.1.1b, and TT2.1.1c, where the prefix indicates the textual version and the numerical sequence indicates the aligned clause-process units. For example, ST.1.1a refers to the first clause-process unit in the source text, TT1.1.1b to its aligned counterpart, and TT2.1.1c to the corresponding unit in TT2. Process identification and process-type classification were first carried out in the ST in separate columns on the Excel spreadsheet (Material/ Mental/Relational/Behavioural/Verbal/ Existential), then repeated for TT1 and TT2. Both finite and non-finite verb groups are treated as instances of processes where they encode experiential meaning, including in embedded or reduced clause structures. While transitivity is conventionally defined at the clause rank in SFL, non-finite constructions are included in this study when they function to construe processes within clause complexes. This decision is analytically motivated, as it allows the study to capture experiential configurations across both fully realized and structurally condensed forms, particularly in cases of clause reduction, expansion, or restructuring in translation. This sequencing ensured that the experiential

representation in the Vietnamese source text was established as the analytical baseline before examining how it was reproduced or reshaped in English.

An illustrative extract from the coding worksheet is presented in Table 3.1. The extract demonstrates how coded clause-process units were identified, assigned to analytical domains, aligned across the three textual versions, and coded for shifts across the two stages of mediation (ST – TT1 and TT1 – TT2). The full coding worksheets were maintained in Excel and subsequently synthesized into domain-based summary tables for analysis in Chapters 4 and 5.

Table 3.2. Illustrative example of transitivity coding and shift identification patterns

ST location	War-Reality domain	ST process ID	Process realisation	Process type	TT1 process ID	Process realisation	Process type	ST-TT1 process shift	TT2 process ID	Process realisation	Process type	TT1-TT2 process shift
CP1.P4.S2	Collective memory	1.1a	<i>là (ở đây)</i>	Relational	1.1b	<i>was</i>	Relational	Equivalence	1.1c	<i>was</i>	Relational	Equivalence
CP1.P25.S1	Geopolitical conflict	25.4a	<i>đang kể tới</i>	Material	25.4b	<i>getting closer</i>	Material	Equivalence	25.4c	omitted	omitted	Process omission
CP2.P89.S6	Psychological trauma	50.3a	<i>đợi</i>	Material	50.3b	omitted	omitted	Omission	50.3c	<i>see</i>	Mental	Process addition
CP2.P90.S2	Psychological trauma	59.1a	<i>nằm lại</i>	Material	59.1b	<i>lied (back)</i>	Material	Equivalence	59.1c	<i>lied to us</i>	Verbal	Material to Verbal
CP2.P157.S2	Geopolitical conflict	76.3a	<i>thù thù</i>	Behavioral	76.3b	<i>commenting</i>	Behavioral	Equivalence	76.3c	omitted	omitted	Omission
										threatening	Verbal	Addition
										invade	Material	Addition
										losing	Material	Addition
										removed	Material	Addition

While process types were coded for all clause-process units, participant and circumstantial features were recorded only where shifts in experiential representation occurred between the paired texts. These included changes in participant roles, participant specification, participant omission and lexical labelling, which may alter the distribution of agency and responsibility at the interpretive level. Similarly, circumstantial features were documented only when changes in temporal, spatial, manner, or other circumstantial elements affected the experiential framing of events, memories, or conflict situations. Such shifts were documented through analytical notes within the coding worksheet and subsequently synthesized during the domain-based analysis. This selective recording procedure enabled the analysis to focus on meaningful shifts in the representation of war reality across the two stages of mediation.

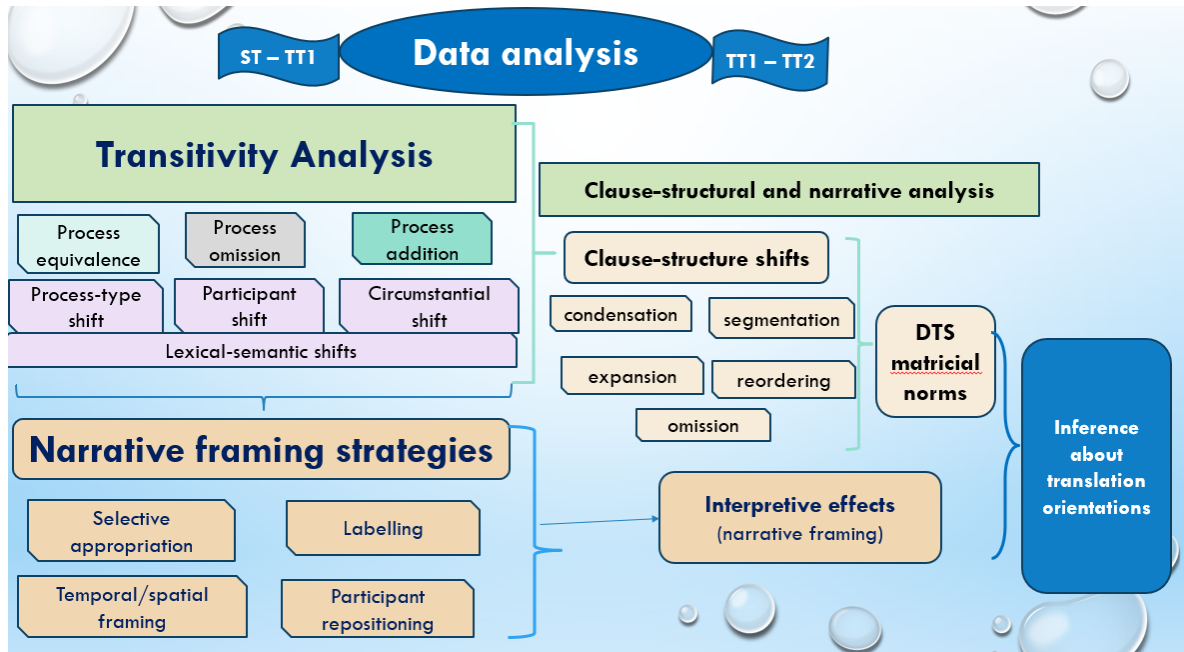
To operationalize war reality analytically, all clause-process units were coded into four domains: Physical brutality (PB), Psychological trauma (PT), Collective memory (CM), and Geopolitical conflict (GC). To reflect the study's two-stage design, separate coding worksheets were created for each domain within the two coupled-paired comparison (ST – TT1 and TT1 – TT2), resulting in a total of eight Excel worksheets. This organization enabled transitivity patterning and mediated shifts to be examined both within individual domains and across the corpus as a whole, supporting domain-specific findings as well as cross-domain interpretations.

Given the interpretive nature of transitivity analysis, coding was conducted solely by the researcher. To enhance consistency, coding decisions were guided by Halliday and Matthiessen's (2013) transitivity framework and applied systematically across all datasets. Ambiguous cases were revisited through repeated comparison of the aligned corpus and consultation of the relevant theoretical criteria. The use of explicit coding categories, clause-process identifiers, and paired-comparison procedures further enhanced transparency and traceability throughout the analysis.

3.4.4. Analytical Procedures

This section outlines the analytical procedures through which the corpus data were examined and interpreted. Drawing on the integrated framework developed in Chapter 2, the analysis combines Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) transitivity analysis, Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS), Baker's (2018) narrative framing framework and Venuti's domestication – foreignisation continuum. The procedure was designed to trace how experiential meanings are reconstructed across the two stages of mediation examined in the present study: interlingual translation from the Vietnamese source text to Phan Thanh Hao's translation (ST – TT1) and editorial rewriting from TT1 to TT2 (TT1 – TT2).

Figure 3.2. Analytical procedures of the Study



As illustrated in Figure 3.2, the analytical procedure moves from clause-level transitivity analysis to the identification of structural and narrative-functional shifts, which are then synthesized to support norm reconstruction and orientation profiling across the two stages of mediation examined in the study.

For each domain, and for each comparison stage (ST – TT1 and TT1 – TT2), analysis followed a consistent two-layer procedure:

- (1) SFL transitivity analysis (experiential configuration/process-level patterns)
 - Process realization (e.g. process specification)
 - Process type
 - Process shifts: equivalence, omission, addition, process change
 - Participant shifts including changes in participant roles, participant specification, participant omission, and lexical labelling.
 - Circumstantial shifts including re-anchoring of time, space, manner etc.

(2) Structural and narrative-functional analysis

- Clause-structure shifts (operationalised as matricial norms in the present study): retention, segmentation, condensation, expansion, reordering, omission.

For the purpose of the present study, retention refers to the preservation of a source-text clause-process unit in TT1, regardless of whether that retained unit subsequently participates in another matricial operation such as segmentation or expansion. Omission refers to the absence of a source-text unit in the translation, whereas addition refers to the introduction of a target-text units without a direct source-text counterpart. Condensation occurs when multiple source-text units are recomposed into a smaller number of target-text units, while expansion involves the redistribution of a source-text unit across multiple target-text units. Reordering refers to changes in the sequence of source-text material, and segmentation refers to the splitting of a source-text clause complex into multiple clause complexes in the translation. These categories are not mutually exclusive; a clause-process units may simultaneously exhibit retention together with another matricial operation such as segmentation, expansion, condensation, or reordering.

- Observed transitivity and structural shifts were subsequently interpreted through Baker's (2018) narrative framing strategies:
 - + selective appropriation: e.g. addition/omission
 - + labelling: i.e. lexical-semantic meaning
 - + temporal/spatial framing: lexical choice, omission/addition
 - + participant repositioning: lexical choice and agency role
- Brief notes on narrative framing effect (i.e. what the shift tends to do to alignment, emphasis, responsibility within the narrative)

To support transparency and pattern-level description, the coded analyses were systematically synthesized into summary tables, placed in each domain-based worksheet, including:

- Clause-structure shift patterns (e.g. segmentation/condensation/expansion/reordering/omission)

- Clause-process unit summaries: frequencies of process equivalence, addition, omission, and shifts.
- Process-type distributions and proportional changes within each paired comparison (ST – TT1, and TT1 – TT2).
- Key recurring process shifts (e.g. Relational to Material; Relational to Existential, etc.)
- Prominent narrative framing strategies recurring within each paired comparison (ST – TT1, and TT1 – TT2).

Finally, findings were synthesized and organized around Toury's (2012) framework of initial, preliminary, and operational norms as well as Venuti's (2017) domestication – foreignization continuum.

While the present study adopts Systemic Functional Linguistics transitivity as the primary analytical lens, it is important to clarify the scope and limits of this choice. Transitivity analysis focuses on the experiential meta-function, capturing how processes, participants, and circumstances construe experience at clause level. This makes it particularly suitable for examining how war reality is discursively constructed through patterns of action, perception, and relational attribution. However, transitivity only addresses the experiential dimension of meaning and does not account for the full range of semiotic resources available in the text. Literary meaning is also construed through interpersonal and textual choices. The interpersonal metafunction contributes to the expression of evaluation, attitude, and stance, while the textual metafunction organizes information and establishes coherence within the discourse. These dimensions may also play a role in shaping representations of war reality. Nevertheless, they are not examined in the present study.

The decision to prioritise transitivity is therefore methodological and theory-driven. It reflects the study's focus on experiential representation as the primary site where war reality is construed and subsequently re-patterned across translation and editorial rewriting. Consequently, interpretive insights from narrative framing (Baker, 2018) partially account for interpersonal and evaluative effects, especially where shifts in labelling, participant positioning, and selective appropriation influence

narrative alignment and stance. Accordingly, the findings of this study should be understood as a systematic account of experiential reconfiguration, complemented, but not replaced, by broader narrative-functional interpretation. In this way, the analytical procedure seeks to ground interpretive claims in systematically observable linguistic patterning rather than impressionistic reading.

3.5. Analytical Framework

This section presents the overarching analytical framework that integrates the theoretical perspectives discussed in Chapter 2 with the analytical procedures described in Section 3.4.4. The framework is based on Toury's (2012) model of Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS), as reformulated by Munday (2022), and provides the logic through which linguistic observations are progressively interpreted as evidence of translational and editorial mediation. In this model, translation analysis proceeds in three main stages. Initially, the texts under study are situated within their target culture systems to assess their significance and conditions of acceptability. In the second stage, comparative textual analysis is conducted through coupled-pair relationships in order to identify correspondences and shifts between successive stages of mediation. In the present study, these paired comparisons consist of ST – TT1 (interlingual translation) and TT1 – TT2 (editorial rewriting). In the final stage, the recurring patterns across these shifts are synthesized to generate generalisations about translation norms and strategies, reconstructing the norm-governed decision-making processes associated with each stage of mediation.

This framework is designed to link clause-level linguistic evidence to recurrent shift patterns and subsequently to the reconstruction of translational norms and orientation tendencies. In doing so, it models both translation and editorial rewriting as culturally situated and systematically constrained forms of mediation rather than as collections of isolated textual choices. The framework is sufficiently flexible to accommodate both trajectories, allowing DTS procedures to be applied not only to interlingual translation (ST – TT1) but also to the subsequent stage of editorial rewriting (TT1 – TT2), which is treated as a form of mediated recontextualization rather than direct translation.

Figure 3.3. Analytical Framework of the Study

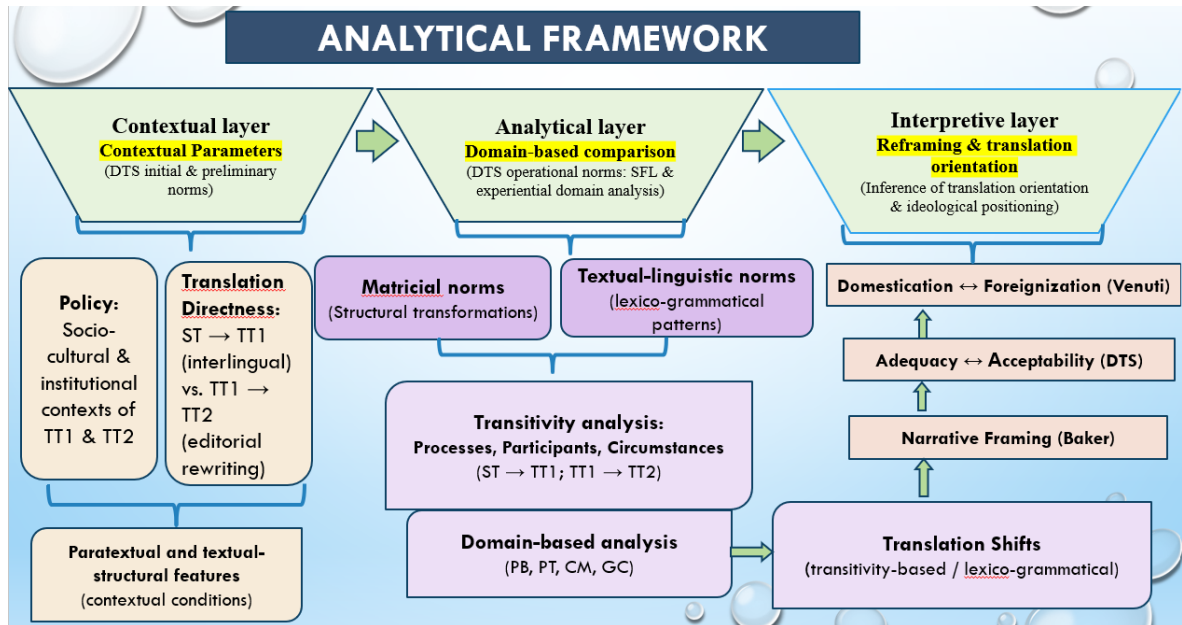


Figure 3.3 presents the analytical framework guiding the study, visually synthesizing how contextual parameters, transitivity-based analysis and interpretive procedures are integrated across the two stages of mediation (ST – TT1 and TT1 – TT2).

Stage 1: Situating the texts in target-culture systems (macro-descriptive positioning).

In the first stage, each target text is positioned within its receiving environment in order to establish the conditions under which it was produced, circulated, and read. This stage identifies contextual indicators relevant to Toury’s initial and preliminary norms. For the present study, a number of procedures are involved:

- (1) Specifying the publication identities of TT1 and TT2 (edition, publisher context, and the “English version” status of TT2);
- (2) Describing the texts’ paratextual framing and production circumstances (where relevant) as indicators of intended readership and acceptability conditions;
- (3) Identifying orientation cues that justify treating TT1 as an interlingual translation and TT2 as a further stage of mediated rewriting.

These contextual observations provide the descriptive grounds for interpreting subsequent recurring patterns as norm-governed translational and editorial decisions rather than isolated stylistic variation.

Stage 2: Comparative textual analysis through coupled pairs (micro-analytic procedure)

In the second stage, systematic comparison is conducted through coupled-paired relationships corresponding to the two stages of mediation examined in the study: ST – TT1 (interlingual translation) and TT1 – TT2 (editorial rewriting). These paired comparisons provide the basis for identifying shifts in experiential representations across the two stages of mediation. Methodologically, this is operationalized through a replicable workflow as follows:

- (1) Corpus preparation and alignment: Three textual versions are digitalized into plain-text format before selected war-related passages are imported into an Excel-based parallel corpus in three columns (ST, TT1, and TT2). Each sentence is assigned traceable metadata (chapter/paragraph/sentence IDs), ensuring that every analytical claim remains recoverable to its co-text.
- (2) Unit of analysis: Comparison proceeds from clause complex to clause-process units, enabling detailed mapping of experiential meaning. Clause complexes are segmented to clause-process units and coded as ST.1.1a, ST.1.2a and aligned to TT1.1.1b, TT1.1.2b, and TT2.1.1c, TT2.1.2c, preserving the sequential logic of the dataset.
- (3) SFL transitivity coding as the core micro-tool: Each clause-process unit is coded for (i) process type (including finite and non-finite process realisations where they construe experiential meaning), (ii) participant configuration and agency distribution, (iii) circumstantial anchoring. Coding is first conducted in the ST, and then repeated in TT1 and TT2.
- (4) Shift identification across two trajectories: Shifts are documented separately for the two trajectories of mediation: ST – TT1 (interlingual translation) and TT1 – TT2 (editorial rewriting). With each documentation, shifts are recorded at three linked levels:
 - Process-level: equivalence, omission, addition, and process-type shift

(e.g. Material ↔ Relation, Material ↔ Mental)

- Participant-level: reconfiguration of participant roles (e.g. Actor/Goal reassignment, participant specification/omission, passive/active alternations where relevant to responsibility).
- Circumstance-level: changes in temporal/spatial anchoring and other circumstantial framings such as addition, omission, specification, generalization.

(5) Lexical marking where it affects experiential configuration: Lexical-semantic differences are marked only where they directly modify experiential representation (for example, labelling choices that intensify or mitigate violence in processes, rename actors, or modify the way experience is construed). This keeps lexical analysis methodologically subordinate to transitivity while still capturing the narrative consequences of labelling. This also marks transitivity shifts as lexico-grammatical phenomena which arise from the interaction between grammatical configuration and lexical-semantic selection in processes, participants, and circumstances.

(6) Narrative framing interpretation attached to shifts: For each documented shift (or cluster of shifts), the analysis specifies the relevant framing strategies pinpointed by Baker (2018) (i.e. selective appropriation, labelling, temporal/spatial framing, participant repositioning) and records a brief framing-effect statement. Importantly, Baker's framing is applied to both ST – TT1 and TT1 – TT2, since the thesis treats both translation and rewriting as forms of mediation; interpretation therefore focuses on whether framing is maintained or reframed at either stage.

This second stage generates the empirical evidence-based reported in Chapter 4 and 5: the paired alignments, coded transitivity profiles, and documented shift-types across the four domains of war reality.

Stage 3: Pattern synthesis and translational orientations (generalisation and interpretation)

In the third stage, the study synthesises recurring shift patterns to infer regularities of translational behaviour and reconstruct the operational norm

tendencies associated with each trajectory (Toury, 2012). This stage proceeds by synthesising coded observations into domain-level and cross-domain level summaries, producing tables that report:

- (1) Clause-structure shifts (e.g. segmentation, condensation, expansion, omission, reordering);
- (2) Frequencies of process equivalence/addition/omission/shifts;
- (3) Process-type distribution changes and directional movement (e.g. increases or decreases in process-type selection);
- (4) Recurrent participant and circumstantial shift tendencies
- (5) Consequences of identified narrative framing strategies and inferences of translational orientations.

While participant, circumstantial, and lexical shift patterns are synthesized qualitatively across domains, their recurrence is assessed in terms of the number of domains in which a particular shift type is systematically evidenced. By contrast, process-level patterns may also be reported quantitatively because they derive directly from the transitivity coding procedures.

On this basis, recurrent patterns are interpreted descriptively as evidence of operational norms, particularly matricial and textual-linguistic norms. DTS provides the methodological rationale for treating repeated shift patterns as norm-governed regularities rather than isolated textual choices. Mediation perspectives, in turn, provide the conceptual basis for treating TT1 – TT2 as a process of staged recontextualization rather than direct translation. Baker's narrative framing framework is then employed to explain the narrative-functional consequences of these regularities, including shifts in agency distribution, temporal anchoring, participant positioning, and narrative emphasis. Importantly, Toury's adequacy/acceptability and Venuti's domestication/foreignization are not treated as predetermined categories but as interpretive tendencies inferred from recurring linguistic, structural, and framing patterns identified in the preceding stages of analysis.

3.6. Ethical considerations

This study follows principles of research integrity, transparency, and accountability across all stages of the project, from corpus selection and data handling to analysis and reporting. Although the research does not involve human participants, ethical considerations are relevant in relation to intellectual property, the responsible representation of culturally sensitive war experiences, methodological transparency, and the ethical use of digital research tools.

The primary corpus consists of three textual versions of *Nỗi Buồn Chiến Tranh* including the Vietnamese source text and Phan Thanh Hao's English translation as the bilingual edition published by Women's Publishing House (2005), together with Frank Palmos's edited English version (1998). As these are publicly available publications, issues of participant anonymity or informed consent do not apply to the primary dataset. Nevertheless, the study complies with copyright and principles of fair use by quoting only what is necessary for analysis, avoiding extensive reproduction of the source texts, and providing full bibliographic acknowledgement for all editions consulted. All references and quotations are cited in accordance with APA 7th edition.

A number of secondary sources used to contextualise the study, including literary criticism, reviews, interviews and scholarly discussions, are available only in Vietnamese. To ensure accessibility for an international readership, excerpts cited from these sources are translated into English. Unless otherwise stated, all translations of Vietnamese-language secondary sources are produced by the researcher. To avoid misrepresentation, translated excerpts are rendered as closely as possible to the original meaning and are used strictly for contextualization (e.g. explaining paratextual conditions, translator/editor's own account of their work and production context), rather than as primary evidence of textual mediation. Accordingly, claims about translation and editorial mediation are derived from the systematic textual analysis of operational norms rather than from retrospective commentary or self-reported accounts.

Although the dataset consists of published texts, the study generates research artefacts (e.g. aligned spreadsheets, clause segmentation, coding notes, frequency

tables). These materials are managed to support transparency and replicability. The researcher maintained consistent file naming and version control for aligned datasets, coding sheets, domain-based sub-corpora, and summary tables used throughout the analysis.

Given the interpretive nature of SFL transitivity analysis and translation-shift categorization, coding consistency was strengthened through iterative recoding, repeated reference to Hallidayan transitivity criteria, and regulatory supervisory consultation. Rather than relying on statistical measures of inter-rater reliability, the study emphasizes transparency, traceability, and theoretically informed decision-making. The study, nevertheless, acknowledges inherent limitations of SFL-based transitivity analysis, particularly interpretative subjectivity and coding ambiguity in complex or multifunctional clause structures (e.g. ellipted participants, embedded clauses, or borderline cases between process types). These limitations mean that some coding decisions necessarily involve analytic judgement by the researcher herself. To mitigate this risk, the study documents decision rules, applies consistent domain-sensitive criteria, and uses cross-checking and consensus review to stabilize interpretations.

In addition, reflexivity is treated as part of ethical practice. The researcher's bilingual competence and familiarity with Vietnam war discourse support culturally informed interpretation; however, these positions are also potential sources of bias. To mitigate this risk, interpretive claims are anchored in observable textual evidence (clause-level patterns and recurrent shifts) and triangulated through the study's layered framework (SFL to DTS norm inference and then to rewriting or mediation rationale prior to narrative framing consequences).

This research also acknowledges the ethical use of AI tools as supportive mechanisms in academic writing. AI assistants were used primarily for rephrasing and refining ambiguous or complex academic content. In particular, AI tools were employed to improve the clarity and readability of complex theoretical discussions. Crucially, all analytical interpretations, coding decisions, and argumentation were conducted independently by the researcher. The AI did not perform or influence any stages of data analysis, interpretation, or theoretical reasoning. The final

responsibility for the content, accuracy, and originality of this thesis rests solely with the researcher.

3.7. Chapter Summary

This chapter has established the methodological foundation for investigating how war reality is construed in *Nỗi Buồn Chiến Tranh* and reconstructed in the interlingual translation (TT1) and editorial rewriting (TT2). It has justified an interpretivist paradigm in which war reality is treated as a discursive and experiential construct. Concurrently, the two English versions are approached as distinct artefacts shaped by different translational and editorial conditions rather than as derivative replicas of the Vietnamese source text.

Methodologically, the chapter has presented a predominantly qualitative approach supported by quantitative techniques within a descriptive, comparative, corpus-based research design. The study proceeds through two staged trajectories of analysis (ST – TT1 and TT1 – TT2), enabling systematic tracing of both continuity and change in experiential reconstruction across the two stages of mediation. A purpose-built parallel corpus is constructed from war-related passages, aligned at clause-complex level, segmented into clause-process units, and coded for process types, participant configurations, and circumstantial anchoring as the core micro-analytic procedure.

Finally, the chapter has operationalized the analytical pathway that links linguistic evidence to higher-level interpretation. It shows how transitivity re-patterning, shift documentation, and domain-based organization provide the basis for reconstructing norms and inferring broader orientation tendencies. Shift documentation covers additions, omissions, process-type shifts, participant shifts, circumstantial shifts, and lexically realised changes affecting experiential representation. Domain-based organization further enables these patterns to be examined across physical brutality, psychological trauma, collective memory, geopolitical conflict. Finally, Baker's framing strategies are employed to interpret narrative-functional consequences of such recurring patterns across both ST – TT1 and TT1 – TT2. These procedures provide a transparent and systematic framework for the empirical analyses and syntheses presented in Chapters 4 and 5.

CHAPTER 4: RECONSTRUCTING WAR REALITY IN INTERLINGUAL TRANSLATION

4.1. Introduction

This chapter examines how Bao Ninh's representation of war reality in the Vietnamese source text of *The Sorrow of War* is reconstructed in translation through an analysis of the translator's initial, preliminary and operational norms as conceptualised in Descriptive Translation Studies. The chapter contributes primarily to Research Questions 2 and 3 of this thesis. Specifically, it examines how the experiential patterns established in the Vietnamese source text are reproduced, modified, or reconstructed in Phan Thanh Hao's English translation through the first stage of mediation (ST – TT1). By tracing recurrent shifts in transitivity patterning, participant configuration, and circumstantial framing, the chapter also provides the empirical basis for inferring translational orientations and interpreting narrative framing tendencies associated with this interlingual translation.

4.2. Initial Norms: Translation Motivations

In Toury's (2012) framework, initial norms refer to the translator's general orientation between adequacy and acceptability, that is, the extent to which the target text tends to preserve source-text textual and representational organization, or conform to the norms of the receiving culture. In the present study, initial norms are not treated as directly observable psychological intentions, but as descriptive hypotheses reconstructed from recurrent translational behaviour. Accordingly, any claims regarding TT1's orientation remain provisional at this stage and are subsequently examined through the analysis of preliminary norms (translation policy and directness), and, most importantly, operational norms, where recurrent regularities in textual structure and linguistic choices can be systematically demonstrated through transitivity-based comparison.

At the level of preliminary observation, TT1 may be provisionally characterized as a form of cultural mediation aimed at conveying the experiential world of a Vietnamese war narrative to English-language reader. Such an orientation appears to involve a commitment to communicating the novel's key experiential

meanings, particularly its sorrowful framing of war experience, while simultaneously negotiating the linguistic and readability requirements of the target language. To contextualise this tentative profile, the present section draws selectively on statements made by Phan Thanh Hao in a published Vietnamese interview conducted by Phan (2020). Consistent with Toury's descriptive orientation, such meta-discursive material is treated as contextual triangulation rather than direct evidence of norms. It provides insight into the translator's stated priorities and retrospective reflections on the translation process, while the reconstruction of norms ultimately rests on observable textual regularities. Nevertheless, the interview offers potentially relevant orientation markers concerning the translator's motivation and stance towards the war narrative, her paratextual framing choices, and the translational process through which TT1 was produced.

Table 4.1. presents a systematic overview of these contextual indicators and the orientation tendencies they may plausibly suggest. The excerpts presented below are not evidence of norms in themselves, but examples of how the translator retrospectively characterises her motivations, priorities, and relationship to the source text:

"I agreed, because our purpose as journalists is to let the world know that we, too, carry sorrow, even though we have won the war." (Phan, 2020).

"In the English translation, I restored the book's original title, 'The Sorrow of War', rather than 'The Fate of Love'." (Phan, 2020).

"At that time, Bao Ninh and I worked together almost every day to clarify what he wanted to convey, especially the interwoven layers of memory." (Phan, 2020).

Table 4.1. Contextual indicators of initial norms

<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Evidence in interview</i>	<i>Relevance to initial norms</i>	<i>Operational-norm expectations to be examined</i>
(1) Witnessing/ representational motivation	The translator presents translation as enabling international readers to recognise Vietnamese sorrow and loss despite wartime victory.	May indicate a source-oriented mediating role and a possible adequacy-leaning orientation.	Possible retention of ST experiential density, war affect, and narrative sorrow.
(2) Restoration of original title	The translator states that she restored the original title <i>Nỗi buồn chiến tranh</i> (<i>The Sorrow of War</i>) instead of <i>Thân phận tình yêu</i> (<i>The Fate of Love</i>).	May indicate commitment to the ST's framing of war as sorrow and is potentially consistent with a foreignising orientation.	Maintenance of ST evaluative framing of war as sorrow; limited replacement by alternative target-market framings.
(3) Author- translator collaboration	The translator mentions daily collaboration with Bao Ninh to clarify intended meanings, especially the novel's fragmented memories.	May suggest attentiveness to ST meaning-making and a possible adequacy-leaning orientation.	Possible retention of temporal complexity, memory sequencing, and psychological introspection.
(4) Acknowledgements of editorial mediation	The translator notes that she submitted her translation to Frank Palmos for editing.	Establishes the textual trajectory from ST to TT1 and then from TT1 to TT2, supporting the study's two-stage mediation model.	Provides a contextual basis for examining TT2 separately as editorial rewriting in Chapter 5.

As summarized in Table 4.1, the translator's account presents translation as a form of generational witnessing and intercultural mediation, suggesting a motivation to make Vietnamese post-war experience intelligible to international readers. Significantly, she claims that she restored the novel's original title *Nỗi buồn chiến tranh* (*The Sorrow of War*) in the English version rather than adopting the domestically circulated prize title *Thân phận tình yêu* (*The Fate of Love*), a decision that reflects commitment to the source text's experiential framing of war as sorrow rather than romantic destiny. The interview also highlights extended author-translator collaboration, especially in clarifying the novel's layered, interwoven memories, an aspect that resonates with the domains of psychological trauma and collective memory examined in the present study.

In DTS terms, these contextual markers may be interpreted as provisionally consistent with an adequacy-leaning orientation, insofar as the translator retrospectively describes her role as communicating the core experiential meaning of the source narrative rather than reshaping it for the expectation of a target literary market. Whether this orientation is borne out in the translation itself is examined through the analysis of preliminary and operational norms in the sections that follow. At the same time, the translator's mention of subsequent editorial involvement indicates that TT1 represents only the first stage of mediation in the English circulation of the novel, reinforcing the methodological decision to analyse ST – TT1 and TT1 – TT2 as separate trajectories of mediation rather than as a single translational process. These contextual markers are treated as interpretive cues rather than evidence of norms in themselves. The reconstruction of initial norms is ultimately grounded in preliminary and operational norms, particularly the recurrent textual-linguistic regularities identified through transitivity analysis in the subsequent sections.

4.3. Preliminary Norms: Contexts of Production

Translated books in Vietnam historically played a major role in the development of Vietnamese language, literature, and also served as a form of international cultural transmission. Vu (2021) traces the development of Vietnamese translated publishing to the national publishing conference in 1984 and the Sixth

Party Congress (*Đại hội VI*), the results of which were renewed policy control and loosen state interventions in publication. This broader publishing context is relevant because Toury's DTS preliminary norms are shaped not only by individual translators but also by institutional conditions governing the selection, presentation, and circulation of translated works.

Toury's preliminary norms concern the translation policy (what works are selected for translation and why) and directness of translation (whether a translation is produced directly from the source text or through an intermediary). In the present study, translation policy is understood in Toury's sense as the principles governing the selection, positioning, and circulation of translated works within the target culture. Because explicit policy statements are unavailable, translation policy is reconstructed through institutional publishing context and paratextual evidence including title presentation, authorship hierarchy, publication format, and the visibility of the Vietnamese source text within the bilingual edition.

Table 4.2 operationalises preliminary norms in TT1 through a systematic checklist of observable paratextual features. The indicators were developed through a systematic examination of TT1 edition, guided by Toury's (2012) concepts of translation policy and directness. This enables contextual triangulation before operational norms are demonstrated through matricial and textual-linguistic analysis.

Table 4.2. Paratextual indicators for reconstructing preliminary norms in TT1

Code	Paratextual Feature	Location	Observation in TT1	Inference for preliminary norms
TT1-PTX-01	Institutional publisher visibility (Women's Publishing House logo/imprint)	cover, spine, title page	√ (present)	Signals state-linked/ institutional publishing orientation rather than commercial Anglophone product
TT1-PTX-02	Austere/ non-commercial design (minimal marketing)	Cover/back cover	√	Suggests cultural-export/ institutional circulation; not market-driven packaging
TT1-PTX-03	Absence of marketing blurbs/ endorsements	Back cover/ inside cover	√	No overt genre selling; reception not guided through Anglophone promotion practices
TT1-PTX-04	No literary series label (e.g. "classics", "Vintage")	Cover/series page	√	Indicates non-global-market positioning
TT1-PTX-05	Absence of ideological marketing cues (e.g. "banned", "dissidence")	Blurb/back cover	√	Minimizes pre-loaded ideological framing; consistent with domestic institutional ethos
TT1-PTX-06	Absence of contextualizing apparatus	Front/back matter	√	No war background note, glossary, maps → suggests reader proximity to context
TT1-PTX-07	Translation presented as cultural artefact rather than commodity	Overall paratext design	√	Reinforces translation policy as cultural transmission
TT1-PTX-08	Author name highly prominent (caps, top placement)	Title page/cover	√	Author-centred hierarchy consistent with collectivist publishing ethos
TT1-PTX-09	Translator names less prominent than author/ title	Title page/cover	√	Translators positioned as facilitators rather than co-creators
TT1-PTX-10	Translators introduced collectively (e.g. "translated by ... with...")	Title page	√	The translated status confirmed; Collaborative mediation emphasised
TT1-PTX-11	Translator/editor not highlighted as "rewriter"	Title page	√	The translated status confirmed
TT1-	Explicit statement "translated from	Title/ copyright	√	The translated status confirmed

PTX-12	<i>Vietnamese</i>			
TT1-PTX-13	Explicit identification of Vietnamese original title	Title/ copyright		Strength of ST anchoring in paratext
TT1-PTX-14	Mention of ST publication history (Vietnam, year, publisher)	Copyright	√	Degree of source legitimacy and traceability
TT1-PTX-15	No mention of intermediate language	Title/ copyright	√	TT1 as direct translation
TT1-PTX-16	Bilingual layout (Vietnamese text & English text in the same bound volume)	Whole edition	√	Co-presence of ST implies bilingual readership proximity
TT1-PTX-17	Reversible format: ST at one end and TT1 at the other	Physical layout	√	Reinforces ST authority and transparency; translation positioned as accompaniment
TT1-PTX-18	No separation into “ <i>original book</i> ” vs. “ <i>translated book</i> ” volumes	Edition structure	√	Suggests institutional design to keep ST visible
TT1-PTX-19	Reader implicitly enabled to cross-check ST vs. TT1	Bilingual design	√	Publishing norm promotes ST anchoring; supports adequacy-oriented policy prediction
TT1-PTX-20	No glossary/ footnotes	Text/ back matter	√	Assumes cultural familiarity (domestic/ diaspora bilingual readers)
TT1-PTX-21	No explanatory introduction to the Vietnam war context	Front matter	√	Suggests target reader is not “distant Western outsider”
TT1-PTX-22	No guide to pronunciation/ terms	Back matter	√	Indicates proximity readership

As shown in Table 4.2, TT1 exhibits 21 out of the 22 paratextual indicators included in the analytical checklist. While these indicators are not intended as a quantitative measurement scale, they suggest a translation policy oriented towards cultural representation, institutional circulation and source-text visibility.

The front cover foregrounds the English title *The Sorrow of War* in a large, highly salient typographic arrangement, visually dominating the page (see Figure 4.1 in Appendix A). This framing immediately positions the work as a war narrative for English-language readers, emphasizing the novel's focus on suffering ("sorrow") and conflict ("war"). The author's name Bao Ninh is also prominently displayed near the top, while the translator's presence is not foregrounded on the cover, consistent with a strong author-centred paratextual hierarchy in Vietnamese institutional publishing. In addition, the cover's visual imagery, dominated by flames and intense orange-red tones, operates as an iconic war signifier, constructing war primarily through destruction, violence, and crisis. Such imagery may function as a paratextual interpretive cue, encouraging readers to approach the novel primarily through themes of war, suffering, and destruction, consistent with a strong author-centred paratextual hierarchy in Vietnamese institutional publishing. The presence of the *Nhà Xuất Bản Phụ Nữ* emblem at the lower corner further marks TT1 as an institutionally produced cultural artefact, reinforcing its association with a Vietnamese institutional publishing environment.

At the title-page level, Bao Ninh's name appears prominently at the top in capital letters, followed by the English title *The Sorrow of War* (see Figure 4.2 in Appendix A). The translator's names are positioned below in smaller font, introduced collectively as: "*Translated by Phan Thanh Hao, Võ Băng Thanh, with Katerina A. Pierce*". This typographic hierarchy is consistent with Vietnamese institutional publishing practices, where translators are often positioned as facilitators rather than co-authors of literary value. The presence of the Women's Publishing House logo reinforces TT1's identity as a translation emerging from a Vietnamese institutional publishing environment. This paratextual design supports the view that TT1 was produced under a culturally oriented translation policy: the translation functions as a

representation of Vietnamese post-war experience and national memory rather than as a product explicitly adapted to perceived international market preferences.

A further preliminary-norm indicator concerns the publication format of TT1 itself. The Women's Publishing House edition presents the English version in a bilingual format, in which the Vietnamese original appears at one end of the volume (see Figure 4.3 and 4.4 in Appendix A) while the English translation is printed from the reverse end, effectively producing a two-text configuration within a single bound publication. This bilingual design is not a neutral formatting choice but a strong signal of translation policy and intended readership. Rather than positioning TT1 as an autonomous Anglophone novel aimed at monolingual target readers, the edition frames the English text as operating alongside, and in continuous relation to, the Vietnamese source. Such a format suggests an intended readership that may include bilingual Vietnamese readers, overseas Vietnamese communities, and readers interested in direct engagement with the source text. The co-presence of the Vietnamese original preserves source-text visibility and makes direct comparison possible. In Toury's terms, this publishing decision strengthens the interpretation that TT1 was produced within an institutional-cultural translation policy that is consistent with a preliminary expectation of close source-text alignment and an adequacy-leaning orientation.

Notably, TT1 provides no translator's preface or cultural notes. This absence can be interpreted in two complementary ways within Toury's preliminary-norm perspective. First, it may reflect a tendency within the Vietnamese institutional publishing. Second, the absence of cultural notes suggests that TT1 may not have been primarily designed for a Western readership requiring contextual guidance; rather, it can plausibly be aligned with readers already familiar with the socio-historical background, thereby reducing the perceived need for extensive paratextual mediation. This interpretation gains additional support when considered alongside TT1's bilingual publication format. This institutional bilingual framing provides a preliminary expectation of a greater structural retention and closer source-text alignment, which is examined empirically through the subsequent analysis of operational norms. Taken together, these paratextual features suggest a translation

policy oriented towards cultural representation, source-text visibility, and institutional circulation. They also provide strong evidence that TT1 was produced directly from the Vietnamese source text rather than through an intermediary language, thereby supporting Toury's dimension of directness.

4.4. Operational Norms: Structural and Representational Shifts

4.4.1. Matricial Norms (ST – TT1)

Having established the initial and preliminary norms associated with TT1, the analysis now turns to Toury's operational norms, beginning with matricial norms. In Toury's (2012) framework, matricial norms concern the management of a text's macro-structural organisation, including decisions regarding textual completeness, segmentation, omission, addition, and the distribution of textual material across the translation. In other words, they are concerned with the extent to which source-text units are retained, omitted, added, condensed, expanded, reordered, or re-segmented in the target version. For the present study, matricial operations are particularly significant because they provide observable evidence of whether TT1 maintains the ST's narrative architecture and experiential sequencing or, alternatively, restructures the text in ways that may increase readability and textual coherence for target-language readers.

Accordingly, this subsection first presents an overall quantitative profile of matricial operations in TT1 relative to ST (Table 4.3), establishing the overall structural tendencies that characterise TT1 (Phan Thanh Hao's translation). It then separates these operations across the four operationalised experiential domains of war reality: physical brutality, psychological trauma, collective memory, and geopolitical conflict, to examine whether structural intervention is evenly distributed or concentrated in particular representational domains (Table 4.4). Together, these tables provide a macro-level perspective on TT1's structural management of the source text and contribute to the broader interpretation of adequacy- and acceptability-related tendencies. They also serve as a bridge to the subsequent analysis of textual-linguistic norms where transitivity shifts and their narrative-functional implications are examined in detail.

Table 4.3. Matricial operations profile in TT1 relative to ST

Matricial operation	Operational coding rule	Count (n)	Percentage of ST corpus (%)	Examples
Retention	ST unit retained with equivalent TT1 unit	391	80.6%	CP1.P6.S1-3/3; CP1.P27.S1-4 CP6.P458.S1-9
Omission	ST unit absent in TT1	43	8.8%	CP2.P176.S7 CP3.P251.S1 CP3.P249.S1 CP6.P463.S9
Addition	TT1 introduced a new unit not present in ST	26	5.3%	CP1.P27.S3 CP1.P28.S7 CP3.P208.S4
Condensation	Multiple ST clause-processes merged into a single TT1 unit	13	2.6%	CP1. P4.S4; CP3.P214.S16
Expansion	One ST clause-process unit expanded into multiple TT1 units	17	3.5%	CP1.P28. S6-7; CP2.P176.S4; CP1.P4. S6; CP1.P36. S26
Reordering	TT1 changes ST sequence	1	0.2%	CP3.P214.S4
Segmentation shift	ST clause complex split in TT1	28	5.7%	CP1.P5.S1; CP2.P176.S7

Note 1: The operational coding rules summarized in Column 2 were established in Section 3.4.4. and are presented here in abbreviated form for ease of reference. Percentages shown in Column 4 are calculated against the total number of source-text clause-process units (n = 485). A clause-process unit may simultaneously exhibit retention together with another matricial operation (e.g. segmentation, condensation, expansion or reordering). The categories are therefore overlapping rather than mutually exclusive, and the reported frequencies reflect the number of instances assigned to each operation type.

Note 2: Illustrative examples are provided for reference only. Detailed discussion of representative cases is provided in the domain-specific analyses.

Table 4.3 summarises the matricial operations identified in TT1 relative to the Vietnamese source text (ST), based on a total of 485 ST analytical units. The profile presented here provides a descriptive overview of the extent to which TT1 maintains the ST's compositional architecture and the degree to which it adapts that architecture to the conventions of English narrative presentation.

Overall, the matricial operations profile demonstrates a strong pattern of structural stability. Retention is the dominant operation, with 391 out of 485 units (80.6%) realised as direct equivalents in TT1. This high rate of retention suggests that TT1 largely preserves the source narrative's textual completeness and sequential arrangement, and is consistent with an adequacy-leaning orientation at the matricial level. Crucially, the retention pattern holds throughout all four experiential domains of war reality in the dataset, and is evident through the preservation of corresponding clause-process units across ST and TT1.

Despite this overall structural stability, TT1 also shows a moderate degree of selective restructuring, reflecting pragmatic adjustments associated with interlingual transfer into English. Omission accounts for 43 units (8.8%), suggesting that although TT1 is broadly complete, it is not fully exhaustive in relation to the ST. Although relatively infrequent, these omissions are particularly noticeable in passages coded under the experiential domain of collective memory (e.g. CP3.P251.S1; CP3.P249.S1; CP6.P463.S3/S9). The relatively limited proportion of omission suggests that TT1 does not exhibit extensive macro-textual reduction of source-text material. The observed omissions appear to operate primarily as local reductions that streamline narrative flow without substantially altering the overall distribution of experiential material.

Addition represents 26 units (5.3%) and is likewise concentrated in the domain of collective memory, most notably in the form of inserted processes or expanded experiential cues that are not lexicographically explicit in ST. Such additions may contribute to narrative cohesion or interpretive clarity in English, particularly where

Vietnamese syntactic condensation or implicit reference might pose interpretive difficulty for target readers. At the matricial level, however, the frequency of addition remains relatively low, suggesting that TT1 is not systematically oriented towards expansion or explanatory reframing. Instead, the additions operate as local adjustments that may facilitate readability for English-language readers.

The profile further shows small but meaningful degrees of condensation and expansion. Condensation occurs in 13 cases (2.6%), where multiple ST clause-process units are recomposed into a single TT1 unit. These instances are most clearly recognised in the physical brutality domain (e.g. CP1.P4.S4; CP3.P214.S16), where the ST often accumulates imagery through serial clause constructions, and TT1 occasionally compresses these sequences into more compact English units. Such condensation tends to reduce clause-complex elaboration without necessarily deleting experiential content; it reconfigures the “shape” of presentation by packing processes into tighter syntactic frames. Conversely, expansion occurs in 17 cases (3.5%), where a single ST unit is expanded into multiple TT1 clause-process units. Expansion is identified in collective-memory sequences (e.g. CP1.P28.S6/7; CP2.P176.S4) and in physical brutality segments (e.g. CP1.P4.S6; CP1.P36.S26). From a matricial perspective, these expansions typically involve sentence splitting and representation of clause-complex material across multiple clause-process units, resulting in a redistribution of syntactic load and experiential density in English.

Reordering is extremely rare in TT1, occurring only once (0.2%). The near absence of reordering indicates that TT1 substantially maintains the ST’s sequencing of events and narrative progression, thereby preserving the source text’s sequencing of events and organization of experiential meaning. Even in the single case of reordering in collective memory (e.g. CP3.P214.S2), the operation does not function as large-scale narrative rewriting but as a minor adjustment to coherence and discourse organisation, aligning the order of presentation to improve interpretability in English while leaving the macro-narrative structure intact.

Segmentation shift constitutes a comparatively salient operation, with 28 instances (5.7%). This refers to the splitting or merging of ST clause complexes into

different clause-complex boundaries in TT1. Segmentation shift is most visible in collective memory passages (e.g. CP1.P5.S1; CP2.P176.S7) and in physical brutality domain. This pattern is methodologically significant because it shows that TT1 may preserve overall content and sequencing while still reconfiguring how experience is chunked into units of textual processing. In SFL terms, segmentation shift affects how experiential meanings are distributed across clauses within a clause complex, and thus potentially alters prominence, focalisation, and the pacing of remembered events or violent episodes. Nevertheless, since segmentation shifts are not accompanied by paragraph-level reshaping or large-scale textual restructuring, they appear to function as grammatical packaging strategies rather than as narrative redesign.

Taken together, the matricial profile presents TT1 as a translation characterised by high retention, minimal reordering, and only moderate clause-level packaging operations (segmentation shifts, limited omissions, and local additions). This descriptive profile suggests that TT1's operational norms favour structural continuity with the ST and involve only limited macro-level restructuring. The implications of these macro-patterns are further examined in the following section through textual-linguistic norms, where transitivity shifts are analysed in detail and subsequently interpreted through Baker's (2018) narrative framing strategies to determine how war how war reality is reconstructed at the micro-level.

Table 4.4. Matricial operations by experiential domains (ST – TT1)

<i>Experiential domain</i>	<i>Total aligned clause-process units (n)</i>	<i>Retention n/%</i>	<i>Omission n/%</i>	<i>Expansion n/%</i>	<i>Condensation n/%</i>	<i>Segmentation n/%</i>	<i>Addition n/%</i>	<i>Reordering n/%</i>
PB	103	80/71.8	8/1.0	6/5.8	6/5.8	12/11.7	4/3.9	0/0.0
PT	105	83/87.6	9/1.9	1/1.0	3/1.0	5/3.8	4/3.8	0/0.0
CM	211	175/80.6	12/2.8	7/3.3	2/3.3	9/4.3	15/7.1	2/0.9
GC	66	53/75.8	5/7.6	3/4.5	2/4.5	2/3.0	3/4.5	0/0.0

Table 4.4 provides a domain-level comparison of matricial operations across the four experiential domains of war reality. While retention remains the dominant operation in all domains, the distribution of other matricial operations suggests that TT1 does not intervene consistently across different aspects of war reality. Instead, certain domains exhibit greater degrees of structural reconfiguration than others.

Among the four domains, psychological trauma displays the highest retention rate (87.6%), accompanied by very limited omission (1.9%), expansion (1.0%), and condensation (1.9%). This pattern suggests that the translator generally preserves the structural organization of passages representing internal experience, memory, and emotional suffering, with relatively little macro-textual intervention. From a matricial perspective, psychological trauma therefore appears to be the most structurally stable domain in TT1.

Collective memory also exhibits a high retention rate (80.6%), but differs from psychological trauma in showing the highest proportion of additions (7.1%). Although omission (2.8%), condensation (0.9%), and segmentation (4.3%) remain relatively limited, the higher incidence of additions suggests a greater tendency towards local structural elaboration. This indicates that collective-memory sequences are subject to more frequent supplementation than other domains, while still maintaining substantial overall continuity with the source text.

Geopolitical conflict shows a lower retention rate (75.8%) and the highest omission rate (7.6%) among the four domains. Expansion (4.5%) and condensation (4.5%) occur at identical rates, suggesting a moderate degree of structural intervention. Compared with psychological trauma and collective memory, the presentation of geopolitical conflict therefore appears more susceptible to selective reduction and restructuring at the matricial level.

The domain exhibiting the greatest degree of structural intervention is physical brutality. Although retention remains relatively high (71.8%), this domain records the highest segmentation rate (11.7%) as well as comparatively high rates of expansion (5.8%) and condensation (5.8%). These figures suggest that violent episodes and combat-related sequences are more frequently re-packaged into different clause-

complex configurations in TT1 than other domains. Rather than indicating extensive omission, however, the pattern points to a tendency towards structure reorganization while largely preserving source-text content.

Overall, the domain-level distribution of matricial operations suggests that TT1 preserves the structural architecture of the source text to a considerable extent across all four domains. Nevertheless, the degree of intervention is not evenly distributed. Psychological trauma, for example, emerges as the most structurally stable domain, whereas physical brutality undergoes the greatest degree of structural reconfiguration. Collective memory occupies an intermediate position characterized by a relatively high incidence of additions, while geopolitical conflict displays the highest proportion of omissions. These patterns provide a more detailed account of TT1's operational norms and indicate that different dimensions of war reality are subject to different degree of structural mediation.

4.4.2. Textual-linguistic Norms (ST – TT1)

In presenting the textual-linguistic norms, this study adopts a two-tier reporting structure. First, transitivity profiles are presented separately for each operationalised experiential domain of war reality (physical brutality, psychological trauma, collective memory, and geopolitical conflict). This domain-based organization is adopted because each domain is associated with distinct experiential concerns and therefore tends to exhibit different process-type distributions, participant configurations, and circumstantial patterns.

Reporting transitivity patterns at the domain level allows the analysis to identify where representational shifts occur most frequently and how particular experiential meanings are maintained, attenuated, intensified, or redistributed across the translated narrative. However, recurrent transitivity shift types and Baker's narrative framing strategies are subsequently synthesized and discussed collectively rather than being repeated separately for each domain. This is because shift categories (e.g. process-type shifts, circumstantial reframing, and lexical labelling) frequently occur across multiple experiential domains and are more effectively interpreted when examined across the dataset as a whole rather than within a single domain in isolation.

A consolidated synthesis therefore enables the study to move from domain-specific findings to the identification of recurring translational regularities. These regularities form the basis for reconstructing operational norms and subsequently interpreting broader orientation tendencies in relation to Toury’s adequacy/acceptability continuum and Venuti’s domestication/foreignization framework. In this way, the analysis maintains both sensitivity to domain-specific representation of war reality and attention to broader translational patterns: the domains organize the interpretation of war reality, while the collective synthesis captures recurring forms of mediation across the dataset.

Table 4.5 Overall process-type distribution across ST and TT1

<i>Process type</i>	<i>ST count (n)</i>	<i>ST (%)</i>	<i>TT1 count (n)</i>	<i>TT1 (%)</i>	<i>Percentage-point change (TT1-ST)</i>
Material	302	63.31	293	62.21	-1.1
Relational	87	18.24	93	19.75	+1.51
Mental	48	10.06	45	9.55	-0.51
Existential	12	2.52	12	2.55	+0.03
Verbal	3	0.63	3	0.64	+0.01
Behavioural	25	5.24	25	5.31	+0.07
Total	477	100	471	100	

Table 4.5 presents an overview of process-type distributions across the source text (ST) and TT1. As explained in Chapter 3, these frequencies are reported descriptively to provide a general picture of experiential patterning across the corpus. The table does not capture individual process-type shift trajectories between aligned clause-process units. Instead, it indicates the relative prominence of each process type within the overall transitivity profile of each text.

The overall distribution shows a high degree of similarity between ST and TT1. Material processes remain dominant in both texts, accounting for 63.31 of all process realisations in ST and 62.21% in TT1. The percentage-point change is therefore relatively small (-1.10), suggesting that action- and event-oriented representation continues to constitute the principal mode through which war reality is construed in the translation. This finding is broadly consistently with the matricial profile discussed earlier, which indicated substantial structural retention across the corpus.

Relational processes constitute the second most frequently category and show the largest positive change, increasing from 18.24% in ST to 19.75% in TT1 (+1.51 percentage points). By contrast, Mental processes decrease slightly from 10.06% to 9.55% (-0.51% percentage points). While these changes remain modest at the collective level, they suggest a limited redistribution of experiential meanings within the translated texts. The precise nature of this redistribution cannot be determined from distributional frequencies alone and therefore requires examination through the process-type shift analysis presented subsequently.

The remaining process types exhibit only minimal variation. Existential processes increase marginally from 2.52% to 2.55% (+0.03 percentage points), Verbal processes from 0.63% to 0.64% (+0.01 percentage point), and Behavioural processes from 5.24% to 5.31% (+0.07 percentage points). These differences are sufficiently small to suggest broad stability in the overall transitivity profile of TT1 relative to the source text.

In general, the global distribution indicates that TT1 largely preserves the experiential architecture of the source text. Although some redistribution among process types can be observed, particularly between Material, Relational, and Mental processes, the overall profile remains remarkably similar across the two texts. This pattern is consistent with the adequacy-leaning tendencies identified in the preceding analyses of initial, preliminary, and matricial norms. However, general distribution alone cannot reveal where or how these changes occur. For that reason, the following sections examine transitivity patterns within each experiential domain before synthesising recurrent process-type shifts and their narrative-functional consequences across the corpus.

4.4.2.1. War Reality as Physical Brutality

To establish the overall experiential profile of Physical Brutality, Table 4.6 compares the distribution of process types across the source text (ST) and TT1 within this domain. As explained in Chapter 3, process-type distribution provides a descriptive overview of how experiential meanings are organized in each text. While the table does not capture individual process-type shift trajectories between aligned

clause-process units, it offers a global picture of the relative prominence of different process types and highlight areas where redistribution may have occurred in translation.

Table 4.6. Transitivity profile in the domain of Physical Brutality (ST – TT1)

<i>Process type</i>	<i>ST (n)</i>	<i>ST (%)</i>	<i>TT1 (n)</i>	<i>TT1 (%)</i>	<i>Percentage-point change (TT1-ST)</i>
Material	79	78.2	81	85.3	+7.1
Relational	17	16.8	10	10.3	-6.5
Mental	3	3.0	3	3.1	+0.1
Existential	1	1.0	3	3.1	+2.1
Verbal	0	0.0	0	0.0	0
Behavioural	1	1.0	0	0.0	-1.0
Total	101	100	97	100	

Table 4.6 shows that Physical Brutality is strongly Material-dominant in both ST and TT1. In the source text, Material processes account for 78.2% of all process realisations, while Relational processes constitute a secondary category at 16.8%. Mental, Existential, and Behavioural processes occur only sporadically, and no Verbal processes are identified in the dataset. This distribution indicates that physical brutality in the source text is represented primarily through actions, events, bodily impacts, and destructive occurrences, with Relational processes serving a more limited role in construing resulting states, conditions, or aftermaths.

The overall profile remains largely stable in TT1, where Material processes continue to dominate the representation of physical brutality. However, a modest redistribution can be observed. Material processes increase from 78.2% to 85.3% (+7.1 percentage points), while Relational processes decrease from 16.8% to 10.3% (-6.5 percentage points). The remaining process types show only minimal variation, with small increases in Existential processes and negligible changes elsewhere. Generally, these figures suggest that TT1 largely preserves the action-oriented experiential profile of the source text while exhibiting a limited shift towards construing brutality through actions and events rather than through resultant states or conditions. The specific process-type shifts and representational mechanisms underlying this redistribution are examined in the following section.

Table 4.7. Prominent process shifts in Physical Brutality (ST – TT1)

<i>Shift category</i>	<i>Typical pattern</i>	<i>Example(s)</i>
Process shifts	ST Relational → TT1 Material	“Mùa khô ấy, <u>nắng to</u> ” (ST.3.1a) → “the sun <u>shone</u> ” (TT1.3.1b)
	ST Relation → TT1 Material passive	“Khu rừng <u>nát bết</u> ” (ST.97.1a) → “The jungle <u>was totally destroyed</u> ” (TT1.97.1b);
	ST Relation → TT1 Material passive	“thân thể <u>giập vỡ tan tành</u> ” (ST.8.4a) → “bodies <u>killed</u> by helicopter gunship, broken” (TT1.8.4b);
	ST Existential → TT1 Mental	“chưa bao giờ... <u>có</u> ” (ST.131.1a) → “Kien had never <u>seen</u> ...” (TT1.131.1b)
	ST Material → TT1 Relational	“mặt nước ... <u>nổi vầng</u> ” (ST.14.2a) → “water surface <u>turned</u> dark brown, reddened” (TT1.14.2b)
Process omissions	Omission of sensory, descriptive, or locally elaborative processes in TT1	“gió lớn, rừng bị ướt <u>đầm xăng đặc</u> ” (ST.3.2a-3.3a); “thối hết cả máu” (ST.36.2a); “miệng anh cũng <u>ứa máu</u> , hai tay run <u>bần bật</u> ” (ST.96.3a-96.4a); “quăng <u>bông</u> theo đường vòng cung” (ST.102.3a);
Process additions	Explicit event	“Then came the baby bombs” (TT1.95.1b);
	Explicit causal processes	“ngón ngang cây cối <u>bị đốn hạ</u> ” (ST.98.2a) → “Trees had been <u>chopped</u> down and branches <u>were scattered</u> all over” (TT1.98.2b-2b1*);
	Explicit event	“Mưa <u>ngát trời</u> ” (ST.99.1a) → “It <u>seemed</u> like the sky was <u>melting</u> into water.” (TT1.99.1b* – 1b);
	Explicit event and causal processes	“Tâm hồn <u>bấn loạn</u> , ngôn ngữ độc thoại <u>rối mù</u> ” (ST.38.1a-2a) → “Their chaotic minds, their troubled speech <u>showed</u> how...” (TT1.38.1b)

Process shifts

One recurrent pattern in the Physical Brutality involves shifts from Relational to Material processes. For example, the relational representation “*Mùa khô ấy, nắng to*” (ST.3.1a) is rendered as the Material process “*the sun shone*” (TT1.3.1b). Similarly, the relational description “*Khu rừng nát bét*” (ST.97.1a) becomes the Material passive “*The jungle was totally destroyed*” (TT1.97.1b). In both cases, TT1 reconfigures brutality from a state or condition into a more event-oriented representation. Rather than presenting devastation as an already existing circumstance, the translation foregrounds the action or process through which destruction is realised. From a narrative framing perspective, this tendency may be interpreted as a form of labelling and experiential re-encoding, whereby violent consequences are reconstructed through more explicit event structures. This contributes to the increased prominence of Material processes observed in Table 4.6.

A similar tendency can be observed in “*thân thể giập vỡ tan tành*” (ST.8.4a), which is rendered as “*bodies killed by helicopter gunship, broken*” (TT1.8.4b). While the source text primarily presents a resultant physical condition, TT1 introduces a more explicit causal event by specifying the military agent responsible for the destruction. The translation therefore strengthens the causal linkage between military action and bodily devastation. Such a shift may be interpreted through Baker’s notion of participant repositioning and labelling, as violence is framed through more explicit actor-action relationships.

Not all process shifts move toward Material construal. In “*chưa bao giờ.... có*” (ST.131.1a), an Existential process is reconstructed as the Mental process *Kien had never seen ...* (TT1.131.1b). Here, the focus shifts from the existence of a phenomenon to a character’s perception of it. This modification increases the prominence of witnessing and subjective experience within scenes of brutality. Similarly, “*mặt nước...nổi váng*” (ST.14.2a) is rendered as “*water surface turned dark brown, reddened*” (TT1.14.2b), shifting from a Material process to a Relational construal that foregrounds the visible aftermath of violence. Together, these examples

suggest that TT1 does not uniformly intensify action but selectively redistributes experiential meanings according to different representational priorities.

Process omissions

Another recurrent pattern involves process omission. Examples include “*gió lớn, rừng bị ướt đẫm xăng đặc*” (ST.3.1a-3.3a), “*thối hết cả máu*” (ST.36.2a), “*miệng anh cũng ứa máu, hai tay run bần bật*” (ST.96.3a-4a), and “*quăng bóng theo đường vòng cung*” (ST.102.3a). In these cases, TT1 removes processes that contribute sensory detail, bodily reaction, or local descriptive elaboration. From the perspective of narrative framing, these omissions may be interpreted as instances of selective appropriation, whereby certain experiential details are excluded while the broader sequence of violent events is retained. Importantly, the omissions do not fundamentally alter the overall representation of brutality. Rather, they reduce some localized sensory intensity and descriptive accumulation. The resulting narrative remains strongly violence-oriented, but individual scenes may appear more streamlined and less densely textured than in the source text.

Process additions

In contrast, TT1 also exhibits process additions that increase the explicitness of violent events. One example is the insertion of “*Then came the baby bombs*” (TT1.95.1b), which introduces an explicit event not realised as a separate process in the source text. Another example occurs in “*ngón ngang cây cối bị đốn hạ*” (ST.98.2a), rendered as “*Trees had been chopped down and branches were scattered all over*” (TT1.98.2b-2b1*). Here, the translation expands the original representation by introducing additional causal and resultant processes. A similar pattern can be observed in “*Mưa ngát trời*” (ST.99.1a), rendered as “*It seemed like the sky was melting into water*” (TT1.99.1b*-1b), and in “*Tâm hồn bấn loạn, ngôn ngữ độc thoại rối mù*” (ST.38.1a-2a), translated as “*Their chaotic minds, their troubled speech showed how...*” (TT1.38.1b). These additions make relationships between events, perceptions, and consequences more explicit than in the source text. In Baker’s terms, such modifications may be interpreted as forms of labelling and selective appropriation. Rather than altering the central narrative of violence, they increase the visibility of causal connections and experiential relations. As a result, scenes of

brutality are often presented through more explicit event structures, facilitating interpretability for target readers while maintaining the overall experiential orientation of the source text.

Taken together, the process shifts identified in the Physical Brutality domain reveal a pattern of substantial representation of continuity combined with selective reconfiguration. TT1 largely preserves the source text's Material-process dominance and action-oriented representation of violence. However, through process redistribution, omission, and addition, the translation occasionally reconstructs brutality as more explicitly event-driven, causally connected, and perceptually accessible. Interpreted through Baker's narrative framing strategies, these shifts primarily involve labelling, participant repositioning, and selective appropriation rather than large-scale reframing of the source narrative. Consequently, the translation remains broadly consistent with the adequacy-leaning orientation identified in the preceding analyses of initial, preliminary, and matricial norms.

Table 4.8. Prominent participant and circumstantial shifts in Physical Brutality (ST – TT1)

<i>Shift category</i>	<i>Typical pattern</i>	<i>Example</i>
Participant shifts	Participant specification	“ <u>Con ma</u> ” ào tới (ST.94.2a) → “ <u>The Phantoms</u> came” (TT1.94.2b)
	Participant specification	“Mảnh bom chém lia <u>một bàn chân</u> ” (ST.96.1a) → “A bomb shell had cut <u>one of his feet</u> ” (TT1.96.1b)
	Participant repositioning	thân thể <u>giập vỡ tan tành</u> (ST.8.4a) → bodies killed <u>by helicopter gunship</u> , broken (TT1.8.4b)
	Participant repositioning	khẩu phần lương thực <u>đang sụt xuống</u> (ST.35.1a) → the food ration <u>was reduced</u> (TT1.35.1b)
Circumstantial shifts	Explicit spatial circumstances	Thịnh “con” hy sinh trong trận chiến (ST.41.1a) → “Small” Thinh was killed in the <u>close</u> fighting. (TT1.41.1b)
	Explicit spatial circumstances	<u>Trên đầu</u> , trực thăng rà rạp <u>ngọn cây</u> (ST.6.1a) → <u>Above them</u> , helicopters flew <u>at top of the sea of the trees</u> (TT1.6.1b)
Lexical relabelling	Explicit naming of actors	Một trái <u>cối</u> 160 <u>nổ tung</u> (ST.102.1a) → A <u>106mm</u> bullet exploded (TT1.102.1b)
	Explicit locations and events	“trực diện trận giáp lá cà kinh khủng dưới chân <u>Ngọc Bơ Rẫy</u> ,” (ST.117.1a) → “engaging in fierce hand-to-hand fighting at the foot of <u>Ngoc Bo Ray mountain</u> ,” (TT1.117.1b)

Participant shifts

As shown in Table 4.8, participant shifts in the Physical Brutality domain primarily involve participant specification and participant repositioning. These shifts do not substantially alter the violent events represented in the source text; rather, they modify how participants are identified or assigned experiential roles within those events.

A recurrent pattern is participant specification. For example, the source-text expression “*Con ma*” *ào tới*” (ST.94.2a) is rendered as “*The Phantom came*” (TT1.94.2b). While the Vietnamese expression employs a metaphorical designation, TT1 reconstructs the participant through a more explicit nominal form. Similarly, “*Mảnh bom chém lìa một bàn chân*” (ST.96.1a) is translated as “*A bomb shell had cut one of his feet*” (TT1.96.1b), where the causal participant responsible for the injury is explicitly specified. In both cases, the translation increases the identifiability of participants involved in scenes of violence. From the perspective of Baker’s narrative framing, this tendency may be interpreted as participant repositioning and labelling, whereby the participants involved in violent actions become more readily identifiable to target readers.

Participant repositioning can also be observed in “*thân thể giập vỡ tan tành*” (ST.8.4a), which is rendered as “*bodies killed by helicopter gunship, broken*” (TT1.8.4b). Here, TT1 introduces an explicit military agent that is not overtly realised in the source text. Similarly, “*khẩu phần lương thực đang sụt xuống*” (ST.35.1a) becomes “*the food ration was reduced*” (TT1.35.1b), shifting attention from an ongoing process to an outcome associated with an implied external cause. Such modifications increase the visibility of agency and causal relations within the narrative. Rather than presenting violence primarily through its consequences, TT1 more frequently specifies who or what is responsible for those consequences. This tendency contributes to a more explicit representation of actor-action relationships within scenes of brutality.

Circumstantial shifts

Circumstantial shifts in the Physical Brutality domain are comparatively limited but exhibit a consistent tendency towards greater spatial specification. These modifications provide additional information regarding the location, setting, or physical environment in which violent events occur. For example, “*Thịnh “con” hy sinh trong trận chiến*” (ST.41.1a) is translated as “*Small*” *Thinh was killed in the close fighting*” (TT1.41.1b). The added circumstance “*in the close fighting*” provides a more explicit specification of the battlefield context surrounding the death. Similarly, “*Trên đầu, trực thăng rà rạp ngọn cây*” (ST.6.1a) becomes “*Above them, helicopters flew at top of the sea of the trees*” (TT1.6.1b), where the translation elaborates the spatial configuration of the scene. In terms of narrative framing, these additions may be interpreted as instances of spatial framing. By providing more explicit locative information, TT1 increases the specificity of battlefield scenes and facilitates readers’ reconstruction of the physical environment in which violence unfolds. Importantly, these expansions do not alter the sequence of events but contribute to a more explicitly anchored representation of violent experience.

Lexical labelling

A further pattern concerns lexical labelling, whereby actors, locations, and military references are rendered through more explicit or internationally recognizable terminology. Unlike participant shifts, which involve changes in experiential roles, lexical labelling primarily affects how entities are named and identified. One example of is “*Một trái cối 160 nổ tung*” (ST.102.1a), which becomes “*A 106mm bullet exploded*” (TT1.102.1b). The translation replaces a culturally specific military reference with a more explicit designation that may be more immediately interpretable to English-language readers. Similarly, “*trực diện trận giáp lá cà kinh khủng dưới chân Ngọc Bơ Rẫy*” (ST.117.1a) is rendered as “*engaging in fierce hand-to-hand fighting at the foot of Ngọc Bo Ray mountain*” (TT1.117.1b). Here, the battlefield location is made more explicit through the addition of the geographical label “*mountain*”. From the perspective of Baker’s narrative framing strategies, these modifications can be interpreted as instances of labelling. The translation reconstructs participants, locations, and military objects through labels that are more explicit and

referentially transparent. Rather than altering the underlying narrative of violence, lexical relabelling increases the accessibility of battlefield references and facilitates comprehension for target readers who may lack familiarity with the original socio-cultural context.

To sum up, the participant, circumstantial, and lexical shifts identified in the Physical Brutality domain reveal a consistent tendency towards greater explicitness. While the source text frequently represents violence through implicit agency, compressed battlefield references, and context-dependent participant identification, TT1 often reconstructs these elements through more explicit participants, clearer causal relations, and stronger spatial anchoring. Interpreted through Baker’s framework, these shifts primarily involve participant repositioning, spatial framing, and labelling rather than large-scale narrative reconfiguration. Consequently, the translation largely preserves the source text’s representation of physical brutality while making the experiential structure of violent events more accessible to English-language readers.

4.4.2.2. War Reality as Psychological Trauma

Table 4.9 presents the transitivity distribution in the domain of Psychological Trauma across the Vietnamese source text (ST) and TT1. The dataset comprises 105 clause-process units in ST and 100 clause-process units in TT1. The table provides an overview of how psychological suffering, traumatic memory, and internal disturbance are experientially construed in both texts, serving as the basis for the subsequent analysis of process, participant, and circumstantial shifts.

Table 4.9. Transitivity profile in the domain of Psychological Trauma (ST – TT1)

<i>Process type</i>	<i>ST (n)</i>	<i>ST (%)</i>	<i>TT1 (n)</i>	<i>TT1 (%)</i>	<i>Percentage-point change (TT1 – ST)</i>
Material	52	49.52	44	44.00	-5.52
Relational	25	23.81	29	29.00	+5.19
Mental	14	13.33	13	13.00	-0.33
Existential	3	2.86	3	3.00	+0.14
Verbal	0	0.00	0	0.00	0.00
Behavioral	9	8.57	11	11.00	+2.43
<i>Total</i>	105	100	100	100	

As shown in Table 4.9, Psychological Trauma is primarily realised through Material processes in both ST and TT1. Material processes account for 52 instances (49.52%) in ST and remain the largest category in TT1 with 44 instances (44.00%). This distribution suggests that psychological trauma in *The Sorrow of War* is frequently represented through actions, bodily reactions, intrusive experiences, and externally observable manifestations rather than exclusively through internal cognition.

The most notable change between ST and TT1 is the reduction of Material processes (-5.52 percentage points), accompanied by an increase in Relational processes (+5.19 percentage points). Relational processes rise from 25 instances (23.81%) in ST to 29 instances (29.00%) in TT1. This shift suggests that TT1 places relatively greater emphasis on states, conditions, evaluations, and identity constructions associated with trauma. While the source text frequently construes psychological disturbance through actions and events, TT1 more often represents trauma through relational attributions, identification, and descriptions of psychological states. The increase in Relational processes therefore indicates a partial redistribution of experiential emphasis from event-oriented representation towards state-oriented representation.

Mental processes are relatively stable, decreasing only marginally from 14 instances (13.33%) in ST to 13 instances (13.00%) in TT1. This stability suggests that TT1 largely preserves the source text's focus on perception, memory, and consciousness as central dimensions of psychological experience. The translation therefore largely preserves the source text's representation of memory, perception, and psychological processing as central dimension of traumatic experience.

A further noticeable change concerns Behavioural processes, which increase from 9 instances (8.57%) in ST to 11 instances (11.00%). Behavioural processes occupy an intermediate position between purely mental and purely material experience and often realise bodily manifestations of psychological states. Their increased frequency in TT1 suggests a tendency to represent trauma through observable symptoms and embodied reactions. Psychological suffering is therefore

more frequently construed through observable behavioural manifestations in addition to internal mental processes.

Existential processes remain marginal in both texts, accounting for only three instances in each version, while Verbal processes are absent altogether. These figures indicate that psychological trauma in both ST and TT1 is constructed primarily through actions, states, perceptions, and behavioural indicators rather than through verbalized reflection or existential declaration.

Overall, the transitivity profile suggests that TT1 broadly preserves the source text's experiential representation of psychological trauma while introducing a modest redistribution away from Material action and towards Relational states and Behavioural manifestations. This redistribution indicates a greater tendency to represent trauma through psychological states, evaluative descriptions and observable behavioural manifestations. However, the stability of Mental processes suggests that memory, perception, and consciousness remain central dimensions of traumatic experience in both texts. The specific mechanisms through which these representational adjustments are realised are examined in the following section through an analysis of prominent process shifts in the Psychological Trauma domain.

Table 4.10. Prominent process shifts in Psychological Trauma (ST – TT1)

<i>Shift category</i>	<i>Typical pattern</i>	<i>Example(s)</i>
Process shifts	ST Material → TT1 Relational	“Và lưu ảnh cuối cùng đọng trong tâm trí...” (ST.47.3a) → “And the small image, remaining in my mind...” (TT1.47.3b)
	ST Material → TT1 Relational	“Những người đã chết đã chết cả rồi.” (ST.62.1a) → The dead ones are irrevocably gone.” (TT1.62.1b)
	ST Relational → TT1 Material	“...hoá thành tiếng rú rít rợn gáy của trực thăng vũ trang” (ST.49.4a) → “...which turned in my mind into the horrifying sound of military helicopter’s propeller.” (TT1.49.4b)
	ST Relational → TT1 Material	“Rủi thay đã không thể thành ngay hiện thực cùng với thắng lợi của cuộc kháng chiến.” (ST.62.6a) → “Sadly, these can’t reappear immediately upon the victory of the resistance.” (TT1. 62.6b)
	ST Mental → TT1 Behavioural	“Và tôi không thể nào bình tâm nổi...” (ST.51.1a) → “And I still, to this day, can’t watch calmly...” (TT1.51.1b)
	ST Mental → TT1 Behavioural	“Đến bây giờ, đến lúc này đây, bạn hãy xem...” (ST.63.1a) → “So far, right now, let’s look at the reality around us...” (TT1.63.1b)
Process omissions	Omission of Material trauma reactions and embodied details	“Dằng dặc trôi qua trong hồi ức của Kiên...” (ST.39.1a) → “Over a long period of time, in his memory...” (TT1.39.1b); “...nghe tiếng quạt trần” (ST.49.3a) → “the sound of the ceiling fan” (TT1.49.3b); “đội một trái hỏa tiễn từ tàu rà” (ST.50.3a) → process omitted; “ôm theo những vết thương đỏ lôm, toác hoác” (ST.58.4a-5a) → “with their reddened tattered wounds” (TT.58.4b);

		“một cuộc chiến tranh chẳng những mãi mãi đè nặng...” (ST.78.2a) → process omitted;
Process additions	Introduction of evaluative or explanatory processes	Có thể là bởi vì đối với Kiên ...” (ST.78.1a) → “Maybe Kien felt as he did...” (TT1.78.1b*) Và dù sao mặc lòng...” (ST.80.1a) → “And whatever happened in the future...” (TT1.80.1b*)
Process condensation	Compression of Material chains into evaluative formulations	“các tử thần xanh tái lổ chỗ vết đạn cúi xuống như muốn soi bóng vào giấc ngủ của anh.” (ST.74.3a) → “The dead souls, pale and full of bullet holes moved into his sleep as if they were his mirrors.” (TT1.74.3b)

Table 4.10 summarises the most prominent process shifts identified in the Psychological Trauma domain between ST and TT1. The table focuses on recurrent patterns of process reconfiguration, omission, addition, and condensation that contribute to the reconstruction of traumatic experience in translation. Following the analytical procedures outlined in Chapter 3, these shifts are interpreted not only in terms of transitivity change but also in relation to Baker's (2018) narrative framing strategies, particularly labelling, participant repositioning, temporal/spatial framing, and selective appropriation. The examples presented below illustrate how TT1 redistributes experiential meanings associated with memory, psychological disturbance, and traumatic persistence while maintaining the broader representational orientation of the source text.

Process shifts

As shown in Table 4.10, one recurrent pattern involves shifts from Material to Relational processes. For example, "*Và lưu ảnh cuối cùng đọng trong tâm trí...*" (ST.47.3a) is rendered as "*And the small image, remaining in my mind...*" (TT1.47.3b). Similarly, "*Những người đã chết đã chết cả rồi*" (ST.62.1a) becomes "*The dead ones are irrevocably*" (TT1.62.1b). In both cases, experiential meanings originally construed through dynamic processes are reconstructed as relatively stable states or conditions. Rather than foregrounding the occurrence of an action, TT1 foregrounds the enduring condition resulting from that action. From the perspective of narrative framing, this shift may be interpreted as a form of labelling, whereby trauma is increasingly represented through persistent psychological and existential states rather than through unfolding events. This tendency corresponds with the increase in Relational processes observed in Table 4.9.

The reverse pattern, namely Relational - Material shifts, also occurs, although less frequently. For instance, "*...hoá thành tiếng rú rít rộn gáy của trực thăng vũ trang*" (ST.49.4a) is rendered as "*...which turned in my mind into the horrifying sound of military helicopter's propeller.*" (TT1.49.4b). Likewise, "*Rủi thay đã không thể thành ngay hiện thực cùng với thắng lợi của cuộc kháng chiến*" (ST.62.6a) becomes "*Sadly, these can't reappear immediately upon the victory of the*

resistance” (TT1.62.6b). Here, TT1 reconstructs relatively static relational meanings through more dynamic processes. In Baker’s terms, these shifts increase the salience of temporal progression, foregrounding the unfolding of events and experiences through time, thereby presenting traumatic memory as an ongoing process rather than a stable condition.

A further recurrent pattern involves Mental – Behavioural shifts. In “*Và tôi không thể nào bình tâm nổi...*” (ST.51.1a), the Mental configuration is rendered as “*And I still, to this say, can’t watch calmly...*” (TT1.51.1b). Similarly, “*Đến bây giờ, đến lúc này đây, bạn hãy xem...*” (ST.63.1a) becomes “*So far, right now, let’s look at the reality around us...*” (TT1.63.1b). These shifts move the representation of trauma from internal recognition toward externally observable behaviour. Rather than representing psychological disturbance solely as an internal mental state, TT1 increasingly construes in through actions and behavioural manifestations. This pattern aligns with the increase in Behavioural processes identified in Table 4.12 and may be interpreted through Baker’s notion of participant repositioning, whereby traumatic experience becomes more publicly visible and experientially accessible.

Process omissions

Another recurrent pattern involves the omission of Material processes associated with bodily reactions, sensory perceptions, and embodied manifestations of trauma. For example, “*Dằng dặc trôi qua trong hồi ức của Kiên...*” (ST.39.1a) is rendered as “*Over a long period of time, in his memory...*” (TT1.39.1b), eliminating the original Material process. Similar reductions occur in “*...nghe tiếng quạt trần*” (ST.49.3a), “*đợi một trái hỏa tiễn từ tàu rà...*” (ST.50.3a), “*ôm theo những vết thương đở lòm, toác hoác*” (ST.58.4a-5a), and “*một cuộc chiến tranh chẳng những mãi mãi đè nặng*” (ST.78.2a). From the perspective of Baker’s framework, these omissions can be interpreted as instances of selective appropriation. TT1 selectively removes some locally elaborated experiential details while preserving the broader representation of traumatic memory. This results in a reduction in experiential density at specific points in the narrative. Psychological trauma remains central, but certain embodied and sensory dimensions become less prominent.

Process additions

TT1 also introduces evaluative and explanatory processes that are not overly realised in the source text. For example, “*Có thể là bởi vì đối với Kiên...*” (ST.78.1a) becomes “*Maybe Kien felt as he did...*” (TT1.78.1b), while “*Và dù sao mặc lòng...*” (ST.80.1a) is rendered as “*And whatever happened in the future...*” (TT1.80.1b). These additions increase interpretive explicitness by making causal or evaluative relations more overt. In Baker’s terms, such modifications may be interpreted as forms of selective appropriation, whereby psychological states are articulated more directly for target readers. Rather than leaving certain relationships implicit as in the ST, TT1 provides additional interpretive guidance regarding emotional causality and subjective evaluation.

Process condensation

A final pattern involves process condensation. For example, the source-text sequence “*các tử thân xanh tái lỗ chỗ vết đạn cúi xuống như muốn soi bóng vào giấc ngủ của anh*” (ST.74.1a-2a-3a) is rendered as “*The dead souls, pale and full of bullet holes, moved into his sleep as if they were his mirrors.*” (TT1.74.1b-3b). Here, a more elaborate chain of experiential meanings is condensed into a more compact formulation. This modification reduces structural complexity while preserving the core traumatic imagery. For a narrative-framing perspective, condensation may be interpreted as a form of selective appropriation, whereby certain intermediate experiential details are compressed into a more economical representation. The resulting effect is not the elimination of traumatic content but a tighter and more integrated presentation of psychological disturbance.

To sum up, the process shifts identified in the Psychological Trauma domain suggest that TT1 preserves the source text’s overall representation of trauma while selectively reconfiguring its experiential profile. The reduction in Material processes alongside the increased prominence of Relational and Behavioural processes indicates a tendency to construe trauma less through action and impact and more through states, evaluations, and embodied manifestations. In addition, selective omissions, additions, and condensations redistribute experiential detail, often

increasing interpretive explicitness while reducing certain locally elaborated descriptions. Interpreted through Baker's narrative framing framework, these patterns foreground particular dimensions of psychological experience without substantially altering the broader narrative of trauma. Consequently, TT1 reconstructs psychological trauma as a more explicitly articulated and evaluatively organized dimension of war experience while remaining broadly aligned with the representational orientation of the source text.

While the above discussion demonstrates how TT1 redistributes experiential meanings through changes in process, the reconstruction of psychological trauma is also shaped by modifications in participant representation and circumstantial framing. Table 4.11 therefore presents the most prominent participant and circumstantial shifts identified in the Psychological Trauma dataset.

Table 4.11. Prominent participant and circumstantial shifts in Psychological Trauma (ST – TT1)

<i>Shift category</i>	<i>Typical pattern</i>	<i>Example(s)</i>
Participant shifts	Participant specification	<p>“và đằng sau bọn Mỹ xô tới, vây xúm lại, ...” (ST.47.6a-7a) → “the American rushing towards her from behind, surrounding her” (TT.47.6b-7b);</p> <p>“một cuộc chiến tranh chẳng những mãi mãi đè nặng, mãi mãi ám ảnh” (ST.78.2a-3a) → “the war which not only continually haunted him” (TT1.78.2b-3b)</p>
	Participation specification and participant repositioning	<p>“Thú thật là anh cực kỳ khiếp hãi những thiên truyện ấy,” (ST.70.1a) → “War stories frighten him too much” (TT1.70.1b);</p> <p>“song những khát vọng nồng cháy từng là cứu cánh của cả một thời” (ST.62.4a) → “but the burning will which was once our salvation” (TT1.62.4b)</p>
Circumstantial shifts	Explicit temporal circumstances	<p>“Trở về sau chiến tranh,” (ST.48.1a) → Since returning from the war, up to the present, (TT1.48.1b)</p>
	Explicit spatial circumstances	<p>“hóa thành tiếng rú rít rợn gáy của trục thẳng vũ trang” (ST.49.4a) → “which turned in my mind into the horrifying sound of military helicopter's propeller.” (TT1.49.4b)</p>

Participant shifts

The participant shifts presented in Table 4.11 suggest that TT1 tends to make relationships between traumatic experiences and their affected participants more explicit. A recurrent pattern involves participant specification through the addition or clarification of affected participants. For example, in “*và đằng sau bọn Mỹ xô tới, vây xúm lại, ...*” (ST.47.6a-7a), TT1 introduces the Goal “her” in “*the American rushing towards her from behind, surrounding her*” (TT.47.6b-7b). Similarly, in “*một cuộc chiến tranh chẳng những mãi mãi đè nặng, mãi mãi ám ảnh*” (ST.78.2a-3a), TT1 renders the expression as “*the war which not only continually haunted him*” (TT1.78.2b-3b), explicitly identifying the affected participant. From the perspective of Baker’s narrative framework, these additions constitute instances of selective appropriation as TT1 introduces experiential detail that is only implicit in the ST. This should strengthen the Actor-Goal relationship and make the victimhood of particular individuals more immediately accessible to readers.

Participant repositioning is also evident in several cases. In “*Thú thật là anh cực kỳ khiếp hãi những thiên truyện ấy,*” (ST.70.1a), the psychological reaction is reformulated as “*War stories frighten him too much*” (TT1.70.1b). Here, the source text foregrounds the experiencer’s emotional state, whereas TT1 reconstructs the triggering stimulus as an active force acting upon the participant. A similar tendency can be observed in “*song những khát vọng nồng cháy từng là cứu cánh của cả một thời*” (ST.62.4a), rendered as “*but the burning will which was once our salvation*” (TT1.62.4b). TT1 explicitly inserts the collective participant “*our*”, strengthening the connection between the aspiration and the wartime community. These shifts may be interpreted as a combination of participant repositioning, labelling and selective appropriation. Collectively, they contribute to a representation of psychological trauma in which causal triggers become more clearly identifiable and relationships between traumatic forces and affected participants become more overtly articulated.

Circumstantial shifts

The circumstantial shifts presented in Table 4.11 primarily involve the addition of explicit temporal and spatial circumstances. A notable example occurs in “*Trở về*”

sau chiến tranh,” (ST.48.1a), which TT1 expands to “*Since returning from the war, up to the present,*” (TT1.48.1b). The translation introduces both a starting point (“*since returning from the war*”) and an endpoint (“*up to the present*”), thereby constructing a more clearly bounded temporal frame for the subsequent narrative. In Baker’s terms, this shift combines temporal framing with selective appropriation, as additional temporal information is introduced to guide readers’ interpretation of the experience as an ongoing post-war condition rather than a discrete historical event. The result is a stronger emphasis on the continuity of psychological suffering across time.

A related pattern appears in the additions of explicit psychological space. In “*hóa thành tiếng rú rít rợn gáy của trực thăng vũ trang*” (ST.49.4a), TT1 renders the expression as “*...which turned in my mind into the horrifying sound of military helicopter’s propeller.*” (TT1.49.4b). The inserted circumstantial phrase “*in my mind*” explicitly locates the experience within the character’s cognitive space, foregrounding the subjective processing of traumatic memory. Instead of presenting the sound merely as an external phenomenon, TT1 frames it as a mental association generated within consciousness. This addition may be interpreted as a combination of selective appropriation and spatial framing, where the space involved is psychological rather than physical. It therefore contributes to TT1’s broader tendency to construe trauma as a persistent psychological condition embedded in memory and subjective experience.

In general, the participant and circumstantial shifts indicate that TT1 tends to increase the explicitness of experiential relations within the Psychological Trauma domain. Through participant specification and repositioning, traumatic experiences are more clearly linked to identifiable affected participants and causal triggers. Through the addition of temporal and psychological-space circumstances, trauma is more firmly anchored within ongoing temporal and cognitive frames. These patterns are most consistently associated with selective appropriation, supplemented by temporal and spatial framing, and occasional instances of labelling. The cumulative effect is a representation of psychological trauma that remains broadly faithful to the source text while making relationships of causality, affectedness, temporal and spatial anchoring more explicit for English-language readers.

4.4.2.3. War Reality as Collective Memory

War reality is also constructed in the novel through collective memory, where the war is remembered not only as a sequence of events but as a shared repertoire of losses, scenes, and recurrent images that bind individual experience to a broader communal narrative. In the ST, this domain is realized through compressed recollections that alternate between material happenings (death, injury, movement, destruction), relational manifestations that summarise states and meanings, and mental/verbal representations that mark remembering, knowing, hearing, and reporting. When rendered into TT1, collective memory is largely preserved as a record of what happened, yet, it is also represented in ways that increase narrativity and public legibility for an Anglophone readership.

Table 4.12. Transitivity profile in the domain of Collective Memory (ST – TT1)

<i>Process type</i>	<i>ST (n)</i>	<i>ST (%)</i>	<i>TT1 (n)</i>	<i>TT1 (%)</i>	<i>Percentage-point change (TT1 – ST)</i>
Material	133	64.25	129	62.02	-2.23
Relational	28	13.53	34	16.35	+2.82
Mental	27	13.04	24	11.54	-1.50
Existential	3	1.45	5	2.40	+0.95
Verbal	3	1.45	3	1.44	-0.01
Behavioral	13	6.28	13	6.25	-0.03
Total	207	100	208	100	

Note: Percentages are calculated relative to the number of process realisations identified in each text (ST = 207; TT1 = 208). Percentage-point change is calculated as TT1 (%) minus ST (%).

Table 4.12 presents the transitivity profile of the Collective Memory domain across ST and TT1. Similar to the other experiential domains, Material processes constitute the dominant process type in both texts, accounting for 64.25% of all process realisations in ST and 62.02% in TT1. This finding indicates that collective memory in both versions is primarily constructed through recollection of actions, events, deaths, losses, and wartime experiences rather than through abstract reflection alone. The continued predominance of Material suggests that TT1 largely preserves the event-oriented foundation of the source text’s memorial discourse.

At the same time, TT1 exhibits a modest reduction in Material processes (-2.23 percentage points) alongside an increase in Relational processes (+2.82 percentage points). Relational processes rise from 13.53% to 16.35% in TT1, becoming the most prominent area of change within the process distribution profile. This pattern suggests that while TT1 continues to present collective memory through recalled events, it also shows a greater tendency to construe remembered experience through states, identifications, descriptive summaries. The shift is consistent with the recurrent Material to Relational classification identified elsewhere in the dataset and points towards a slightly stronger emphasis on interpretive representations of remembered events.

Mental processes show a moderate decrease from 13.04% to 11.54% (-1.50 percentage points), indicating a relatively reduced reliance on explicit acts of remembering, or perceiving. Instead of foregrounding memory as an ongoing cognitive activity, TT1 occasionally redistributes experiential meaning towards Material and Relational representations. Existential processes increase slightly from 1.45% to 2.40% (+0.95 percentage points), suggesting a marginally greater tendency to anchor collective memory through statements of existence. By contrast, Verbal and Behavioural processes remain largely stable across the two texts, indicating that reporting acts and behavioural manifestations play a relatively minor role in the representation of collective memory.

Overall, the transitivity profile demonstrates a high degree of representational continuity between ST and TT1. Although Material processes remain dominant in both versions, TT1 shows a limited rebalancing towards Relational and, to a lesser extent, Existential configurations. As a result, collective memory remains fundamentally event-oriented but is occasionally presented through more descriptive forms of representation. The implications of these distributional patterns are examined in greater detail through the analysis of process, participant, and circumstantial shifts in the following sections.

Following the transitivity profile presented in Table 4.12, Table 4.13 identifies the most prominent process-level shifts through which TT1 reconstructs the

experiential representation of collective memory. While the overall distribution of process types suggests a high degree of representational continuity, closer examination reveals recurring patterns of process reclassification, omission, addition. In accordance with the analytical procedure outlined in Chapter 3, these shifts are examined not only in terms of changes to transitivity configuration, but also in relation to Baker’s (2018) narrative framing strategies. The discussion below therefore considers how process shifts affect the restructuring of collective memory as a mode of remembering, witnessing, and reporting past wartime experiences.

Table 4.13. Prominent process shifts in Collective Memory (ST – TT1)

<i>Shift category</i>	<i>Typical pattern</i>	<i>Example(s)</i>
Process shifts	ST Material → TT1 Relational	“bị dồn vào thế mất còn chỉ trong nháy mắt và tắc gang” (ST.84.3a) → “Dying and surviving were no more than an inch from each other” (TT1.84.3b)
	ST Relational → TT1 Material	Thân xác ra tro” (ST.22.1a) → “His body has been turned to ash” (TT1.22.1b)
Process omissions	Omission of Material processes	“ra đi cùng với ba chục năm trường chiến trận...” (ST.114.3a); “...bóp mặt nàng như vậy” (ST.146.7a);
	Omission of Mental processes	“đọc thấy...” (ST.115.4a) (Mental); “Kiên nhìn thấy thế: (ST.140.2a) (Mental);
Process additions	Addition of Material processes	“ai nấy nom nớp một lệnh hành quân ứng chiến” (ST.34.2a) → “everybody was worrying that they’d get an order to do support fighting” (TT1.34.2b-2b1);
	Addition of a Relational process	“Chiến sự lớn lao làm chuyên rung” (ST.33.1a) → “The fighting was so loud that it shook the earth” (TT1.33.1b-1b1);

Process shifts

The most recurrent shift pattern in the Collective Memory domain involves the reconfiguration of Material processes into Relational processes. One example occurs in “*bị dồn vào thế mất còn chỉ trong nháy mắt và tắc gang*” (ST. 84.3a), rendered as “Dying and surviving were no more than an inch from each other”

(TT1.84.3b). In the source text, the Material construction construes a dynamic process in which participants are forced into an extreme life-or-death situation. TT1 re-expresses this experience through a Relational clause that construes the proximity between survival and death as a state of affairs. Rather than foregrounding the unfolding event, the translation presents the resulting condition. In Baker's terms, this shift may be interpreted as a form of selective appropriation in which a dynamic event sequence is reformulated as a state-based representation.

The reverse pattern, namely Relational to Material shifts, is also observed. For instance, "*Thân xác ra tro*" (ST.22.1a) is rendered as "*His body had been turned to ash*" (TT1.22.1b). Whereas the source text presents destruction as a resultant state, TT1 reconstructs it through a Material passive process that foregrounds transformation as an event. In Baker's framing terms, the change increases the prominence of the destructive action underlying the resultant condition. The focus therefore moves from the condition of the body to the process of destruction itself. Such shifts contribute to a slightly stronger event-oriented representation of collective memory, even though the overall transitivity profile shows a modest increase in Relational processes.

Overall, these process shifts suggest that TT1 alternates between event-based and state-based configurations of remembered experience. Some memories are reformulated through Relational clauses that foreground outcomes and evaluative meanings, whereas others are reconstructed through Material processes that make causal developments more explicit. Rather than systematically reorienting the memorial narrative in one direction, TT1 appears to redistribute experiential emphasis between events and states according to local textual requirements.

Process omissions

Another recurrent pattern involves the omission of Material and Mental processes. Material omissions can be observed in examples such as "*ra đi cùng với ba chục năm trường chiến trận...*" (ST.114.3a) and "*...bóp mặt nàng như vậy*" (ST.146.7a), where process meanings present in the source text are not realised as separate clause-process units in TT1. Similarly, Mental processes are omitted in

examples such as “*được thấy...*” (ST.115.4a) and “*Kiên nhìn thấy thế*” (ST.140.2a). These omissions do not remove major events from the memorial narrative. Rather, they tend to affect locally embedded details of action, perception, or observation. From the perspective of Baker’s (2018) selective appropriation, the omissions represent a reduction in experiential detail rather than a substantial restructuring of narrative content. The omitted Mental processes are particularly noteworthy because they reduce explicit references to acts of seeing, perceiving, or witnessing. Consequently, certain remembered experiences are presented without overt mediation through an observer’s consciousness. Likewise, the omission of some Material processes compresses individual event sequences by reducing the number of explicitly represented actions. Nevertheless, because such omissions remain relatively limited in frequency, they do not substantially alter the overall representation of collective memory. The broader pattern of recollection, loss, and wartime experience is preserved, while selected experiential details are condensed or absorbed into neighboring clauses.

Process additions

In contrast to omission, TT1 also introduces additional Material and Relational processes that are not explicitly realised in the source text. For example, “*ai nấy nom nóp một lệnh hành quân ứng chiến*” (ST.34.2a) is expanded into “*everybody was worrying that they’d get an order to do support fighting*” (TT1.34.2b-2b1). The added Material process (“do support fighting”) makes the implied military action more explicit. Likeness, “*Chiến sự lớn lao làm chuyễn rung*” (ST.33.1a) becomes “*The fighting was so loud that it shook the earth*” (TT1.33.1b-1b1), where an additional Relational process contributes to a more explicit representation of the relationship between the military event and its physical consequences. These additions may also be interpreted through Baker’s notion of selective appropriation. By introducing additional process meanings, TT1 makes experiential relations that remain implicit or condensed in the source text more overt. The added processes frequently specify military activities, articulate causal links, or elaborate consequences that are only indirectly implied in the source text. As a result, the

translation presents remembered events through a more fully articulated chain of experiential relations. The additions therefore contribute to a memorial narrative in which actions, consequences, and causal connections are more explicitly represented. While remaining broadly consistent with the experiential content of the source text, TT1 provides target readers with a more overt representation of how events and outcomes are related.

Overall, the process shifts identified in the Collective Memory domain indicate a high degree of representational continuity accompanied by selective redistribution of experiential meanings. Material ↔ Relational shifts redistribute emphasis between event-oriented and state-oriented configurations, while omissions reduce locally embedded details of action and perception. Additions, in contrast, tend to make certain military activities, causal relationships, and experiential connections more explicit. In Baker's terms, these patterns are most consistently associated with selective appropriation, whereby experiential material is condensed, expanded, or reformulated without fundamentally altering the memorial orientation of the narrative. The cumulative effect is that TT1 preserves collective memory as a record of wartime experience while presenting that experience in a more explicit and systematically articulated manner.

Table 4.14. Prominent participant and circumstantial shifts in Collective Memory (ST – TT1)

<i>Shift category</i>	<i>Typical pattern</i>	<i>Example(s)</i>
Participant shifts	Participant specification through labelling	“bắn xả vào dòng thác tàn binh của trung đoàn 45” (ST.127.4a) → “...were firing non-stop at the stream of the remnants from the <u>Saigonese Regiment 45</u> ” (TT1.127.4b)
	Change in participant role	“...dưới những vách hầm ngầm bị tổng thủ pháo” (ST.86.3a) → “after artilleries had blocked their exit” (TT1.86.3b)
	Participant specification through collective reference	“Không thể nào không rùng mình” (ST.114.1a) → “Everybody shuddered” (TT1.114.1b)
	Participant specification through spatial labelling	“rên thì dân xứ nào cũng một giọng như nhau” (ST.90.6a) → “On our side and on the Saigonese side, everybody moaned the same.” (TT1.90.6b)
Circumstantial shifts	Explicit spatial circumstance	“Người Nam hay Bắc hay Trung cũng chả biết...” (ST.90.4a) → “But did he come from the North, the South, or the Centre, I didn’t know” (TT1.90.4a)

While the preceding analysis focused on process-level redistribution of experiential meanings, Table 4.14 presents the most prominent participant and circumstantial shifts identified in the Collective Memory domain. As outlined in Chapter 3, participant and circumstantial features were recorded only where modifications in participant configuration, participant specification, participant roles, lexical labelling, or circumstantial framing altered the experiential representation of the source text. The pattern presented here therefore do not constitute a comprehensive inventory of all participant and circumstantial features, but rather highlight recurrent shifts that contribute to the reconstruction of collective memory in TT1.

Participant shifts

Participant shifts occur through participant specification as in “*bắn xả vào dòng thác tàn binh của trung đoàn 45*” (ST.127.4a), which is rendered into TT1 as “...were firing non-stop at the stream of the remnants from the *Saigonese* Regiment 45” (TT1.127.4b). While the source text refers to a military unit through a more context-dependent expression, TT1 introduces the label “*the Saigonese*”, providing a more explicit designation. This shift may be interpreted as labelling in Baker’s terms, increasing referential specificity and making the identity of the represented group more accessible to readers who may lack the historical and cultural knowledge presupposed by the source text.

Another pattern is participant specification through collective reference. For example, “*Không thể nào không rùng mình*” (ST.114.1a) in ST becomes “*Everybody shuddered*” (TT1.114.1b) in TT1. The source text encodes a generalized experiential reaction without explicitly identifying a particular group, whereas TT1 introduces a collective participant. This shift makes the experiencer group more explicit and transforms an abstract reaction into a shared communal response. Through Baker’s framework, the addition can be viewed as a form of selective appropriation, foregrounding the collective nature of memory and emotional response.

This similar pattern also occurs through spatial labelling. In “*rên thì dân xứ nào cũng một giọng như nhau*” (ST.90.6a), TT1 renders the phrase as “*On our side*

and on the Saigonese side, everybody moaned the same.” (TT1.90.6b). Here, TT1 introduces labels that divide participants according to opposing wartime positions. This represents a form of labelling that organizes social actors into recognizable groups and strengthens the geopolitical coordinates of the remembered event. At the same time, the statement that “*everyone moaned the same*” preserves the underlying emphasis on shared human suffering across conflict boundaries.

Another notable pattern involves changes in participant role. In “...*dưới những ngách hầm ngầm bị tổng thủ pháo*” (ST.86.3a), TT1 reconstructs the clause as “*after artilleries had blocked their exit*” (TT1.86.3b). The source text backgrounds the responsible force through a passive-like construction, whereas TT1 introduces an explicit Actor. This redistribution of participant roles increases the visibility of agency within the clause. Interpreted through Baker’s framework, the shift reflects a form of selective appropriation that foregrounds the causal force behind the event, making relations of action and affectedness more explicit while leaving the broader memorial meaning intact.

Circumstantial shifts

The most prominent circumstantial pattern in the Collective Memory domain is the addition of explicit spatial circumstances. This can be observed in the translation of “*Người Nam hay Bắc hay Trung cũng chả biết...*” (ST.90.4a) as “*But did he come from the North, the South, or the Centre, I didn’t know*” (TT1.90.4a-4a1). While the source text refers to regional identity in a condensed manner, TT1 reconstructs the distinction through explicit spatial labels. From the perspective of Baker’s narrative framing theory, this represents a combination of labelling and spatial framing, as the translation more clearly locates participants within recognizable geopolitical categories. The added specificity strengthens the spatial coordinates of recollection and assists readers in situating the remembered individual within the broader social and political landscape of wartime Vietnam.

Taken together, the participant and circumstantial shifts in the Collective Memory domain indicate that TT1 generally preserves the source text’s memorial orientation while increasing the explicitness with which social actors and spatial relations are represented. Through participant specification, role redistribution, and

spatial framing, the translation tends to make collective experiences more readily identifiable and interpretable. According to Baker (2018), these shifts are most consistently associated with labelling, selective appropriation, and spatial framing, which together contribute to a more explicitly organized representation of collective memory without substantially altering the underlying experiential content of the source text.

4.4.2.4. *War Reality as Geopolitical Conflict*

The Geopolitical Conflict domain concerns the representation of political actors, military organisations, territorial labels, and conflict-related relations that frame the broader war context. Table 4.15 presents the overall transitivity profile of this domain in the source text and TT1. As in the previous sections, the comparison provides an overview of process-type distributions before examining the specific linguistic mechanisms through which geopolitical conflict is reconstructed in translation.

Table 4.15. Transitivity profile in the domain of Geopolitical Conflict (ST – TT1)

Process type	ST (n)	ST (%)	TT1 (n)	TT1 (%)	Percentage-point change (TT1 – ST)
Material	38	57.58	40	60.61	+3.03
Relational	17	25.76	19	28.79	+3.03
Mental	4	6.06	5	7.58	+1.52
Existential	5	7.58	1	1.52	-6.06
Verbal	0	0.00	0	0.00	0.00
Behavioral	2	3.03	1	1.52	-1.51
Total	66	100	66	100	

As shown in Table 4.15, the Geopolitical Conflict domain is characterized by a predominantly Material profile in both texts. Material processes account for 57.58% of all process realisations in the ST and 60.61% in TT1, making them the dominant resource for representing military operations, political actions, and conflict-related events. Relational processes constitute the second largest category, increasing from 25.76% in the ST to 28.79% in TT1. Mental, Existential, and Behavioural processes occur relatively infrequently, while Verbal processes are absent from both texts.

Although the overall transitivity profile remains largely stable, several shifts can be observed. TT1 shows a slight increase in both Material processes (+3.03 percentage points), and Relational processes (+3.03 percentage points). Mental processes also rise slightly (+1.52 percentage points). In contrast, Existential processes decrease markedly from 7.58% to 1.52% (-6.06 percentage points), while Behavioural processes decline marginally (-1.51 percentage points). These changes suggest that TT1 redistributes a proportion of experiential meaning away from existential representations and towards Material and Relational configurations.

From a transitivity perspective, the overall pattern suggests that TT1 preserves the ST's event-oriented representation of geopolitical conflict while increasing the prominence of both action-based and relational meanings. The rise in Material processes indicates a slightly stronger tendency to present geopolitical realities through actions, operations, and concrete developments. At the same time, the increase in Relational processes suggests a tendency to make political alignments, institutional identities, or conflict-related categories more explicit. However, because Material processes remain dominant in both texts, geopolitical conflict continues to be construed primarily through actions and events, with relational meaning functioning as a secondary resource for defining political alignments, identities, and conflict conditions. The specific mechanisms underlying these distributional changes are examined below through process, participant, and circumstantial shifts.

Table 4.16. Prominent process shifts in Geopolitical Conflict (ST – TT1)

<i>Shift category</i>	<i>Typical pattern</i>	<i>Example(s)</i>
Process shifts	ST Existential → TT1 Material	“song đã có sơ tán” (ST.72.2a) → “but people were ordered to evacuate” (TT1.72.2b) “có đào hầm” (ST.72.3a) → “to dig shelters” (TT1.72.3b)
	ST Existential → TT1 Relational	“sắp có những bước ngoặt và những đột biến cho mọi cuộc đời” (ST.75.2a) → “...which would be a turning point in every one's lives” (TT1.75.2b)
Process omissions	Omission of Material processes	“đang khởi động” (ST.20.1a); “nơi thì rền vang tiếng súng” (ST.27.2a) “và cuồn cuộn những cột lửa” (ST.158.3a) → “and noisy rolling columns of fire” (TT1.158.3b)
	Omission of Existential processes	“đã có một giây” (ST.155.2)
Process additions	Addition of Mental processes	“Và bất chấp trong tầm pháo có cả đồng minh,” (ST.93.1a) → “And not even noticing that there was their allies” (TT1.93.1b)
		“Cuộc đời của bộ binh B3 thời hiệp định” (ST.28.1a) → “The life of B3 Infantry following the Paris Agreement” (TT1.28.1b)

Compared with the preceding domains, the reconstruction of Geopolitical Conflict in TT1 is realised less through systematic redistribution of process types and more through modifications to participant representation and circumstantial framing. Nevertheless, several recurrent patterns can be identified, particularly involving the redistribution of Existential processes, selective process omission, and occasional process additions. Collectively, these shifts tend to make geopolitical developments more explicit as actions, events, or cognitively interpreted experiences rather than as states of existence alone.

Process shifts

The most recurrent process shift in this domain involves the reconfiguration of Existential processes into either Material or Relational processes. For example, the existential construction “*song đã có sơ tán*” (ST.72.2a) is rendered as (TT1.72.2b), while becomes (TT1.72.3b). In the source text, the Existential process simply indicates the existence of wartime measures such as evacuation and shelter construction. TT1, however, reconstructs these phenomena through Material processes, foregrounding the actions undertaken by human participants. Rather than preserving wartime preparations as conditions that existed, the translation represents them as deliberate responses to conflict. From the perspective of Baker’s narrative framing framework, this shift may be interpreted as a form of selective appropriation whereby existentially presented information is reformulated into action-oriented representations, increasing the visibility of human agency within the geopolitical situation. A similar tendency can be observed in the Existential – Relational shift. The source-text expression “*sắp có những bước ngoặt và những đột biến cho mọi cuộc đời*” (ST.75.2a) is translated as “*which would be a turning point in every one’s lives,*” (TT1.75.2b). Here, the existential anticipation of forthcoming changes is reformulated as a Relational identification. Rather than presenting the turning point as something that will come into existence, TT1 classifies it as a defining condition in people’s lives. Interpreted through Baker’s notion of selective appropriation, the shift foregrounds

the significance of the geopolitical transformation by presenting it as an identifiable historical condition rather than a merely anticipated development.

Process omissions

Table 4.16 also shows instances of process omission, affecting both Material and Existential processes. Examples include the omission of Material processes such as “*đang khởi động*” (ST.20.1a), “*noi thì rền vang tiếng súng*” (ST.27.2a), and “*và cuộn cuộn những cột lửa*” (ST.158.3a), as well as the omission of the Existential process in “*đã có một giây*” (ST.155.2a). These omissions generally involve locally embedded details describing military activities, battlefield atmosphere, or momentary states. Rather than removing major geopolitical developments, they reduce certain descriptive components of the conflict environment. In terms of Baker’s framework, such omissions represent selective appropriation through the suppression of particular experiential details while preserving the broader geopolitical narrative. The result is a slightly more condensed representation of conflict without substantial alteration to the overall political or military context.

Process additions

In contrast, TT1 occasionally introduces additional processes that are absent from the source text. One example is the addition of a Mental process in “*Và bất chấp trong tầm pháo có cả đồng minh*” (ST.93.1a), rendered as “*And not even noticing that there was their allies*” (TT1.93.1b). The inserted Mental process “*not noticing*” explicitly foregrounds perception and awareness, directing attention to the actors’ cognitive relationship with the geopolitical situation. This addition may be interpreted as selective appropriation because it introduces an interpretive dimension that is only implicit in the source text, thereby making the circumstances of conflict more readily accessible to target readers. A further example occurs in “*Cuộc đời của bộ binh B3 thời hiệp định*” (ST.28.1a), translated as “*The life of B3 Infantry following the Paris Agreement*” (TT1.28.1b). Although the experiential content remains largely unchanged, the added formulation explicitly situates the military experience within a clearly identifiable political

framework. The addition therefore contributes to a more explicit geopolitical contextualization of the event being narrated.

Overall, the process shifts observed in the Geopolitical Conflict domain are relatively limited and do not substantially alter the transitivity profile shown in Tabel 4.15. The most noticeable tendency is the redistribution of some Existential meanings into Material and Relational configurations, which makes wartime descriptions more readily interpretable as actions or identifiable historical conditions. Meanwhile, omissions reduce selected descriptive details, whereas additions occasionally strengthen cognitive or political contextualization. Interpreted through Baker's framework, these modifications are most consistently associated with selective appropriation, involving the expansion, reduction or reformulation of experiential meanings while preserving the source text's overall representation of geopolitical conflict. The more substantial representational changes in this domain emerge not at the level of process type, but through participant and circumstantial shifts examined in the following section.

Table 4.17. Prominent participant and circumstantial shifts in Geopolitical Conflict (ST – TT1)

<i>Shift category</i>	<i>Typical pattern</i>	<i>Example(s)</i>
Participant shifts	Participant specification through ideological relabelling	<p>“bọn ngụy” (ST.20.1a) → “The Saigon forces” (ST.20.1b); “quân ta” (ST.32.1a) → “our armed forces” (TT1.32.1b); “quân ta” (ST.110.2a) → “the Northern troops” (TT1.110.2b) “quân ta” (ST.157.1a) → “the revolutionary forces” (TT1.157.1b) “địch ở trên đèo” (ST.157.1a) → “the enemy on the pass” (TT1.157.1b) “xác quân thù” (ST.108.1a) → “corpses of AVRN air forces commandoes” (ST.108.1b)</p>
	Participant specification through geopolitical identification	<p>“bọn lính chiến” (ST.109.1a) → “fighting soldiers of the Saigon Armed Forces” (TT1.109.1b) “bọn cảnh sát” (ST.111.1a) → “The Saigonese police” (TT1.111.1b)</p>
	Participant specification deitic affiliation	<p>“(Và bất chấp trong tầm pháo có cả đồng minh,” (ST.93.1a) → “(And not even noticing that there was) their allies” (TT1.93.1b)</p>
Circumstantial shifts	Explicit spatial circumstances	<p>“sự tình hai biên giới” (ST.76.3a) → “border between two countries” (TT1.76.3b)</p>

	Explicit locational specification	<p>“trên tàu tốc hành quân lính... qua thành phố” (ST.77.1a) → “express trains full of soldiers...through Hanoi.” (TT1.77.1b)</p>
	Explicit temporal-political circumstances	<p>“thời hiệp định” (ST.28.1a) → “following the Paris Agreement” (TT1.28.1b) “hồi Mậu Thân” (ST.25.4a) → “the period Offensive 1968” (TT1.25.4b) “Mậu Thân, sau Mậu Thân” (ST.121.1a) → “The 1968 Tet Offensive and the post Tet Offensive” (TT1.121.1b) “Thăng Long vẫn phi chiến địa” (ST.72.1a) → “Thang Long – Hanoi’s former name – was still a non-war area” (TT1.72.1b)</p>

As indicated above, the most salient representational modifications in this domain occur at the level of participant and circumstantial configuration. Table 4.17 presents the examples that indicate recurring tendencies towards participant specification through ideological and geopolitical labelling, as well as circumstantial explicitation through the addition of spatial, locational, and temporal-political information. These shifts do not substantially alter the underlying conflict events represented in the source text. Rather, they tend to make political affiliation, military actors, historical references, and geopolitical settings more explicit for target readers. The following discussion examines how these participant and circumstantial modifications contribute to the reconstruction of geopolitical conflict in TT1.

Participant shifts

A prominent pattern involves participant specification through ideological relabelling. In several instances, politically marked participant labels in the source text are replaced by more explicit institutional or military designations in TT1. For example, “*bọn nguỵ*” is rendered as “*The Saigon forces*” while “*quân ta*” appears variously as “*our armed forces, the Northern troops*”, and “*the revolutionary forces*”. Similarly, “*xác quân thù*” becomes “*corpses of ARVN air forces commandoes*”. These translations replace context-dependent ideological labels with participant designations that are more readily identifiable within an international historical framework. Rather than relying on the political assumptions embedded in the source culture, TT1 specifies the institutional or military affiliation of the participant. In terms of Baker’s narrative framing framework, these shifts may be interpreted as instances of labelling, whereby participant identities are re-articulated through alternative naming practices that reposition conflict actors within a more globally recognizable geopolitical narrative.

A related tendency can be observed in participant specification through geopolitical identification. For instance, “*bọn lính chiến*” is rendered as “*fighting soldiers of the Saigon Armed Forces*”, while “*bọn cảnh sát*” becomes “*The Saigonese police*”. In both cases, TT1 introduces information about political or institutional affiliation that is only implicit in the source text. The resulting participant

representations are more precisely anchored within the military and administrative structures of the conflict. Through Baker's notion of labelling, these shifts may be understood as increasing the specificity with which social and political actors are positioned in the narrative, thereby reducing potential ambiguity for readers unfamiliar with the historical context of the war being referred to.

Participant specification is also evident in cases involving explicit affiliation. In "*Và bắt cháp trong tầm pháo có cả đồng minh*", TT1 renders "*đồng minh*" as "*their allies*". While the source text leaves the affiliation of the participant implicit, the possessive determiner "*their*" explicitly identifies the allies as belonging to a particular side of the conflict. This shift reduces referential indeterminacy and makes alliance relations more explicit. Although the clause also involves the addition of a Mental process ("*not even noticing*"), the representational significance lies in the specification of participant affiliation. In Baker's terms, the shift may be interpreted as a form of participant specification through labeling, whereby geopolitical alignments are made more overtly available to target readers.

Circumstantial shifts

At the circumstantial level, TT1 frequently introduces more explicit spatial information. One example occurs in the rendering of "*sự tình hai biên giới*" as "*border between two countries*". Whereas the source text presupposes knowledge of the geopolitical context, TT1 reconstructs the circumstance through a more explicit spatial formulation. The translation thus transforms an implicit geopolitical reference into a clearly identifiable geopolitical location. In Baker's terms, this may be interpreted as a form of spatial framing, whereby the narrative space of the conflict is made more accessible and interpretable for readers outside the source culture.

A similar tendency is evident in cases of locational specification. For example, "*trên tàu tốc hành quân lính...qua thành phố*" is rendered as "*express trains full of soldiers...through Hanoi*". The addition of the place name "*Hanoi*" introduces a specific geographical reference that is absent from the source text. Rather than merely indicating movement through an urban space, TT1 situates the event within a concrete and historically recognizable location. This shift strengthens the spatial anchoring of

the narrative and contributes to a more explicit geopolitical mapping of wartime events.

TT1 also shows a recurring tendency towards temporal-political explicitation. For instance, “*thời hiệp định*” becomes “*following the Paris Agreement*”, while “*Mậu Thân*” is rendered as “*the period of the 1968 Offensive*”, and “*Mậu Thân, sau Mậu Thân*” becomes “*The 1968 Tet Offensive and the post Tet Offensive*”. Likewise, “*Thăng Long vẫn phi chiến địa*” is expanded into “*Thang Long – Hanoi’s former name – was still a non-war area*”. In each case, historically embedded Vietnamese references are reformulated through more explicit temporal or political markers. These additions provide target readers with information that would otherwise require considerable background knowledge. Within Baker’s framework, such shifts may be interpreted as a combination of temporal framing and labelling, whereby historically specific events are repositioned within a more explicit chronological and geopolitical narrative structure.

Taken together, the participant and circumstantial shifts observed in the Geopolitical Conflict domain indicate a consistent tendency towards explicitation of political, military, and historical reference. Participant modifications primarily involve the specification of ideological, institutional, and geopolitical affiliations, while circumstantial changes introduce more explicit spatial and temporal-political framing. Interpreted through Baker’s narrative framing framework, these shifts are most closely associated with labelling, spatial framing, and temporal framing. Rather than substantially altering the underlying representation of conflict events, TT1 reconstructs geopolitical conflict in a form that is more historically explicit, geographically anchored, and internationally interpretable, thereby facilitating access to the political and military context presupposed in the source text.

4.4.3. From Operational Norms to Translation Orientation

4.4.3.1. Adequacy and Acceptability

The preceding analysis of operational norms provides a basis for inferring TT1’s overall translational orientation in relation to Toury’s (2012) adequacy – acceptability continuum. As discussed in Chapter 2, adequacy refers to a translation’s

tendency to preserve source-text relations and representation structures, whereas acceptability reflects greater conformity to target-language norms and reader expectations. The orientation of TT1 can therefore be inferred from the cumulative patterns observed across matricial and textual-linguistic norms rather than from isolated translation decisions.

At the matricial level, TT1 demonstrates a strong tendency toward structural preservation. Retention accounts for 80.6% of all source-text clause-process units, while reordering occurs only once across the entire corpus. Omission, addition expansion, condensation, and segmentation shifts are present but remain comparatively limited in frequency. These findings indicate that TT1 generally preserves the source text's narrative architecture, sequencing of events, and distribution of experiential material. Even when structural modifications occur, they tend to operate locally rather than producing large-scale restructuring of the narrative. Such a profile is broadly consistent with an adequacy-oriented operational norm, as the translator largely maintains the compositional organization of the source text.

The analysis of textual-linguistic norms further reinforces this tendency. Across all four experiential domains, the overall transitivity profile of ST and TT1 remain highly similar. Material processes remain dominant in both texts, accounting for 63.31% of process realisations in ST and 62.21% in TT1, while the relative distribution of Relational, Mental, Existential, Verbal, and Behavioural processes exhibit only modest variation. These findings suggest that TT1 generally preserves that experiential architecture through which war reality is construed in the source text. Although process shifts, omission, additions, and participant modifications are observable throughout the corpus, they rarely alter the fundamental experiential orientation of individual passages. Instead, they primarily redistribute experiential meanings within the existing war-reality framework.

At the same time, the analysis also reveals recurring tendencies associated with acceptability. Across the four domains, TT1 frequently introduces explicit participant identification, geopolitical specification, spatial anchoring, temporal clarification, and causal elaboration. Examples include the specification of military actors and

political groups, the expansion of historically embedded references such as *Mậu Thân* and *hiệp định* into more explicit geopolitical labels, and the addition of explanatory process structures that make causal relations more overt. Similarly, participant specification, spatial framing, and lexical labelling recur across multiple domains, particularly in Collective Memory and Geopolitical Conflict. These interventions increase referential transparency and facilitate interpretation for readers who may not possess extensive knowledge of the Vietnamese historical context. From Toury's perspective, such patterns indicate a degree of adaptation to target-reader accessibility and interpretability.

Taken together, the operational norms identified in this chapter suggest that TT1 occupies a position closer to the adequacy end of Toury's continuum. The translation preserves the source text's narrative structure, experiential organization, and representational priorities to a considerable extent, while introducing selective forms of explicitation that facilitate comprehension for English-language readers. TT1 may therefore be characterized as a predominantly adequacy-oriented translation that incorporates limited acceptability-oriented adjustments at the local textual level. These findings provide an important basis for the subsequent discussion of foreignization and domestication in forthcoming section.

4.4.3.2. Domestication and Foreignisation

While the previous section examined TT1 in relation to Toury's adequacy-acceptability continuum, the operational norms identified throughout this chapter may also be interpreted through Venuti's (2017) distinction between foreignisation and domestication. As discussed in Chapter 2, foreignization refers to translational practices that preserve the linguistic, cultural, and historical distinctiveness of the source text, whereas domestication seeks to reduce that foreignness by adapting the text to target-cultural expectations and interpretive conventions. The distinction is therefore, not only concerned with textual fidelity but also with the degree to which the translated text either foregrounds or minimizes the alterity of the source culture.

Overall, the evidence presented in this chapter suggests that TT1 exhibits a predominantly foreignizing orientation. Across all four experiential domains, the

translation preserves the central representational framework through which war reality is construed in the Vietnamese source text. The narrative remains firmly located within the historical, geographical, and political context of the Vietnam War, and TT1 generally retains source-oriented references rather than replacing them with culturally equivalent target-culture formulations. Vietnamese places, military units, historical events, and political actors continue to function as the primary co-ordinates through which wartime experience is represented. The preservation of these source-cultural references allows the translated narrative to engage with the war from within its original socio-cultural framework rather than through target-cultural analogues.

The foreignizing tendency is particularly visible in the domain of Geopolitical Conflict. Although TT1 frequently explicates political and military references, the explicitation normally takes the form of clarification rather than substitution. Expression such as “*Mậu Thân*” are rendered as “*the 1968 Tet Offensive*”, while “*hiệp định*” is rendered as “*the Paris Agreement*”. Rather than replacing Vietnamese historical references with target-cultural equivalents, TT1 preserves their historical specificity while making them more accessible to readers unfamiliar with the source context. Similarly, military labels such as “*Saigon troops*”, “*Northern troops*”, “*revolutionary forces*”, and “*ARVN*” retain the geopolitical structure of the conflict rather than assimilating it into more generalized or culturally neutral terminology. These choices preserve the historical and ideological landscape of the source narrative while providing additional interpretive support for target readers.

A similar pattern can be observed in the domains of Collective Memory and Physical Brutality. The analysis demonstrates that participant specification, spatial framing, and lexical labelling frequently increase explicitness, yet these modifications generally preserve rather than replace source-cultural meanings. Battle locations, military references, and collective identities are often rendered through more explicit English expressions, but the underlying referential framework remains recognizably Vietnamese. TT1 therefore tends to mediate foreignness rather than eliminate it. For example, the rendering of “*Thang Long*” into “*Thang Long – Hanoi’s former name*”. The translation makes culturally embedded references more interpretable while maintaining their source-oriented character.

Nevertheless, the chapter also identifies recurring domesticating tendencies. These are most clearly visible in the frequent use of explicitation, participant specification, temporal specification, and cause elaboration. Throughout the corpus, TT1 regularly transforms compressed or context-dependent Vietnamese expressions into more explicit forms that facilitate interpretation for Anglophone readers. Historical abbreviation is converted into internationally recognizable labels; participant identities are specified where the source text relies on contextual inference; and causal relations are often articulated more overtly than in the original. Such interventions reduce processing demands on target readers and align the narrative more closely with English-language expectations regarding clarity, referential transparency, and informational explicitness.

However, these domesticating features remain local and supportive rather than dominant. Their primary function is not to replace Vietnamese cultural realities with target-cultural ones but to improve accessibility to those realities. In Venuti's terms, TT1 does not seek to conceal the foreignness of the source text. Instead, it frequently retains source-cultural and historical specificity while employing explanatory strategies that facilitate comprehension. As a result, TT1 appears to be a translation that is visibly anchored in the Vietnamese context of the war even though it accommodates the informational needs of an English-language readership.

In general, the operational norms identified throughout this chapter suggest that TT1 is best characterized as a predominantly foreignizing translation that incorporates selective domesticating interventions. The translation consistently preserves the historical, geographical, and experiential specificity of Bao Ninh's representation of war reality, while employing explicitation and clarification to improve interpretability for English-language reader. Foreignisation therefore constitutes the dominant translational orientation, whereas domestication functions primarily as a local strategy of reader assistance rather than a broader programme of cultural assimilation.

4.5. Chapter Summary

This chapter has examined the reconstruction of war reality in TT1 through the framework of Descriptive Translation Studies, focusing on Toury's (2012) initial,

preliminary, and operational norms. By analysing shifts across the four representational domains of Physical Brutality, Psychological Trauma, Collective Memory, and Geopolitical Conflict, the chapter has investigated how experiential meanings are reproduced, modified, or redistributed in the English translation.

The findings suggest a high degree of representation continuity between the source text and TT1. At the matricial level, most clause-process units are retained, while additions, omissions, condensations, and re-orderings remain comparatively limited. At the textual-linguistic level, the overall transitivity profiles of the four domains remain broadly stable, indicating that TT1 largely preserves the experiential organization through which war reality is construed in the source text. Although process, participant, and circumstantial shifts occur throughout the corpus, these shifts typically operate as local adjustments that clarify, elaborate, or make explicit meanings already present in the original narrative. Interpreted through Baker's (2018) narrative framing strategies, the observed shifts frequently involve selective appropriation, labelling, participant repositioning, and temporal-spatial framing. However, these interventions generally support accessibility and interpretability rather than fundamentally reorienting the narrative. As a result, TT1 maintains the source text's representational priorities while facilitating comprehension for an English-language readership.

Taken together, the evidence suggests that TT1 is predominantly adequacy-oriented in Toury's (2012) sense. The translation largely preserves the source-text's narrative structure, experiential organization, and historical perspective, while incorporating limited acceptability-orientated adjustments through explicitation. From the perspective of Venuti's (2017) framework, TT1 may be characterized as a predominantly foreignizing, retaining the cultural, historical, and geopolitical specificity of Bao Ninh's representation of war while employing selective domesticating strategies to support reader accessibility. These findings establish TT1 as a broadly source-oriented reconstruction of war reality and provide an important point of comparison for Chapter 5, which examines how TT2 reconfigures the same narrative through a different pattern of translational mediation.

CHAPTER 5: RECONSTRUCTING WAR REALITY THROUGH MEDIATED REWRITING

5.1. Introduction

Following the examination of ST – TT1 mediation in Chapter 4, this chapter investigates the second stage of mediation represented by the relationships between Phan Thanh Hao’s English translation (TT1) and Frank Palmos’s edited English version (TT2). Unlike Chapter 4, which focused on interlingual translation, the present chapter examines TT2 as a case of mediated rewriting operating upon an existing translation.

Using the same integrated analytical framework employed in the preceding chapter in order to maintain comparability across the two mediation trajectories, the analysis proceeds through the examination of initial norms, preliminary norms, and operational norms. Particular attention is paid to how recurrent transitivity patterns associated with the four experiential domains of war reality (Physical Brutality, Psychological Trauma, Collective Memory, and Geopolitical Conflict) are reconfigured between TT1 and TT2. The chapter then draws on the cumulative evidence of structural and representational shifts to evaluate the translational orientations of TT2 in terms of adequacy and acceptability as well as domestication and foreignization. The chapter concludes with a summary of the principal findings, which provide the basis for the comparative synthesis presented in Chapter 6.

5.2. Initial Norms: Editorial Motivations

Unlike Chapter 4, where initial norms concerned an interlingual translator’s orientation towards the source text, the present chapter examines a second-stage English rewriting produced from an already translated English text. Consequently, initial norms are reconstructed not as preferences governing transfer between Vietnamese and English, but as editorial orientations governing the reshaping of TT1 for a different readership and literary market. Following Toury (2012), these norms are treated as hypotheses inferred from contextual evidence and subsequently tested through the examination of preliminary and operational norms. The principal source

of contextual evidence is Palmos's reflective essay *Editing and Interpreting The Sorrow of War* (Palmos, 2011), in which he discussed the rationale underlying his production of the English version. Although such retrospective statements cannot in themselves establish translational norms, they provide valuable indications of the editorial principles that informed the rewriting process.

As shown in Table 5.1, Palmos repeatedly characterized TT1 as an "English version" designed for international circulation and explicitly distinguishes this activity from "normal translating" (Palmos, 2011). He further stated that his version was produced according to the "FitzGerald translation school", whose objective is to use the target language to reproduce the "tones and moods" of the original rather than maintain strict textual correspondence.

Several statements also point towards a strongly interventionist editorial stance. Palmos (2011) openly acknowledged modifying parts of the narrative for international audiences and noted that some passages had to be "Westernised" because Bao Ninh's "cultural sensitivity restrained him from describing personal events". He further referred to the use of "atmospheric enhancement" and repeatedly emphasized the need to provide readers with clear information concerning setting, participants, and historical context. Together, these comments suggest an editorial orientation that prioritises readability, narrative accessibility, and interpretive guidance for Anglophone readers.

The statements discussed above suggest a number of recurring editorial priorities concerning audience, narrative presentation, cultural mediation, and the role of rewriting. Rather than treating these statements as direct evidence of translational behaviour, the present study uses them as contextual indicators from which provisional hypotheses about TT1's initial norms may be formulated. These indicators and their corresponding operational expectations are summarized in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1. Contextual indicators of initial norms in TT2

<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Evidence in editor's statements</i>	<i>Relevance to initial norms</i>	<i>Operational-norm expectations to be examined</i>
(1) TT2 framed explicitly as an “ <i>English version</i> ” for international circulation	Palmos repeatedly refers to his works as an “ <i>English version</i> ” rather than a translation and notes that he “ <i>modified certain parts of the narrative for an international audience</i> ” and “ <i>broader, international audience</i> ”	Suggests a target-oriented editorial norm in which the text is positioned as an English literary work intended for international readership rather than as a close preservation of TT1.	Narrative smoothing increased readability; restructuring of dense passages; explicitation of historical, political, and cultural references; greater narrative cohesion.
(2) Declared adherence to FitzGerald-style translation principles	“ <i>My English version of The Sorrow of War was written along the FitzGerald translation school lines, where the intention is to use the second language to portray the pervading tones and moods intended in the original language.</i> ”	Indicates priority on reproducing perceived narrative effect, atmosphere, and emotional impact rather than preserving formal correspondence.	Rewording, recomposition, process redistribution, condensation, and expansion of clauses; restructuring to achieve affective equivalence rather than textual correspondence.
(3) Legitimation of interventionist rewriting	“ <i>Writing and ‘English version’ is more complicated by far than normal translating</i> ”; “ <i>I modified certain parts of</i>	Positions editorial intervention as an integral part of the rewriting process rather than minimal editing.	Clause restructuring; participant repositioning; narrative re-sequencing; addition and omission of experiential detail; increased

	<i>the narrative for an international audience.”</i>		interpretive explicitness
(4) Westernisation for broader readership	<i>“There were only brief passages, where Bao Ninh’s cultural sensitivity restrained him from describing personal events that I had to Westernise for broader, international audiences.”</i>	Strong indicator of domestication and target-culture accommodation	Cultural explicitation; geopolitical specification; replacement of culturally implicit references; adaptation of narrative presentation to Anglophone conventions.
(5) Reader-oriented narrative guidance	In discussing the opening, Palmos explains that it tells readers “where”, “who it was”, and “when” the events occur.	Suggests priority on immediate reader orientation and historical intelligibility	Temporal and spatial explicitation; participant identification; chronological scaffolding; reduction of ambiguity
(6) Atmospheric enhancement as an editorial principle	<i>“I still used the FitzGerald School’s imagery with atmospheric enhancement.”</i>	Indicates willingness to amplify atmosphere and narrative effect where necessary	Descriptive additions; sensory intensification; expansion of evaluative and experiential detail; strengthened narrative framing
(7) Preservation of Bao Ninh’s narrative tone and war-centred focus	<i>“I had to write in very stark terms what Bao Ninh had to say”; “Bao Ninh had a war story, of sorrow, so I stayed with his story.”</i>	Suggests that intervention is constrained by a commitment to preserving the novel’s affective orientation and thematic core	Retention of brutality, trauma, loss and war-centred experiential meanings despite structural reorganisation
(8) Rejection of literary embellishment	<i>“I was tempted to add a line or two describing the beauty</i>	Indicates restraint in introducing stylistic	Limited poetic amplification; preference for narrative

	<i>of certain areas... When I reread the work I dropped every one of them."</i>	ornamentation not perceived as part of Bao Ninh's voice	economy; preservation of the novel's austere and anti-romantic representation of war
(9) Experiential identification as rewriting authority	<i>"We shared the same mental images of the jungles and villages and the noises of war."</i>	Palmos presents his war experience as a source of interpretive legitimacy for rewriting the narrative	Increased psychological explicitness; human-centred framing; reduction of politically marked distinction; greater accessibility for international readers
(10) Humanist and psychological framing of the novel	Bao Ninh is praised for leading readers <i>"deep into the psyche of soldiers at war"</i> and portraying <i>"mothers in torment and enemies in death"</i> .	Indicate emphasis on psychological intelligibility and universal human experience rather than ideological positioning	Extensive participant relabelling; agency redistribution; narrative reframing and restructuring across experiential domains
(11) Editorial mediation as co-authorship	Palmos presents himself as actively <i>"editing and interpreting"</i> the text, consulting multiple Vietnamese informants and revising the manuscript repeatedly.	Suggests TT2 should be understood as mediated rewriting rather than secondary polishing	

As Table 5.1. indicates, the contextual evidence points consistently towards an interventionist editorial orientation. TT2 is repeatedly framed as an “English version” designed for international circulation, while Palmos explicitly legitimizes modification, atmospheric enhancement, and selective Westernisation as part of the rewriting process. Such statements suggest a preference for narrative accessibility, interpretive guidance, and stylistic coherence over strict preservation of TT1’s textual organization.

At the same time, the indicators do not support a view of TT2 as unrestricted adaptation. Palmos repeatedly emphasizes his commitment to preserving Bao Ninh’s narrative voice, emotional tone, and war-centred focus. His rejection of ornamental additions and his stated desire to reproduce the “tones and moods” of the original suggest that intervention was constrained by an attempt to retain what he regarded as the novel’s experiential core.

In conclusion, the indicators suggest that TT2 operates under an initial norm broadly oriented towards acceptability, while remaining selectively attentive to the affective and thematic orientation of the source narrative. In Venuti’s (2017) terms, the statements also point towards a domesticating tendency, particularly in relation to reader accessibility and cultural mediation. However, these conclusions remain provisional. Consistent with Toury’s (2012) descriptive framework, the proposed initial norm must be evaluated against evidence from preliminary norms and operational norms, which provide a more reliable basis for reconstructing the actual regularities governing the mediated rewriting.

5.3. Preliminary Norms: Contexts of Production

In Toury’s (2012) framework, preliminary norms concern the broader translation policy and directness of translation that govern the selection, production, and circulation of translated texts before textual transfer itself takes place. Because such norms are rarely stated explicitly, they must be reconstructed through observable evidence surrounding the production and presentation of the translation. In literary translation research, paratextual materials, including covers, title pages, publication data, editorial notes, series affiliations, promotional blurbs, and publisher framing,

provide an important source of evidence because they reveal how a text is positioned within the target literary system and how readers are guided to interpret it (Toury, 2012).

Accordingly, the present study examines a range of paratextual features associated with TT2 in order to reconstruct the preliminary norms governing its production and circulation. The categories included in Table 5.2 were not predetermined independently of the data. Rather, they were derived from Toury's notions of translation policy and directness of translation and operationalised through recurring paratextual features that are commonly used to position translated literature within the target culture. Particular attention is paid to publisher identity, title-page attribution, editor visibility, mediation signals, genre framing, ideological framing, literary prestige positioning, and other forms of paratextual presentation that may reveal how TT2 was introduced, legitimized, and marketed to Anglophone readers. The table therefore does not treat paratextual features as norms in themselves. Instead, these features are analysed as observable indicators from which preliminary norms may be inferred. The resulting interpretations remain provisional and are subsequently evaluated against the textual evidence presented in the analysis of operational norms.

Table 5.2. Paratextual indicators for reconstructing preliminary norms in TT2

Code	Paratextual Features	Location	Observation in TT2	Inference for preliminary norms
TT2-PTX-01	International commercial publisher visibility (Secker & Warburg/Vintage)	Cover, title page, copyright page	√ (present)	Signals integration into the Anglophone literary publishing system and orientation towards international circulation rather than state-sponsored translation dissemination.
TT2-PTX-02	Canonising series affiliation (e.g. Vintage Classics edition)	Front cover, spine, title page	√	Positions the novel within the target literary canon; suggests market-based literary legitimization and long-term circulation.
TT2-PTX-03	Prominent author visibility	Cover and title page	Bao Ninh foregrounded; editor less prominent	Constructs authorial authenticity while reducing visibility of translational mediation
TT2-PTX-04	Layered title-page attribution	Title page	<i>“English version by Frank Palmos from the original translation by Phan Thanh Hao”</i>	Explicitly acknowledges indirect translation and legitimizes mediated rewriting as a recognized production route.
TT2-PTX-05	Editor visibility	Cover and title page	Present but subordinate to author name	Suggests a norm of mediator visibility without full co-authorship status.
TT2-PTX-06	Explicit mediation	Title page and	TT2 openly	Indicates acceptance of mediated

	signal	publication metadata	identified as based on Phan Thanh Hao's translation	translation and editorial intervention within the publication process.
TT2-PTX-07	Editorial preface or explanatory note	Preface/introductory materials	√	Provides an interpretive frame for reading the novel and legitimizes editorial intervention.
TT2-PTX-08	Editor's discussion of rewriting practice	Preface/editor's commentary	" <i>Editing</i> ", " <i>interpreting</i> ", and " <i>version</i> " explicitly discussed	Suggests interventionist editorial norms rather than minimal revision.
TT2-PTX-09	Source-text reframing	Front matter, notes	Vietnamese source text mediated through TT1 rather than directly foregrounded	Repositions the source text within a global publication chain and legitimizes editorial transformation.
TT2-PTX-10	Genre framing	Cover blurb and promotional materials	War novel; anti-war narrative; trauma-centred representation	Directs reader expectations toward internationally recognizable war-literature conventions.
TT2-PTX-11	Historical and geopolitical explicitation	Cover copy, introductory materials	Reference to Tet Offensive, Paris Agreement, Fall of Saigon, etc. more readily explained	Suggests orientation towards readers lacking Vietnamese historical knowledge.
TT2-PTX-12	Analogical positioning	Reviews,	Comparisons with	Integrates the novel into existing

	within world literature	endorsements, promotional materials	Western war classics (e.g. <i>All Quiet on the Western Front</i>) where present	Anglophone literary frameworks and enhances accessibility.
TT2-PTX-13	Endorsements and prestige reviews	Back cover, promotional pages	Reviews from major Western media and literary authorities	Reinforces market legitimacy and target-system authority.
TT2-PTX-14	Copyright-page publishing network	Copyright page	Multiple publishing identities and international distribution channels	Reflects commercial publishing norms and global literary circulation.
TT2-PTX-15	Typography and segmentation	Chapter layout and formatting	Clear segmentation and readability-oriented design	Suggests publishing norms favouring accessibility and supports later matricial intervention
TT2-PTX-16	Publisher self-positioning	Front/back matter	Presence of Vintage/Random House branding and catalogue information	Frames the novel as part of global literary consumption and canon formation.

One of the most salient paratextual features concerns the explicit acknowledgement that TT2 was produced from an existing English translation rather than directly from the Vietnamese source text. The title-page attribution “*English version by Frank Palmos from the original translation by Phan Thanh Hao*” publicly foregrounds a mediated production chain and legitimises editorial intervention as part of the translation process. From a DTS perspective, this constitutes an important indicator of preliminary norms because it establishes TT2 as an indirect translation and signals that rewriting rather than direct linguistic transfer forms the basis of textual production.

The publishing context further suggests a target-oriented circulation strategy. Unlike TT1, whose paratextual presentation reflected Vietnamese institutional publishing environment, TT2 was issued through major Anglophone publishers and subsequently incorporated into internationally recognized literary series. Such positioning indicates that the text was not only meant to be a translated Vietnamese novel but a publishable work within the Anglophone literary marketplace. Preliminary norms therefore appear to favour readability, market circulation, and integration into target-system literary expectations.

Editorial visibility is also unusually prominent. Paratextual materials, acknowledgements, and Palmos’s own retrospective account explicitly foreground the editor’s role in shaping the English version. Rather than presenting himself as an invisible linguistic mediator, Palmos repeatedly characterized the work as an “*English version*” and described extensive interpretive intervention. These signals suggest that TT2 was produced under preliminary norms that legitimised editorial rewriting as an acceptable form of mediation.

In general, the paratextual evidence points to preliminary norms characterized by indirect translation, strong editorial mediation, international literary positioning, and target-oriented circulation. These indicators suggest that TT2 entered the Anglophone literary system as a mediated rewriting, rather than a conventional translation. The preliminary norms reconstructed here therefore provide an important contextual foundation for examining the matricial and textual-linguistic norms discussed in the following sections.

5.4. Operational Norms of Mediated Rewriting

5.4.1. Matricial Norms

In Toury's (2012) framework, matricial norms refer to norm-governed decisions concerning the structural organisation of translated texts, including the inclusion or omission of textual material, textual completeness, segmentation, and the distribution or reordering of narrative units. In the present study, matricial norms are reconstructed through systematic comparison between TT1 (Phan Thanh Hao's interlingual translation) and TT2 (Frank Palmos's mediated English version), with particular attention to changes in chapter organization, paragraph structure, clause-complex segmentation, and the condensation or expansion of narrative material. While paratextual evidence and publishing context provide important contextual support, matricial norms are established primarily through recurrent structural patterns observable in TT2 relative to TT1.

Table 5.3 presents a quantitative profile of the matricial operations through which TT2 rewrites TT1 at the level of aligned clause-process units. Using the aligned corpus as the basis for comparison, the table records the extent to which TT2 retains TT2 units, omits TT1 units, or introduces new units not traceable to TT1, alongside secondary operations such as condensation, expansion, reordering, and segmentation units. The table therefore serves as a descriptive foundation for the reconstruction of matricial norms by identifying the overall distribution of editorial intervention before domain-specific analyses are undertaken.

Table 5.3. Matricial operations profile in TT2 relative to TT1

<i>Matricial operation</i>	<i>Operational definition</i>	<i>Count (n)</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>	<i>Example(s)</i>
Retention	TT1 unit retained with equivalent TT2 unit	282	58.14	PB 94.1c; PB 103.1c; PT 71.1c; PT 120.1c; CM116.1c; 1201-6c; GC121.1c; GC108.1c;
Omission	TT1 unit absent in TT2	145	29.90	PB128.3c; PT83.1c; CM126.2c; CM150-161.1c; GC 93.1c; GC 158.1c;

Addition	TT2 introduced new unit not in TT1	110	22.68	PB3.1c1; PB13.1c; PB35.1c; PT40.4c; PT46.1c; PT47.11c; CM22.2c; CM24.1c; CM30.1c; GC108.1c; GC111.5c; GC160.1c
Condensation	Multiple TT1 clauses/processes recomposed/merged into one TT2 unit	30	6.19	PB4.2c; PB8.4c1; PT40.3c; PT43.2c; PT56.1c; PT50.1c; CM1.1c; CM1.2c; GC27.1c; GC28.2c;
Expansion	One TT1 unit expanded into multiple TT2 clauses/processes	93	19.18	PB3.2c; PB41.5c; PT57.1c1; PT60.3c1; CM114.1c1; CM114.3c; CM115.3c; GC76.3c; GC160.1c
Reordering	TT2 changes TT1 sequence	11	2.27	PT 62.5c2; CM 132.1c*; 140.7c;
Segmentation shift	TT1 clause complex split in TT2	23	4.74	PB 8.4c3; PB 36.1c; PT 40.3c; PT48.3c1*; PT 49.3c; CM22.2c*; CM 81.1c2; CM 88.3c; CM90.7c; CM 114.4c; CM 134.4c*; CM 134.8 c1*; GC 157.1c*;

Note: Because TT2 may introduce new units while simultaneously omitting TT1 units, and because operations such as expansion, condensation, segmentation may co-occur at different alignment points, the percentages reported here should be interpreted as operation rates relative to the TT1 clause-process units (n = 485) rather than as mutually exclusive categories. Consequently, the percentages do not sum to 100%.

Table 5.3 indicates that retention remains the most frequent matricial operation, accounting for 282 instances (58.14%) of the TT1 clause-process units. This suggests that a substantial proportion of TT1's experiential material remains represented in TT1. Nevertheless, the rewriting process is characterized by extensive intervention. TT2 omits 145 TT1 units (29.90%) while simultaneously introducing 110 new units not directly traceable to TT1 (22.68%). In addition, a range of restructuring operations are observed, including expansion (93 instances; 19.18%), condensation (30 instances; 6.19%), segmentation (23 instances; 4.74%), and reordering (11 instances; 2.27%). Collectively, these figures indicate that TT2 is not limited to lexical revision or stylistic editing, but involves substantial reorganization of narrative material.

Among the secondary operations, expansion occurs considerably more frequently than condensation, suggesting a tendency for TT2 to elaborate, unpack, or redistribute experiential meanings already present in TT1. At the same time, the relatively high omission rate indicates that editorial intervention also involves the removal of selected material. Rather than preserving TT1 through simple retention, TT2 frequently reshapes existing narrative structures through a combination of deletion, addition, and recomposition. Segmentation shifts and reordering occur less frequently but nevertheless demonstrate that intervention extends beyond clause-level wording to the organization of narrative sequences.

These quantitative patterns provide an initial indication of the rewriting strategies operating in TT2, but they do not in themselves reveal which aspects of war reality are most affected by editorial intervention. To address this issue, the following sections examine how matricial operations are distributed across the four experiential domains of war reality (Physical Brutality, Psychological Trauma, Collective Memory, and Geopolitical Conflict). Through domain-specific analysis, the study identifies the representational consequences of these structural interventions and their contribution to the reconstruction of war reality in TT2.

While Table 5.3 provides an overall profile of matricial operations across the corpus, it does not reveal whether editorial intervention is distributed evenly across

different aspects of war reality. To address this issue, Table 5.4 breaks down the matricial operations according to the four experiential domains established in the study: Physical Brutality (PB), Psychological Trauma (PT), Collective Memory (CM), and Geopolitical Conflict (GC). By examining the relative frequency of retention, omission, expansion, condensation, segmentation, addition, and reordering within each domain, the table provides a more subtle view of how TT2 restructures different dimensions of war experience. The domain-based comparison serves as a bridge between the global matricial profile presented in Table 5.3 and the subsequent analysis of domain-specific operational norms.

Table 5.4. Matricial operations by experiential domains (TT1 – TT2)

<i>Experiential domain</i>	<i>Total aligned clause-process units (n)</i>	<i>Retention n/%</i>	<i>Omission n/%</i>	<i>Expansion n/%</i>	<i>Condensation n/%</i>	<i>Segmentation n/%</i>	<i>Addition n/%</i>	<i>Reordering n/%</i>
PB	100	77/77.00	12/12.00	11/11.00	4/4.00	2/2.00	17/17.00	1/1.00
PT	104	60/57.69	23/22.12	31/29.81	5/4.81	12/11.54	22/21.15	2/1.92
CM	176	104/59.09	92/52.27	43/24.43	15/8.52	8/4.55	51/28.98	8/4.55
GC	69	41/59.42	18/26.09	8/11.59	4/5.80	2/2.90	20/28.99	0/ 0.00

Note: As in Table 5.3, these percentages do not sum to 100% because a unit may participate in more than one matricial operation.

Table 5.4 reveals that matricial intervention is unevenly distributed across the four experiential domains of war reality. Retention remains the dominant operation in all domains, ranging from 57.69% in Psychological Trauma to 77.00% in Physical Brutality. This indicates that a substantial proportion of TT1's experiential material is preserved in TT2. Nevertheless, the retention figures must be interpreted alongside the relatively high frequencies of omission, addition, and expansion, which demonstrate that preservation is accompanied by extensive editorial restructuring.

Among the four domains, Collective Memory (CM) exhibits the highest degree of matricial intervention. While 59.09% of TT1 units are retained, the domain also records the highest omission rate (52.27%), the highest addition rate (28.98%), and the highest frequency of condensation (8.52%). Expansion is likewise prominent (24.43%). These figures suggest that memories, recollections, and retrospective narrative sequences constitute a major site of editorial recomposition in TT2. Rather than simply preserving TT1's memorial narrative, the rewriting frequently removes, supplements, and restructures existing material, indicating a substantial reorganization of how collective remembrance is narratively presented.

Psychological Trauma (PT) also displays a comparatively high level of intervention. Although more than half of the TT1 units are retained (57.69%), the domain records the highest expansion rate across the corpus (29.81%) together with a relatively high rate of segmentation shifts (11.54%). Additions (21.15%) and omissions (22.12%) further indicate active editorial involvement. Compared with the other domains, these patterns suggest a tendency for TT2 to redistribute traumatic experience through elaboration and structural re-segmentation, resulting in a more extensively reworked textual presentation of psychological suffering.

By contrast, Physical Brutality (PB) remains the most structurally stable domain. Retention reaches 77.00%, while omissions (12.00%), expansions (11.00%), condensations (4.00%), and segmentations (2.00%) all occur at comparatively low rates. Although TT2 introduces a notable number of new units (17.00%), the overall profile suggests that representations of bodily violence and material destruction are preserved more consistently than other dimensions of war reality. Editorial

intervention in this domain appears relatively restrained at the level of textual structure.

Geopolitical Conflict (GC) occupies an intermediate position. Retention remains relatively high (59.42%), but additions (28.99%) and omissions (26.09%) occur more frequently than in Physical Brutality. In contrast, expansions (11.59%), condensations (5.80%), and segmentation shifts (2.90%) remain comparatively limited. This pattern suggests that editorial intervention in the geopolitical domain is directed less towards large-scale structural recomposition than towards selective modification and supplementation of existing material.

In general, the distribution of matricial operations indicates that TT2 does not intervene uniformly across the representation of war reality. The most extensive restructuring occurs in the domains of Collective Memory and Psychological Trauma, whereas Physical Brutality remains comparatively stable. Geopolitical Conflict occupies a middle position characterized by selective addition and omission rather than extensive recomposition. These domain-specific patterns provide an important foundation for the subsequent analysis of textual-linguistic norms, where the representational consequences of these structural interventions are examined in greater detail.

5.4.2. Textual-Linguistic Norms: Experiential Reconfiguration of War Reality

Following the examination of matricial norms, the analysis now turns to textual-linguistic norms as realised through transitivity patterns. Whereas matricial norms reveal how TT2 restructures the textual organization of TT1, textual-linguistic norms provide insight into how experiential meanings are redistributed within the rewritten narrative. Table 5.5 presents the overall transitivity profile of TT2 relative to TT1, comparing the distribution of process types across the corpus before examining their domain-specific manifestations. The table therefore serves as an initial indicator of whether the mediated rewriting preserves, suppresses, or rebalances particular modes of representing war experience.

Table 5.5. Overall transitivity distribution in TT2 relative to TT1

<i>Process type</i>	<i>TT1 (n)</i>	<i>TT1 (%)</i>	<i>TT2 (n)</i>	<i>TT2 (%)</i>	<i>Percentage-point change (TT1 – TT2)</i>
Material	293	62.21	295	66.4	+4.19
Relational	93	19.75	81	18.2	-1.55
Mental	45	9.55	32	7.2	-2.35
Existential	12	2.55	12	2.7	+0.15
Verbal	3	0.64	6	1.4	+0.76
Behavioral	25	5.31	18	4.1	-1.21
Total	471	100	444	100	0.00

Table 5.5 shows that Material processes remain dominant in both TT1 and TT2. Their proportion increases from 62.21% in TT1 to 66.4% in TT2, representing a gain of 4.19 percentage points. By contrast, Relational processes decrease from 19.75% to 18.2% (-1.55 percentage points), while Mental processes decline from 9.55% to 7.2% (-2.35 percentage points). Behavioural processes also decrease from 5.31% to 4.105 (-1.21 percentage points). Existential processes remain largely stable, increasing marginally from 2.55% to 2.7% (+0.15 percentage points), whereas Verbal processes rise from 0.64% to 1.4% (+0.76 percentage points). Overall, the total number of clause-process units decrease from 471 in TT1 to 444 in TT2, indicating a degree of textual compression alongside the redistribution of process types.

From a textual-linguistic perspective, the most notable development is the increased prominence of Material processes accompanied by reductions in Mental, Behavioural, and Relational processes. This pattern suggests that TT2 tends to foreground actions, events, and externally observable developments while reducing the relative prominence of cognition, perception, affective response, and state-based representation. The decrease in Mental processes (-2.35 percentage points) is particularly significant because these processes frequently encode remembering, perceiving, and reflecting, all of which play an important role in the representation of war experience in TT1. Similarly, the reduction in Behavioural processes (-1.21 percentage points) suggests a diminished emphasis on bodily manifestations of psychological and emotional states. The slight increase in Verbal processes (+0.76

percentage points) may indicate a tendency to make certain meanings more explicitly reportable through speech or verbal reporting. Taken together, these changes produce a transitivity profile that is somewhat more event-oriented and externally focused than that of TT1.

The overall tendencies provide only a macro-level view of textual linguistic restructuring. The cumulative profile does not reveal where such redistributions occur or how they affect specific dimensions of war reality. The following sections therefore examine the four experiential domains individually in order to identify the process shifts, participant reconfigurations, and circumstantial changes through which TT2 reconstructs the experiential representation of war reality.

5.4.2.1. War Reality as Physical Brutality

Physical Brutality constitutes the first experiential domain examined in TT2. As discussed in Chapter 3, this domain encompasses representations of bodily injury, killing, destruction, military violence, and other forms of material devastation associated with warfare. Table 5.6 compares the transitivity profile of Physical Brutality in TT2 relative to TT1, allowing an initial assessment of whether the mediated rewriting preserves or redistributes the experiential resources through which wartime violence is represented before specific process, participant, and circumstantial shifts are examined.

Table 5.6. Transitivity profile in the domain of Physical Brutality (TT1 – TT2)

Process type	TT1 (n)	TT1 (%)	TT2 (n)	TT2 (%)	Percentage-point change (TT1-TT2)
Material	81	85.3	80	81.63	-3.67
Relational	10	10.3	11	11.22	+0.92
Mental	3	3.1	4	4.08	+0.98
Existential	3	3.1	3	3.06	-0.04
Verbal	0	0.0	0	0.00	0.00
Behavioral	0	0.0	0	0.00	0.00
Total	97	100	98	100	0.00

Table 5.6 shows that Material processes remain overwhelmingly dominant in both TT1 and TT2. In TT1, Material processes account for 85.3% of all process types within the domain, while in TT2 they account for 81.63%. Despite remaining the principal mode of representation, their proportion decreases by 3.67 percentage

points. By contrast, Relational processes increase from 10.3% to 11.22% (+0.92 percentage points), while Mental processes rise from 3.1% to 4.08% (+0.98 percentage points). Existential processes remain virtually unchanged, decreasing marginally from 3.1% to 3.06%. Neither version contains Verbal or Behavioural processes within the analysed dataset. The overall number of clause-process units increases marginally from 97 in TT1 to 98 in TT2, indicating that the redistribution of process types occurs without substantial expansion or reduction of the domain as a whole.

From a textual-linguistic perspective, the profile suggests a modest shift away from the strongly action-centred representation that characterizes TT1. Although Physical Brutality continues to be represented primarily through Material processes, TT2 shows a slightly greater tendency to construe wartime violence through states, attributes, and cognitive configurations, as reflected in the increased proportions of Relational and Mental processes. In experiential terms, this indicates that some instances of violence are no longer represented solely as actions performed by or upon participants but are partially reformulated as conditions, qualities, consequences, or objects of consciousness. The increase remains relatively limited, however, and does not fundamentally alter the overall representational orientation of the domain. Physical Brutality in TT2 continues to be dominated by material realisations of violence, destruction, and bodily suffering.

The relative stability of the transitivity profile is noteworthy when compared with the broader corpus tendencies identified in Table 5.5. Whereas TT2 generally exhibits a stronger preference for Material processes across the corpus, this tendency is less pronounced in the Physical Brutality domain, where Material processes decrease slightly while Relational and Mental processes increase marginally. This suggests that the mediated rewriting does not simply apply a uniform textual strategy across all experiential domains. Rather, editorial intervention appears to operate selectively, producing a domain-specific redistribution of experiential meaning. The precise mechanisms through which this redistribution occurs are examined in the following sections through an analysis of prominent process shifts (Table 5.7) and participant and circumstantial shifts (Table 5.8).

Table 5.7. Prominent process shifts in Physical Brutality (TT1 – TT2)

Shift category	Typical pattern	Example(s)
Process shift	TT1 Relational → TT2 Material	“In the jungle there were hundreds of bomb and artillery craters” (TT1.98.3b) → “The ground was pock-marked with hundreds of craters” (TT2.98.3c) “All the bomb and artillery craters were full of water” (TT1.100.1b) → “All the bomb craters were filled to the rim with water” (TT2.100.1c)
	TT1 Material → TT2 Mental	“Death put his hand on him” (TT1.16.1b) → “He felt Death’s hand on him” (TT2.16.1c)
	TT1 Mental → TT2 Relational	“not knowing who was who” (TT1.5.3b) → “became disoriented” (TT2.5.3c)
Process omissions	Omission of Material processes	“and aimed at almost each one’s back” (TT1.6.2b) “tearing up the forest land” (TT1.106.2b) “but Death’s hand grasped him tightly” (TT1.128.3b)
	Omission of Material process sequences	“The stream of grey uniformed soldiers were driven ahead by tanks, were all killed, and heaped up together by Kien’s hands” (TT1.129.1b-3b)
	Omission of figurative process constructions	“Bullets buzzed like fire bees” (TT1.12.1b) “as suddenly as water running out of the broken bottom of a bottle” (TT1.35.2b) “It seemed like the sky was melting into water” (TT1.99.1b)
Process additions	Addition of a Relational process	“That dry season” (TT1.3.1b) → “That was the dry season” (TT2.3.1c)
	Addition of Material processes	“the wind and a sea of fire spread all over as the fire of the hell” (TT1.3.4b) → “the wind blew fiercely, and the enemy sent napalm spraying through the jungle and a sea of fire enveloped them, spreading like the fires of hell” (TT2.3.4c)
	Addition of a Mental process	“He fell down, face to the earth...” (TT1.41.4b) → “He fell, his face to the earth, without seeing Ho Bia again” (TT2.41.4c)
	Addition of a Material process	“A 106mm bullet exploded almost under his feet” (TT1.102.1b) → “Quang had been hit by a shell exploding right at his feet” (TT2.102.1c)

Table 5.7 identifies the most prominent process shifts observed in the Physical Brutality domain between TT1 and TT2. While Table 5.6 provides an overview of the overall transitivity distribution, it does not reveal how particular experiential meanings are reconfigured through local textual intervention. The examples selected in Table 5.7 therefore illustrate recurrent patterns of process substitution, omission, and addition that contribute to the reconstruction of physical violence in the mediated rewriting. These patterns are examined descriptively through transitivity analysis and subsequently interpreted with reference to Baker's (2018) narrative framing strategies.

Process shifts

The process shifts reveal several forms of experiential redistribution. One recurrent pattern involves the reconfiguration of Relational processes into Material processes. For example, the descriptive clause "*In the jungle there were hundreds of craters*" (TT1.98.3b) is reformulated as "*The ground was pock-marked with hundreds of craters*" (TT2.98.3c), while "*All bomb and artillery craters were full of water*" (TT1.100.1b) becomes "*All the bomb craters were filled to the rim with water*" (TT2.100.1c). In TT1, the clauses primarily describe existing conditions of the war landscape. TT2, however, reconstructs these conditions through Material processes that foreground the physical effects of bombardment. The result is a representation that places greater emphasis on the material traces produced by violence rather than on their static existence.

Other shifts involve movement away from external action towards internal experience or resultant states. In "*Death put his hand on him*" (TT1.16.1b) → "*He felt Death's hand on him*" (TT2.16.1c), Material process is reformulated as a Mental process, shifting attention from the external force of death to the participant's subjective perception of imminent mortality. Similarly, "*not knowing who was who*" (TT1.5.3b) is rendered as "*became disoriented*" (TT2.5.3c), transforming a Mental process into a Relational configuration that attributes a state to the participant. These shifts suggest that TT2 occasionally condenses experiential sequences into more readily interpretable states or perceptions. In Baker's terms, such reformulations can

be viewed as instances of selective appropriation whereby experiential meanings are reorganized rather than removed.

Process omissions

Process omission constitutes another notable pattern. Several Material processes presented in TT1 disappear altogether in TT2, including “*aimed at almost each other’s back*” (TT1.6.2b) “*tearing up the forest land*” (TT1.106.2b), and “*Death’s hand grasped him tightly*” (TT1.128.3b). In addition, TT2 omits longer Material process sequences, as illustrated by the removal of the chain “*were driven ahead by tanks, were all killed, and heaped up together by Kien’s hands*” (TT1.129.1b-3b). A further subset of omissions involves figurative process constructions such as “*Bullets buzzed like fire bees*” (TT1.12.1b), “*as suddenly as water running out of the broken bottom of a bottle*” (TT1.35.2b), and “*It seemed like the sky was melting into water*” (TT1.99.1b). Collectively, these omissions reduce the density of processes and remove some locally elaborated representations of violence. From a narrative-framing perspective, the omissions function as a form of selective appropriation that compresses experiential detail and decreases the prominence of figurative representation of brutality.

Process additions

Process addition operates in the opposite direction by introducing new experiential meanings not explicitly realised in TT1. Some additions involve Relational processes, as in “*That dry season*” (TT1.3.1b) becoming “*That was the dry season*” (TT2.3.1c), which transforms a nominal reference into an explicit identifying relation. Other additions involve Material processes that elaborate causal chains of violence. For example, TT2 expands “*the wind and a sea of fire spread all over as the fire of the hell*” (TT1.3.4b) into “*the wind blew fiercely, and the enemy sent napalm spraying through the jungle and a sea of fire enveloped them, spreading like the fires of hell*” (TT2.3.4c). Here, multiple new Material processes specify both agency and the mechanics of destruction. Similarly, “*A 106mm bullet exploded almost under his feet*” (TT1.102.1b) becomes “*Quang had been hit by a shell exploding right at his feet*” (TT2.102.1c), introducing an explicit process of impact that foregrounds

the victim's experience. The addition of a Mental process in "*without seeing Ho Bia again*" (TT2.41.4c) likewise introduces a new layer of consciousness absent from TT1.

Taken together, the process shifts in Table 5.7 indicate that TT2 reconstructs physical brutality through a combination of deletion, compression and amplification. Some sequences of violence are condensed through the omission of Material processes and figurative process constructions, while others are elaborated through the addition of new Material and Mental processes that clarify agency, causation, or subjective experience. In Baker's framework, these patterns are most consistently associated with selective appropriation whereby experiential material is redistributed rather than simply preserved. The cumulative effect is not a reduction of physical violence as a representational domain, but a reorganization of how violence is narratively conducted, perceived, and interpreted within the rewritten text.

Table 5.8. Prominent participant and circumstantial shifts in Physical Brutality (TT1 – TT2)

Shift category	Typical pattern	Example(s)
Participant shifts	Participant specification through institutional agency	“The food was reduced” (TT1.35.1b) → “Orders came for the food rations to be sharply reduced” (TT2.35.1c)
	Participant specification through character identification	"Small" Think was killed in the close fighting. (TT1.41.1b) → “‘Lofty’ Think, one of the lovers, was killed in close fighting,” (TT2.41.1c)
	Participant repositioning towards victim-centred experience	“Death put his hand on him.” (TT1.16.1b) → “He felt Death's hand on him.” (TT2.16.1c); “Blood was up to their calves,” (TT1.37.1b) → “We were up to our ankles in blood,” (TT2.37.1c); “A 106mm bullet exploded almost under his feet” (TT1.102.1b) → “Quang had been hit, by a shell exploding right at his feet” (TT2.102.1c)
	Participant reallocation through agency foregrounding	“The 7.6mm bullet shells rained on the floor tiles under the girl's white uniform” (TT1.113.1b-2b) → “Kien fired the remainder of the magazine into her, and the tiles under the girl’s white uniform reddened with blood” (TT1.113.1c-2c);
Circumstantial shifts	Explicit cause/source circumstances	“whose water surface turned dark brown, reddened.” (TT1.14.2b) → “whose surface water turned rust-coloured from the blood.” (TT2.14.2c); “Then more artillery shells pounded continuously for some minutes” (TT1.106.1b) → “Then even more artillery rounds came in from the enemy,” (TT2.106.1c)
	Addition of purpose circumstances	“no time to cry.” (TT1.41.3b) → “No time for tears or for vengeance.” (TT2.41.3c)
	Addition of circumstantial state framing	“Kien did want to stop firing” (TT1.128.1b) → “Kien, in a firing frenzy, had not wanted to stop firing” (TT1.128.1c)

Following the examination of process-level reconfiguration in Table 5.7, Table 5.8 presents the most prominent participant and circumstantial shifts observed in the Physical Brutality domain between TT1 and TT2. Whereas process shifts reveal how actions, events, and states are experientially reconstructed, participant and circumstantial shifts provide further insight into how agency, affectedness, causation, and contextual framing are redistributed in the mediated rewriting. The examples selected illustrate recurring patterns of participant specification, participant repositioning, agency foregrounding, and circumstantial explicitation. As in the preceding analyses, the table does not aim to catalogue all observed shifts, but highlights those that recur sufficiently to suggest systematic tendencies in the reconstruction of physical violence.

Participant shifts

The participant shifts in Table 5.8 indicate a recurrent tendency toward greater specification and redistribution of experiential focus in TT2. One pattern involves the specification of previously implicit or backgrounded participant. In “*The food was reduced*” (TT1.35.1b), the reduction of food appears as an impersonal circumstance of wartime deprivation, whereas TT2 reformulates this as “*Orders came for the food rations to be sharply reduced*” (TT2.15.1c), introducing an institutional source behind the action. Similarly, “*Small*” *Thin* was killed in the close fighting” (TT1.41.1b) becomes “*Lofty*” *Thin*, one of the lovers, was killed in the close fighting” (TT2.41.1c), providing additional identifying information that situates the character more explicitly within the narrative.

A second pattern concerns the repositioning of experiential focus towards affected participants. In “*Death put his hand on him*” (TT1.16.1b), the experiential emphasis falls on the external force represented by Death, whereas “*He felt Death’s hand on him*” (TT2.16.1c) shifts attention to the participant’s perception of suffering. Similar repositioning occurs in “*Blood was up to their calves*” (TT1.37.1b), which becomes “*We were up to our ankles in blood*” (TT2.37.1c), and in “*A 106mm bullet exploded almost under his feet*” (TT1.102.1b), which is reformulated as “*Quang had been hit, by a shell exploding right at his feet*” (TT2.102.1c). In each case, the focus

moves from environmental conditions or external events towards the embodied experience of those affected by violence.

Another recurrent pattern involves the foregrounding of agency. In TT1, “*The 7.6mm bullet shells rained on the floor tiles under the girl's white uniform*” (TT1.113.1b-2b) presents violence through the effects of ammunition. TT2 reconstructs the event as “*Kien fired the remainder of the magazine into her, and the tiles under the girl's white uniform reddened with blood*” (TT1.113.1c-2c), explicitly identifying the human actor responsible for the action. Agency therefore becomes more visible, and narratively attributable.

Circumstantial shifts

Circumstantial shifts display a parallel tendency towards contextual enrichment. TT2 frequently adds explicit cause or source circumstances, as seen in “*rust-coloured from the blood*” (TT2.14.2c0) and “*artillery rounds came in from the enemy*” (TT2.106.1c0), where causal relations that remain implicit in TT1 become overtly specified. Similar additions occur through purpose circumstances, such as “*for vengeance*” (TT2.41.3c), and through circumstantial state framing, as in “*Kien, in a firing frenzy, had not wanted to stop firing*” (TT2.128.1c). These additions increase the amount of contextual information accompanying acts of violence and their consequences.

Taken together, the participant and circumstantial shifts suggest that TT2 systematically reframes physical brutality through increased participant specification and contextual explicitation. In Baker's (2018) terms, many of these interventions can be interpreted as forms of selective appropriation and participant repositioning. Rather allowing violence to emerge through fragmented experiential details, TT2 frequently guides readers towards more explicit interpretations of who acts, who suffers, and why events occur.

The specification of institutional authority through expressions such as “*Orders came*” exemplifies this tendency. Whereas TT1 often leaves causation dispersed within the wartime environment, TT2 introduces identifiable sources of action, making violence more explicitly framed through clearer attribution of agency

and causality, thereby reducing interpretive ambiguity for readers. Likewise, the repeated movement toward victim-centred configurations foregrounds embodied suffering and subjective experience. Through such shifts, physical brutality is not merely represented as a surrounding condition but as a direct experiential encounter of identifiable human participants.

The foregrounding of agency further aligns with the broader rewriting orientation identified in the previous sections. As demonstrated in the discussion of initial norms (Section 5.2), Palmos explicitly positioned his version as an interventionist “English version” intended for international readers and influenced by the FitzGerald tradition of adaptive rewriting. The participant shifts observed here provide textual evidence of that orientation. Events that are obscure, environmental, or indirectly represented in TT1 are frequently reorganized around identifiable actors and clearer causal structures in TT2.

The circumstantial additions similarly support the preliminary and matricial tendencies identified earlier in the chapter. The preliminary norms analysis suggested a stronger orientation towards Anglophone readability, narrative accessibility and interpretive guidance. At the operational level, the addition of source, cause, purpose, and state circumstances serves precisely this function by reducing inferential demands on readers and supplying explanatory links that are less explicit in TT1. These additions are also consistent with the matricial profile observed in Tables 5.3 and 5.4, where expansion and addition emerged as recurrent operations across the corpus. The circumstantial enrichments identified in Table 5.8 therefore represent a linguistic manifestation of the broader editorial recomposition that characterizes TT2.

To sum up, the transitivity shifts indicate that TT2 reconstructs physical brutality through the preservation of violent events and a more explicitly framed narrative of violence. Participants become more identifiable, agency becomes more attributable, and circumstances become more explanatory. The cumulative effect is a representation of wartime brutality that remains intense but is organized into a more coherent and interpretively guided narrative for Anglophone readerships.

5.4.2.2. War Reality as Psychological Trauma

This subsection examines how psychological trauma is re-narrated in TT2 through shifts in experiential meaning (SFL transitivity), with particular attention to how Palmos’s editorial rewriting reconfigures the visibility, legibility, and narrative staging of trauma in relation to TT1. Table 5.9 presents the transitivity profile of the Psychological Trauma domain in TT2 relative to TT1. Following the overall transitivity comparison in Table 5.5, the table focuses specifically on how experiential meanings associated with psychological suffering are redistributed in the mediated rewriting. Consistent with the analytical procedure adopted throughout this study, the comparison is conducted at the level of process types in order to identify systematic shifts in the representation of cognition, perception, emotional response, behavioural manifestation, and states of psychological distress.

**Table 5.9. Transitivity profile in the domain of Psychological Trauma
(TT1 – TT2)**

Process type	TT1 (n)	TT1 (%)	TT2 (n)	TT2 (%)	Percentage-point change (TT1 – TT2)
Material	44	44.00	50	49.50	+5.50
Relational	29	29.00	27	26.73	-2.27
Mental	13	13.00	10	9.90	-3.10
Existential	3	3.00	4	3.96	+0.96
Verbal	0	0.00	2	1.98	+1.98
Behavioral	11	11.00	8	7.92	-3.08
Total	100	100	101	100	

As shown in Table 5.9, Material processes remain the dominant process type in both versions, increasing from 44% in TT1 to 49.5% in TT2, representing a gain of 5.5 percentage points. By contrast, Relational processes decrease slightly from 29% to 26.73% (-2.27 percentage points), while Mental processes decline from 13% to 9.9% (-3.1 percentage points). Existential processes increase marginally from 3% to 3.96% (+0.96 percentage points), and Verbal processes, absent in TT1, appear in TT2 at 1.98%. Overall, the profile suggests that while TT2 preserves the broad transitivity configuration of the Psychological Trauma domain, it exhibits a measurable redistribution away from Mental and Behavioural configurations towards Material processes, accompanied by the introduction of a small number of Verbal processes.

From an experiential perspective, these shifts suggest a tendency in TT2 to reconstruct psychological trauma through more externally observable and narratively reportable forms of experience. The reduction in Mental processes indicates that certain instances of cognition, perception, memory, or emotional response in TT1 are no longer represented primarily as internal psychological activity. Likewise, the decline in Behavioural processes suggests a reduced emphasis on bodily manifestations of psychological distress. Instead, the increase in Material processes points towards a greater foregrounding of actions, events, and externally visible consequences. Although the size of the changes remains moderate, the overall direction of the redistribution is noteworthy because psychological trauma in TT1 is frequently construed through subjective experience, memory, and affective response.

Table 5.10 presents the most prominent process-level shifts identified in the Psychological Trauma domain between TT1 and TT2. Whereas Table 5.9 provided a quantitative overview of transitivity distribution, the present table focuses on recurrent qualitative changes involving process-type transformation, process omission, and process addition. The selected examples illustrate how experiential meanings associated with cognition, memory, perception, identity, and post-war psychological suffering are reconfigured in the mediated rewriting. As with previous domain-specific analyses, the table does not aim to catalogue all process shifts in the corpus. Instead, it highlights analytically rich patterns that recur across the dataset and contribute to the reconstruction of psychological trauma in TT2.

Table 5.10. Prominent process shifts in Psychological Trauma (TT1 – TT2)

Shift category	Typical pattern	Example(s)
Process shifts	Mental → Existential	“Maybe Kien felt...” (TT1. 78.1b) → “For him there had been just the one war” (TT1. 78.1c)
	Relational → Verbal shift	“And it is he, no one else...” (TT1. 68.1b) → “They say of me... cannot even bear” (TT2.68.1c*)
	Material → Verbal	“For me the future had lied back in the far away past” (TT1.59.1b) → “The future lied to us, there long ago in the past” (TT2.59.1c)
	Relational → Existential	“And it is not the new life, the new age...” (TT1.60.1b) → “There is no new life, no new era” (TT2.60.1c)
Process omissions	Omission of Mental processes	“I thought it would shoot a rocket down: "Chiiiiill Boum!" (TT1.50.2b-4b); “as we had wished” (TT1.62.7b);
	Omission of Psychological elaboration	“the war which not only continually haunted him” (TT1.78.3b); “Now, more and more Kien felt as though he wasn’t living but rather had gotten suck on earth” (TT1.83.1b-3b)
Process additions	Addition of Relational evaluation	“The hope is contained in the beautiful pre-war past” (TT2.60.3c1*)
	Addition of Material-explanatory processes	“to escape the anti-intellectual atmosphere of the state ideologies that came with Communism” (TT2.71.4c1-c2) “The vulgar and cruel life we all experienced during the war?” (TT2.63.2c); “as if they were his mirrors” (TT1.74.2b); “as though they were mirrors surrounding him” (TT2.74.2c)
	Addition of Mental processes	“But the whump-whump-whump continues without the attack, and the helicopter images dissolve, and I see in its place a ceiling fan.” (TT2.50.1c)

Process shifts

The process shifts identified in Table 5.10 indicate that TT2 occasionally reconfigures psychological experience through changes in process type. One recurrent tendency involves the movement from Mental to Existential representation. For example, “*Maybe Kien felt...*” (TT1.78.1b) becomes “*For him there had been just the one war*” (TT2.78.1c), a subjective process of feeling is transformed into an existential statement, presenting trauma as an objective condition of existence instead of an internal perception. A similar movement towards externalization can be observed in the shift from Relational to Existential processes, where “*And it is not the new life, the new age...*” is rewritten into “*There is no new life, no new era*”. Here, an evaluative attribution is reconstructed as a categorical statement of non-existence.

Other shifts involve the replacement of identity-oriented or experiential configurations with communicative ones. The Relational to Verbal shift in “*And it is he, no one else...*” becoming “*They say of me...*” relocates psychological experience from internal self-definition to reported discourse. Likewise, the Material to Verbal shift in “*the future had lied back in the far away past*” becoming “*The future lied to us*” transforms a metaphorical spatial image into a verbal act of deception, thereby increasing interpretive explicitness.

Taken together, these process shifts suggest a tendency in TT2 to move psychological experience away from subjective perception and existential ambiguity towards more explicit and communicatively accessible formulations. Rather than representing trauma primarily through internal states, TT2 frequently reconstructs it as an externally observable condition or as a narratively articulated judgement. This tendency is compatible with the broader editorial orientation identified in Section 5.2 – 5.4, where readability, interpretive guidance, and narrative clarity emerge as recurrent priorities.

Process omissions

A second prominent pattern involves the omission of processes that contribute to the representation of cognition and psychological suffering. Several Mental processes are removed altogether, including “*I thought it would shoot a rocket down*”

and “*as we had wished*”. These omissions reduce the amount of direct access readers receive to characters’ thoughts, expectations, and subjective responses. More strikingly, TT2 also omits clauses that elaborate the continuing effects of trauma. Expressions such as “*the war which not only continually haunted him*” and “*Kien felt as though he wasn’t living but rather had gotten stuck on earth*” are absent from the rewritten version. These clauses contribute significantly to TT1’s portrayal of lingering psychological disturbance, emotional paralysis, and post-war alienation. Their removal therefore reduces the density of explicitly traumatized consciousness represented in the text.

From an interpretive perspective, these omissions suggest that TT2 selectively streamlines psychological representation by reducing certain forms of introspection and existential elaboration. Rather than foregrounding fragmented inner experience, the rewriting tends to suppress some of the more extended manifestations of psychological suffering. This tendency aligns with the matricial patterns identified earlier in this chapter, particularly the relatively high rates of omission and condensation observed in the Psychological Trauma domain. The resulting narrative, therefore, is one in which trauma remains present but is often represented in a more concise and narratively controlled manner.

Process additions

Alongside omissions, TT2 introduces a number of additional processes that enrich, explain, or reframe psychological experience. One notable pattern is the addition of Relational evaluation. The clause “*The hope is contained in the beautiful pre-war past*” introduces an explicit evaluative interpretation that is absent from TT1. Rather than allowing readers to infer the emotional significance of memory, the added clause directly attributes value and meaning to the past.

TT2 also introduces what may be termed explanatory processes. Additions such as “*to escape the anti-intellectual atmosphere of the state ideologies that came with Communism*” provide causal or motivational explanations that are not overtly expressed in TT1. Similarly, expansions such as “*the vulgar and cruel life we all experienced during the war*” and “*mirrors surrounding him*” supply additional

experiential detail and interpretive framing. These additions increase the degree to which psychological states are contextualised and explained.

A further pattern involves the addition of Mental processes. In the helicopter sequence (TT2.50.1c), TT2 introduces the clause “*I see in its place a ceiling fan*”, explicitly representing perception and consciousness. The added Mental process guides readers through the character’s shifting psychological state by making the perceptual transition overt rather than implied.

To sum up, these additions reveal a complementary tendency to the omissions discussed above. While TT2 removes some forms of implicit or prolonged psychological elaboration, it simultaneously introduces processes that clarify, contextualise, and interpret psychological experience. Trauma is therefore reconstructed not simply through reduction but through selective reorganization. The rewriting frequently replaces ambiguity and introspective density with more explicit evaluative, explanatory, and perceptual formulations. This pattern is generally consistent with the acceptability-oriented editorial norms reconstructed in the earlier sections, whereby experiential meanings are reshaped to enhance coherence, accessibility, and interpretive transparency for an international Anglophone readership.

Table 5.11 presents the most prominent participant and circumstantial shifts identified in the Psychological Trauma domain between TT1 and TT2. Whereas Table 5.10 examined process-level reconfigurations of psychological experience, the present table focuses on changes involving participant representation and circumstantial framing. The selected examples reveal recurring patterns of participant specification, participant repositioning, evaluative labelling, autobiographical positioning and the addition of spatial, temporal and causal circumstances. As in previous section, the table highlights recurrent and analytically significant shifts rather than providing an exhaustive inventory.

Table 5.11. Prominent participant and circumstantial shifts in Psychological Trauma (TT1 – TT2)

Shift category	Typical pattern	Example(s)
Participant shifts	Participant specification through reframing in TT2	“The ones still living” (TT1.62.2b) → “Those who survived” (TT2.62.2c);
		“...our salvation” (TT1.62.4b) → “Vietnam’s salvation” (TT2.62.4c);
		“And not only this war literature, others' war literature, he avoids reading.” (TT1.69.1b) → “Is it the author who avoids reading anything about any war, the Vietnam war or any other great wars?” (TT2.69.1c)
	Participant specification through evaluative labelling in TT2	“Oh my months and era, my generation!” (TT1.43.1b) → “Oh my lost years and months and days! My lost era! My lost generation!” (TT2.43.1c)
	Participant repositioning in TT2	“And it is he, no one else who even today still can’t enter a cinema” (TT1.68.1b-2b) → “They say of me that the war author cannot even bear to enter a cinema” (TT2.68.1c-2c)
	Omission of participant-centred psychological elaboration in TT2	“his sacred and sorrowful identity as an anti-American soldier would live forever in Kien's heart before anything else, as a last will and testament” (TT1.80.2b); “Now, more and more Kien felt as though he wasn’t living but rather had gotten suck on earth” (TT1.83.1b-3b)
	Addition of autobiographical participant positioning in TT2	“Even me, I’m nearly forty. I was eighteen at the start of the war in 1965, twenty-eight at the fall of Saigon in 1975.” (TT2.63.2c)
Circumstantial shifts	Spatial anchoring in TT2	“Over a long period of time, in his memory” (TT1.39.1b) → “Over a long period, over many, many graves” (TT2.39.1c*);
		“...breathing heavily...” (TT1.47.11b) → “breathing heavily over her body” (TT2.47.11c)
		“Some nights I’ve been startled...” (TT1.49.1b)

		→ “In my bed room, on many nights...” (TT2.49.1c)
	Historical-temporal specification	“Even me, I’m nearly forty. I was eighteen at the start of the war in 1965, twenty-eight at the fall of Saigon in 1975” (TT2.63.2c);
		“...I hadn’t sensed before.” (TT1. 44.2b) → “I’d not felt for her at the time of our traumatic, violent parting after second Tet in 1968.” (TT2.42.2c);
		“the year Mau Than (1968) (TT1.46.1b) → “Mau Than, the tragic year of 1968” (TT2.46.1c);
	Post-war temporal anchoring	“Since returning from the war, up to the present” (TT1.48.1b) → “Since returning to Hanoi” (TT2.48.1c)
	Addition of manner and evaluative circumstances	“Curling up in my bed,” (TT1.50.1b) → “I curl up in defence against the expected vapour-streak and the howling of their rockets.” (TT2.50.1c)
		Sadly, these can't reappear immediately upon the victory of the resistance,”(TT1.62.6b) → “Our history-making efforts for the great generations have been to no avail.” (TT2.62.6c)
	Addition of purpose	“who had gone into hiding.” (TT1.71.4b) → “who had gone into hiding to escape the anti-intellectual atmosphere of the state ideologies that came with Communism” (TT2.71.4c)
	Addition of source	“During those cold Spring nights, the familiar lonely souls reappeared” (TT1.73.1b) → “During the twilights of those cold nights the familiar, lonely spirits reappeared from the Screaming Souls Jungle,” (TT2.73.1c)

Participant shifts

The participant shifts in Table 5.11 reveal a recurrent tendency towards greater specification and reframing of psychological experience in TT2. One prominent pattern involves participant specification through reframing. For example, “*The one still living*” becomes “*These who survived*”, transforming a relatively neutral description of existence into one defined by survival. Similar specification occurs when “*our salvation*” is reformulated as “*Vietnam’s salvation*”, and when the referential field is expanded through additions such as “*the Vietnam war*” and “*any other great wars*”. These changes move the representation beyond the intermediate narrative context and situate it within broader collective and historical frames.

Another recurring tendency is participant specification through evaluative labelling. The transformation of “*my months and era, my generation*” into “*my lost years and months and days! My lost era! My lost generation!*” introduces explicit evaluative characterization not present in TT1. Likewise, TT2 frequently repositions narrative participants. In “And it is he, no one else who even today still can’t enter a cinema”, TT2 reconstructs the passage as “*They say of me that the war author cannot even bear to enter a cinema*”, shifting the narrative perspective from a third-person presentation towards a more personalized and self-referential stance. Additional autobiographical positioning appears in insertions such as “*Even me, I’m nearly forty. I was eighteen at the start of the war in 1965, twenty-eight at the fall of Saigon in 1975*” (TT2.63.2c). At the same time, TT2 omits certain forms of participant-centred psychological elaboration. Passages such as “*his sacred and sorrowful identity as an anti-American soldier*” and “*had gotten stuck on earth*” are removed, reducing some of the metaphorical and ideologically marked dimensions of psychological suffering present in TT1.

Circumstantial shifts

The circumstantial shifts display a parallel tendency towards contextual enrichment. TT2 repeatedly introduces more explicit spatial anchoring through additions such as “*over many, many graves*”, “*over her body*”, and “*in my bedroom*”. Historical and temporal circumstances are similarly expanded through references to

1965, 1968, 1975, *the Tet Offensive*, and “*Mau Than, the tragic year of 1968*”. Further additions include more specific post-war temporal anchoring (e.g. “*Since returning to Hanoi*”), evaluative and manner circumstances (e.g. “*in defence against the expected vapour-streak and the howling of their rockets*”), purpose circumstances (e.g. “*to escape the anti-intellectual atmosphere of the state ideologies that came with Communism*”), and source circumstances (e.g. “*from the Screaming Souls Jungle*”).

These shifts suggest that TT2 reconstructs psychological trauma through a more explicitly contextualized and historically anchored narrative framework. Whereas TT1 frequently presents trauma through fragmented memories, internal states, and subjective recollections, TT2 often supplements these experiences with additional participant specification, and circumstantial detail that situates them within clearer autobiographical, historical, and geopolitical coordinates. Psychological suffering therefore becomes not only an internal experience but also a narratively contextualized experience connected to identifiable individuals, historical events, and specific locations.

The participant shifts are particularly revealing in this regard. The movement from “*the ones still living*” to “*those who survived*” recasts identity through the lens of survival, while additions such as “*Vietnam’s salvation*” and “*the Vietnam war*” broaden the scope of reference from personal memory to collective historical experience. Similarly, the repeated introduction of evaluative labels such as “*lost generation*” increases the interpretive explicitness of trauma. Rather than allowing readers to infer loss from narrative events, TT2 increasingly names and foregrounds that loss directly. The additions of autobiographical positioning and the repositioning of narrative voice further strengthen the sense of a retrospective witness recounting and interpreting his own experiences.

The circumstantial shifts reinforce this tendency. The addition of spatial, temporal, and purpose circumstances repeatedly reduces the indeterminacy that characterizes many traumatic memories in TT1. Memories that are initially represented through vague temporal references, or subjective recollection are frequently re-situated within identifiable historical moments, geographical locations,

and causal frameworks. As a result, TT2 becomes a representation of psychological trauma that is more firmly anchored in historical chronology and narrative explanation.

These tendencies are broadly consistent with the editorial orientation reconstructed in the earlier sections of the chapter. The initial norms analysis suggests that TT2 was shaped by a preference for readability coherence, and accessibility for an international Anglophone readership. The preliminary norms analysis likewise indicated a publishing orientation favouring historical contextualization and interpretive guidance. At the level of matricial norms, recurrent patterns of addition and expansion demonstrated TT2's willingness to supplement and reorganize TT1 in order to enhance narrative clarity. The participant and circumstantial shifts examined here provide further evidence of these tendencies. Through systematic specification, contextualization, and explanatory enrichment, TT2 reconstructs psychological trauma as a more historically situated and interpretively guided experience, thereby reducing some of the ambiguity, fragmentation, and subjective openness that characterize TT1's representation of post-war memory and suffering.

5.4.2.3. War Reality as Collective Memory

Table 5.12 presents the transitivity profile of the Collective Memory domain in TT2 relative to TT1. Whereas the previous sections examined the reconstruction of physical brutality and psychological trauma, the present section focuses on how memories of war, retrospective reflection, and collective remembrance are reconfigured in the mediated rewriting. The table provides an overview of the distribution of process types across the aligned TT1-TT2 corpus, allowing shifts in experiential representation to be identified before examining specific processes, participant, and circumstantial changes in subsequent tables. As with the preceding domain analyses, the transitivity profile serves as a descriptive foundation for investigating how TT2 reconstructs the experiential meaning associated with collective memory.

Table 5.12. Transitivity profile in the domain of Collective Memory (TT1 – TT2)

Process type	TT1 (n)	TT1 (%)	TT2 (n)	TT2 (%)	Percentage-point change (TT1 – TT2)
Material	129	62.02	118	66.67	+4.65
Relational	34	16.35	28	15.82	-0.53
Mental	24	11.54	14	7.91	-3.63
Existential	5	2.40	4	2.26	-0.14
Verbal	3	1.44	4	2.26	+0.82
Behavioral	13	6.25	9	5.08	-1.17
Total	208	100	177	100	

As shown in Table 5.12, Material processes remain dominant in both versions, accounting for 62.02% of processes in TT1 and 66.07% in TT2. This represents an increase of 4.65 percentage points, making Material processes the only major category to show a substantial gain in proportional representation. In contrast, Mental processes decrease from 11.54% to 7.91%, representing the largest decline among all process types (-3.63 percentage points). Smaller decreases can also be observed in Behavioural processes (-1.17 percentage points), Relational processes (-0.53 percentage points), and Existential processes (-0.14 percentage points). Verbal processes increase slightly from 1.44% to 2.26% (+0.82 percentage points), although they remain comparatively infrequent. Overall, TT2 contains fewer total clause-process units than TT1 (177 compared with 208), indicating that the reconstruction of collective memory involves a degree of textual reduction alongside selective redistribution of process types.

The distributional changes suggest that TT2 reconstructs collective memory through a greater emphasis on remembered events and actions, accompanied by a reduced emphasis on acts of remembering, reflection, and subjective recollection. The increased prominence of Material processes indicates that memories are more frequently represented through what happened rather than through the mental processes by which those experiences are recalled, interpreted, or relived. Correspondingly, the decline in Mental processes points to a relative reduction in the introspective dimension of collective memory, with fewer explicit representation of

cognition, remembrance, and psychological engagement with the past. The slight increase in Verbal processes further suggests a tendency for memories to be represented through acts of narration and reporting rather than solely through internally reflection.

Together, these tendencies indicate that TT2 shifts collective memory towards a more externally oriented and narratively organized mode of representation. Memories remain central to the domain, but they are increasingly presented as recountable historical experiences rather than as fragmented acts of recollection embedded within consciousness. These patterns are broadly consistent with the tendencies identified elsewhere in the chapter. The initial norms analysis suggested an editorial preference for readability, coherence, and accessibility for an international Anglophone readership, while the matricial analysis demonstrated substantial levels of omission, addition, and restructuring across the corpus. The transitivity profile of the Collective Memory domain provides further evidence of this tendency. By reducing some of the mental and behavioural dimensions of remembrance while increasing the relative prominence of Material processes, TT2 appears to reconstruct collective memory in a manner that privileges narrative coherence and historical contextualisation over the more subjective and internally mediated forms of remembering that are characteristic of TT1. Such observations provide a quantitative foundation for the more detailed analysis of process, participant, and circumstantial shifts presented in the following sections.

Following the quantitative overview presented in Table 5.12, the analysis now turns to the qualitative patterns through which collective memory is reconfigured in TT2. While the overall transitivity profile revealed reduction in Mental, Behavioural, and Relational processes alongside a relative increase in Verbal processes, these distributions do not fully capture the mechanisms by which TT2 reconstructs remembered experience. In the domain of Collective Memory, experiential change frequently extends beyond isolated process substitutions to include extensive omission, addition, condensation, and recomposition of narrative material. As a result, transitivity shifts often operate together with broader matricial interventions,

producing substantial restructuring of memory sequences and retrospective narration. Table 5.13 therefore presents the most prominent process-level patterns identified in the corpus. The examples illustrate not only shifts between process types (e.g. Relational Material, Material Relation, or Material Existential), but also recurrent omissions of Mental processes, large-scale narrative recompositions, and additions of processes. Examining these patterns makes it possible to identify how TT2 reorganises the experiential representation of collective memory before considering their implications for narrative framing and translational orientation.

Table 5.13. Prominent process shifts in Collective Memory (TT1 – TT2)

Shift category	Typical pattern	Example(s)
Process shifts	TT1 Relational → TT2 Material	“The thirty years of fighting had been a whole world,” (TT1.114.3b2) → “they had been fighting for thirty years,” (TT2.114.3c2); “so it was not necessary for him to have a tomb” (TT1.22.2b) → “No grave or tomb for them to throw the cards onto” (TT2.22.2c)
	TT1 Material → TT2 Relational	“Death, till now madly devouring” (TT1.134.1b) → “The killing had been obsessive, all-devouring (TT2.134.1c)
	TT1 Material → TT2 Existential	“no one won and no one lost” (TT1.92.1b-2b) → “no winner, no loser” (TT2.92.1c-2c)
Process omissions	Omission of Mental processes	“predicting...” (TT1.31.3b); “as if it wanted” (TT1.33.2b); “And he could see” (TT1.88.5b); “One could also be shocked by seeing...” (TT1.89.1b); “I just knew” (TT1.90.2b); “The war, in a jiffy was no long what he thought” (TT2.148.c)
Narrative recomposition	Omission of reflective memory narration	“seemed to turn suddenly into a joke, the group of enemy soldiers, some lying close to the ground,” (TT1.134.2b-3b); “just at the moment two T54 rushed on, and turned sidewalk, crushing on no one anymore” (TT1.134.6b-8b); “But did he come from the North, the South or the Centre I didn’t know, as he was only moaning, and you know, moaning sounds the same everywhere, in every part of the country. On our side and on the Saigonese side, everybody moaned the same” (TT1.90.4b-6b)
	Total omission of	“Actually, Kien had been more fortunate during the war than in peace time, because in

	TT1 retrospective war-memory sequence	the war he could have lived, fought, and grown up beside his really good comrades. However the price of this fortune was that he had lost one by one his friends, his most intimate comrades and brothers-in-arms. They were killed in front of him, or inside his arms. Others died to save his life. Many of them died on account of his mistakes” (TT1.150-154)
	Omission of TT1 narrative sequence and recomposition of TT2 event narrative	“The Americans were all gathered there, ... They didn’t shout, didn’t burst into laughter, didn’t scream. The horrible scene took place silently, writhing in the barbarous quiet” (TT1.164.1b-165.2b) → “but the way they had all come to a standstill, and all others waiting their turn, it appeared they would end their patrol with the rape” (TT2.163.2c1-c4)
	Omission of TT1 sensory memory sequence and recomposition of TT2 action sequence	“In the grass clearing, on top of the trampled bushes by the moth-covered human-shaped rock, a heap of black bodies, covered with sweat, breathing heavily. He didn’t hear Hoa’s cry, but he could feel it” (TT1.161-162) → “Without losing their control, of lifting their voices, they set about stripping Hoa, and the dog-handler first, roughly fucking her” (TT2. 162.2c1-c4)
Process additions	Addition of Verbal processes	Some said (TT2.114.3c); “...shouted Tac” (TT2.132.1c); He shouted (TT2.132.8c)
	Addition of evaluative Relational processes	“...if you included the Japanese and the French. He had been fighting for eleven years. War had been their whole world” (TT2.114.3c2-3c4);
	Addition of explanatory Material processes	“fighting a big man on top of her. She was struggling desperately, ...her clothes being ripped from her...” (TT2.140); “after artilleries had blocked their exit.” (TT1.86.3b) → “because artillery barrages had blocked their exit, sucking life from them.” (TT2.86.3c); “The first pain in his soldier's life almost vague, almost untrue,

		<p>stuck closely at Kien.” (TT1.149.1b)</p> <p>→ “He was to remember that as his first war wound, not the blood from his injuries now staining the glove” (TT2.149.1c)</p>
	Addition of Mental processes	<p>“Kien and Tac watched...” (TT2.113.3c);</p> <p>“he had seen...” (TT2.86.1c)</p>
	Explicitation through Verbal and Mental processes	<p>“the most ironic teachings against the spirit of conciliation, against the bullets covered in sugar, against the passions of the remnants of the fallen luxurious society” (TT1.82.3b-5b)</p> <p>→ “urging them to ignore the spirit of reconciliation, to beware of the ‘bullets’ coated with sugar, to ignore the warmth and passion among the remnants of this fallen, luxurious society of the South” (TT2.82.2c-5c);</p>

Table 5.13 reveals that the reconstruction of collective memory in TT2 extends beyond isolated transitivity shifts to encompass substantial omission, addition, and recomposition of narrative material. Compared with the domains of Physical Brutality and Psychological Trauma, the examples in this domain demonstrate a much stronger interaction between textual-linguistic and matricial interventions. While several process substitutions are observable, the most prominent tendency is the restructuring of retrospective memory sequences through selective deletion, condensation, and replacement with newly constructed experiential material.

Process shifts

With regard to process shifts, TT2 exhibits recurrent movement from abstract or evaluative configurations towards more concrete experiential representation. In “*The thirty years of fighting had been a whole world,*” (TT1.114.3b2), the Relational process is reformulated as the Material process “*they had been fighting for thirty years,*” (TT2.114.3c2). Likewise, “*Death, till now madly devouring*” (TT1.134.1b) is reconstructed as the Relational expression “*The killing had been obsessive, all-devouring*” (TT2.134.1c), while “*no one won and no one lost*” (TT1.92.1b-2b) becomes the Existential formulation “*no winner, no loser*” (TT2.92.1c-2c). These shifts indicate a tendency to recast metaphorical, evaluative, or process-oriented representations into forms that foreground states, outcomes, and historically recognizable conditions. Rather than substantially altering the content of collective memory, TT2 reorganises its experiential construal in ways that may be more immediately accessible to target readers.

Process omissions

A second pattern involves the omission of Mental processes. Examples such as “*predicting...*”, “*as if it wanted*”, “*And he could see*”, “*One could also be shocked by seeing....*”, “*I just knew*”, and “*The war, in a jiffy was no longer what he thought,*” are omitted in TT2. These omissions reduce explicit representations of perception, cognition, and subjective reflection. Consistent with the quantitative findings in Table 5.12, the reduction of Mental processes decreases the extent to which collective memory is mediated through individual consciousness.

Consequently, instead of being presented as an act of reflection and interpretation, remembered experience is presented as a sequence of observable situations and events.

Narrative recomposition

More significant than individual process omissions, however, is the large-scale narrative recomposition observed throughout this domain. A number of examples demonstrate that TT2 removes substantial retrospective memory sequences and replaces them with newly organized experiential material. The first pattern involves the compression of reflective memory narration. Clauses such as “*seemed to turn suddenly into a joke*”, “*just at the moment two T54 rushed on*” and “*But did he come from the North, the South, or the Centre I didn’t know*” are removed, resulting in the loss of reflective commentary, uncertainty, and associative memory movement.

Another pattern is the complete omission of retrospective war-memory narration, most notable in TT1.150-154, where Kien reflects upon comradeship, sacrifice, personal responsibility, and the deaths of fellow soldiers. The removal of this passage eliminates an extended sequence of autobiographical remembrance and survivor-guilt reflection. A third pattern involves the omission of sensory memory sequences and their replacement with action-centred narration. In TT1.161-162, for example, sensory impressions such as “*covered with sweat*”, “*breathing heavily*”, and “*He didn’t hear Hoa’s cry, but he could feel it*” are replaced by the action-oriented sequence “*they set about stripping Hoa*” (TT2.162.2c1-c4). Similarly, the collective description of the obscure rape scene in TT1.164-165 is recomposed into a more direct event narrative in TT1. Collectively, these interventions suggest that TT2 does not merely reduce memory material but reorganizes how collective memory itself is narrated. Reflective collection, sensory perception, and retrospective evaluation are frequently compressed or removed, while event progression and externally observable actions become more prominent.

Process additions

Process additions further reinforce the tendency towards explicitation and narrative restructuring. TT2 introduces additional Verbal processes (“*Some said*”,

“shouted Tac”; “He shouted”), evaluative Relational processes (*“War had been their whole world”*), explanatory Material processes (*“because artillery barrages had blocoked their exit”*), and Mental processes (*“Kien and Tac watched”; “he had seen”*). These additions frequently serve connective and explanatory functions, making relationships between events more explicit than in TT1. Particularly noteworthy is the reformulation of *“the most ironic teachings against the spirit of conciliation, against the bullets covered in sugar, against the passions of the remnants of the fallen luxurious society”* (TT1.82.3b-5b) into *“urging them to ignore the spirit of reconciliation, to beware of the ‘bullets’ coated with sugar, to ignore the warmth and passion among the remnants of this fallen, luxurious society of the South”* (TT2.82.2c-5c). Here, TT2 introduces additional verbal and mental dimensions through expressions such as *“urging”* and *“beware”*, while also specifying the referential scope of the original expression through the addition of *“society of the South”*. As the result, the narrative becomes a more explicit and contextually anchored representation of collective memory.

To sum up, the patterns in Table 5.13 indicate that until now Collective Memory is the domain in which TT2 departs most substantially from TT1. While local transitivity shifts are observable, the most consequential interventions occur at the level of narrative recomposition, where entire memory sequences are compressed, omitted, or reconstructed. These findings correspond closely with the matricial profile observed earlier, particularly the high rates of omission and addition identified in this domain. They also align with the acceptability-oriented tendencies inferred from TT2’s initial norms and with the editorial interventionist orientation suggested by the preliminary norms. Cumulatively, these textual-linguistic and matricial interventions reconstruct collective memory into a more explicit and systematically organized narrative, shifting attention from subjective recollection and sensory remembrance towards the representation of events, actions, and their consequences.

Table 5.14. Prominent participant and circumstantial shifts in Collective Memory (TT1 – TT2)

Shift category	Typical pattern	Example(s)
Participant shifts	Participant reorientation	“of the independent battalion 27, the unlucky battalion of which he is one among ten survivors,” (TT1.1b2b) → “Ten men survived from the Unlucky Battalion, after fierce, horrible, barbarous fighting.” (TT2.2.1b)
	Participant narrowing	“Everyone shuddered” (TT1.114.1b) → “Kien shuddered” (TT2.114.1c)
	Participant reallocation	“his eyes turned dull with a most surprised look” (TT1.135.4b) → “He looked at Kien with intense surprise” (TT2.135.4c)
	Participant specification through sociopolitical categorisation	“People just didn’t care” (TT1.81.2b) → “The general population just didn’t care about them. Nor did their own authorities” (TT2.81.2c1-2c2);
	Ideological recategorization of participants	“especially against the idea of some people being meritorious” (TT1.82.6b) → “And especially to guard against the idea of the South having fought valiantly or been meritorious in any way” (TT2.82.6c)
Circumstantial shifts	Omission of locational setting	At every station where the train stopped, (TT1.82.1b)
	Circumstantial specification through historical-political labelling	he belonged to the Special Commandoes of Interdivision No 6. (TT1.90.3b) → “because he was from the ARVN Special Commandos, on the other side.” (TT2.90.3c); “Later, whenever he heard someone telling stories” (TT1.115.1b-2b) → “In later years, when he heard stories of V-Day” (TT1.115.1c);

		<p>“or watching a film of the scene on 30 April in Saigon - cheers, flags and flowers, soldiers; people joyful, triumphant, happy” (TT1.115.3b)</p> <p>→ “or watched the scenes of the Fall of Saigon on film, with cheering, flags, flowers, triumphant soldiers and joyful people,” (TT2.115.3c);</p> <p>“...Gate No 5 of Tan Son Nhat airport,” (TT1.24.1b)</p> <p>→ “Gate 5 of Saigon’s Tan Son Nhat airport” (TT2.24.1c)</p>
	Addition of reflective circumstances	<p>“Another year with the MIA team. Or was it longer? And more time wandering as a Veteran. And more time wandering as a Veteran.” (TT2.67.1c1-1c4);</p> <p>“It was the morning of 30 April, with just three hours to go before the eleven-year war ended.” (TT2.24.2c);</p>

Participant shifts

The participant shifts in Table 5.14 reveal a recurrent tendency in TT2 to reorganize the representation of collective memory through changes in participant scope, participant identity, and participant specification. Several examples involve shifts between collective and individual perspectives. In TT1, memory is frequently anchored in individual experience, as in *“the unlucky battalion of which he is one among ten survivors”*, whereas TT2 foregrounds the collective participant *“Ten men survived from the Unlucky Battalion”*. Conversely, in *“Everyone shuddered”* → *“Kien shuddered”*, TT2 narrows a collective reaction to a single focal participant. Participant reallocation is also evidence in the shift from *“his eyes turned dull with a most surprised look”* to *“He looked at Kien with intense surprise”*, where a body-part participant is replaced by a human participant. Beyond participant scope, TT2 repeatedly introduces more specific social and ideological categorisations. Generic references such as *“People”* are reformulated as *“the general population”* and *“their own authorities”*, while the vague expression *“some people being meritorious”* becomes the more politically marked *“the South having fought valiantly”*.

These participant shifts indicate that TT2 does not merely preserve the collective memory represented in TT1 but actively reorganizes its point of reference. The alternation between collective and individual focalisation suggests a tendency to redistribute experiential attention according to narrative needs rather than maintaining TT1’s original perspective structure. More importantly, the specification of participants through sociopolitical labels and ideological categories reflects a broader movement toward explicitation. While many cases involve straightforward participant specification, some instances move beyond clarification into ideological reinterpretation. For example, TT1’s warning against *“some people being meritorious”* is reformulated in TT2 as a warning against *“the South having fought valiantly or been meritorious in anyway.”* Here, TT2 does not simply identify an otherwise implicit participant; it introduces a politically specific referent and a proposition absent from TT1. The shift therefore alters the experiential meaning of the passage by redirecting a general reflection on claims of merit toward a judgement concerning a particular wartime actor.

This tendency is broadly consistent with the acceptability-oriented initial norm identified early in the chapter, whereby TT2 seeks to make narrative relationships more immediately accessible to target readers. In many instances, such specification appears to facilitate comprehension by making social, political, or institutional referents more readily identifiable. However, some interventions exceed straightforward explicitation. Rather than merely recovering information implicit in TT1, TT2 occasionally introduces new participant categories, evaluative meanings, or ideological associations that are not recoverable from TT1. The reformulation of “*some people being meritorious*” as “*the South having fought valiantly or been meritorious in any way*” illustrate such a shift, where a general reflection on claims of merit is transformed into a politically specific judgement concerning a particular wartime actor. In these cases, participant specification becomes a form of interpretive rewriting, producing experiential meanings that diverge from those encoded in TT1. This pattern reflects not only the acceptability-oriented tendency of TT2 but also the greater editorial intervention permitted by its mediated production context. At the textual-linguistic level, participant shifts therefore contribute both to the explicitation of collective memory and, in certain instances, to its ideological reconfiguration.

Circumstantial shifts

The circumstantial shifts displayed in Table 5.14 are characterized primarily by omission of locational details, addition of historical-political labels, and insertion of reflective temporal circumstances. In a small number of cases, TT2 removes circumstantial information, such as the omission of “*At every station where the train stopped*”. More frequently, however, TT2 expands circumstantial information through historical and political specification. References such as “*Special Commandoes of Interdivision No.6*” are reformulated as “*ARVN Special Commandoes, on the other side*”; “*someone telling stories*” becomes “*stories of V-Day*”, and “*the scene of 30 April in Saigon*” is recast as “*the scenes of the Fall of Saigon*”. Similarly, “*Gate 5 of Tan Son Nhat airport*” is reformulated as “*Gate 5 of Saigon’s Tan Son Nhat airport*”. TT2 also introduces new reflective and temporal circumstances, including “*Another year with the MIA team,*” “*wandering as a Veteran*”, and “*just three hours to go before the eleven-year war ended*”.

These circumstantial modifications reveal a systematic tendency toward temporal and historical anchoring. Whereas TT1 often relies on contextual inference and shared cultural knowledge, TT2 frequently inserts explicit historical references that identify events, locations, and political affiliations more directly. This results in a version of collective memory that is more firmly situated within recognizable historical backgrounds. References such as “*V-Day*”, “*the Fall of Saigon*”, and “*ARVN*” transform recollected experiences into events linked to specific historical narratives and political categories. The addition of reflective circumstances further reinforces retrospective narration by positioning memories within clearly defined temporal frameworks. Such patterns correspond closely to the matricial norms identified in Section 5.4.1, particularly TT2’s recurrent use of addition and expansion. They also support the broader textual-linguistic tendency observed throughout the corpus whereby TT2 increases contextual explicitness and historical specificity. Consequently, collective memory in TT2 is reconstructed not only as remembered experience but also as a more clearly contextualized historical narrative, one that is easier for target readers to follow but less reliant on the ambiguity, implicitness, and associative memory structures that characterize TT1.

Taken together, the participant and circumstantial shifts suggest that TT2 reconstructs collective memory through a dual process of participant specification and contextual explicitation. Participants are more clearly identified, socially categorized, and in some instances, ideologically repositioned, while circumstances are more firmly anchored in historical time, political affiliation, and retrospective reflection. Many of these modifications function as contextual clarification, supplying target readers with historical and political information that remains implicit in TT1. However, some participant shifts extend beyond explicitation and constitute forms of interpretive rewriting. In such cases, TT2 introduces evaluative or ideological meanings that are not recoverable from TT1, thereby reshaping the experiential meanings through which collective memory is represented. The reformulation of a general warning against claims of merit into a politically specific reference to “*the South having fought valiantly*” exemplifies this tendency.

Compared with TT1, which often represents memory through fragmented recollections, shared experiential knowledge and implicit historical references, TT2 presents collective memory in a more explicit, historically contextualized, and narratively structured form. This tendency aligns with the acceptability-oriented initial norm and the mediating conditions of TT2's preliminary norms, while also reflecting the expansive matricial operations identified earlier. At the same time, the data suggest that TT2 does not merely clarify remembered experience for target readers but occasionally reinterprets it through additional historical, political, and evaluative framing. Collective memory is therefore reconstructed not only through increased contextual explicitness but also, in certain instances, through the introduction of meanings that diverge from those encoded in TT1.

5.4.2.4. War Reality as Geopolitical Conflict

The domain of Geopolitical Conflict concerns the representation of war as a conflict between political, military, and ideological actors. Unlike Physical Brutality and Psychological Trauma, which foregrounds bodily violence and individual suffering, this domain captures how the war is discursively framed through references to opposing sides, military organizations, political identities, and broader conflict relations. Table 5.15 compares the transitivity profiles of TT1 and TT2 in this domain in order to identify whether Paltos's mediated version preserves or reconfigures the experiential meanings through which geopolitical conflict is represented. By examining changes in process-type distribution, the analysis provides an overview of TT2's textual-linguistic norms before moving to more detailed analyses of process, participant, and circumstantial shifts.

Table 5.15. Transitivity profile in the domain of Geopolitical Conflict (TT1 – TT2)

Process type	TT1 (n)	TT1 (%)	TT2 (n)	TT2 (%)	Percentage-point change (TT1 – TT2)
Material	40	60.61	45	68.18	+7.57
Relational	19	28.79	15	22.73	-6.06
Mental	5	7.58	4	6.06	-1.52
Existential	1	1.52	1	1.52	0.00
Verbal	0	0.00	0	0.00	0.00
Behavioral	1	1.52	1	1.52	0.00
Total	66	100	66	100	

As shown in Table 5.15, the increase in Material processes suggests that TT2 tends to construe geopolitical conflict more strongly through action, events, and interaction between political and military actors rather than through states of being, classifications, or subjective perceptions. The reduction in Relational processes indicates a partial movement away from describing political entities, affiliations, or wartime conditions towards representing conflict as something enacted through concrete actions. Similarly, the slight decline in Mental processes reduces the role of cognition and perception in favour of more event-centred representations. Although the magnitude of these shifts is smaller than those observed in the domains of Psychological Trauma and Collective Memory, they nevertheless point to a consistent tendency already identified elsewhere in TT2: a preference for dynamic configurations over more reflective or descriptive modes of representation.

From the perspective of Toury’s textual-linguistic norms, the data suggest that TT2 generally preserves the experiential structure of geopolitical conflict while subtly increasing its action-oriented feature. This tendency is compatible with the acceptability-oriented initial norm identified throughout the chapter in which experiential meanings are frequently reorganized to produce a more direct and narratively accessible for target readers. However, at this level, the changes need to be examined through detailed transitivity analysis presented in the following tables.

Table 5.16 presents the qualitative examination of recurrent process-level shifts between TT1 and TT2.

Table 5.16. Prominent process shifts in Geopolitical Conflict (TT1 – TT2)

Shift category	Typical pattern	Example(s)
Process shifts	TT1 Mental → TT2 Relational	“all that which was heard and seen” (TT1.25.1b) → “The rumours and the predictions were all seen as ...” (TT2.25.1c)
	TT1 Relational → TT2 Material	“In the whole Central Highland from the high area of North Wing to Middle Wing to South Wing the immense endless pastoral had a deadly silence in some places and gun-sounds in others.” (TT1.27.1b) → “In the whole Central Highlands, the immense, endless landscape was covered with a deadly silence or isolated, sporadic gunfire.” (TT2.27.1c)
	TT1 Material (attack) → TT2 Material (military support)	the Americans fired down artillery from the top of the hill for two hours in a row.” (TT1.93.1b) → “The Americans backed these ARVN units up with artillery from the top of a hill” (TT2.93.1c)
Process omissions	Omission of Material attack process	“The American assaulted,” (TT1.11.1b) → omitted in TT2
	Omission of Mental processes	“And not even noticing that there was their allies, the Americans fired down artillery from the top of the hill for two hours in a row.” (TT1.93.1b) → “The Americans backed these ARVN units up with artillery from the top of a hill” (TT2.93.1c)
Process additions	Addition of Material military processes	“The enemy on the pass and the revolutionary forces at Khanh Duong area were measuring their forces in artillery firing.” (TT1.157.1b) → “Behind them to the east the southern forces were now using artillery, setting their sights with ranging shots at the northern forces to the west, who were

		returning the artillery fire, also using trial shells to calibrate their sights.” (TT2.157.1c-5c);
	Addition of explanatory Material/Relational conflict processes	<p>“War was about to break” (TT1.75.1b)</p> <p>→ “Another war was about to break out! Pol Pot had been chased out of Cambodia by Vietnamese troops and because of that Pol Pot's allies, the Chinese, were threatening Vietnam's northern border.” (TT2.75.1c);</p> <p>Passionate discussions on the situation on the northern border, with China threatening to invade because of their humiliation in losing Pol Pot, removed from power in Cambodia by the glorious Vietnamese Army. (TT2.76.3c)</p>
		<p>Those days, before the eyes of ordinary soldiers like Kien himself, even the high sky was a blind alley. (TT1.160.1b)</p> <p>→ For the infantry scouts even the sky was dangerous in those two weeks of withdrawal, carrying the wounded, dragging their feet through the jungles, heading west towards the Cambodia border” (TT2.160.1c)</p>

Process shifts

As shown in Table 5.16, process shifts in the domain of Geopolitical Conflict are relatively limited in number but significant in their semantic effects. Several instances involve changes in process type. TT1 Mental processes are occasionally reformulated as Relational processes, as in “*all that which was heard and seen*” becoming “*the rumours and the predictions were all seen as...*”, transforming experiential perception into classifying interpretation. Similarly, TT1 Relational processes are recast as Material processes, as in the depiction of the Central Highlands being characterized by silence and gunfire becoming a landscape actively “*covered with*” silence and sporadic gunfire (TT1.27.1b → TT1.27.1c). Another notable pattern involves the preservation of Material process type while altering the nature of military action itself. For example, TT1 depicts a direct attack (“*the Americans fired down artillery*”), whereas TT2 reinterprets the same action as military support for allied ARVN units (“*the Americans backed these ARVN units up with artillery*”).

Process additions

Process additions are more extensive and predominantly involve the expansion of military and geopolitical explanation. New Material processes are introduced to elaborate military engagements, such as the detailed artillery exchange between northern and southern forces (TT2.157.1c-5c). Additional Material and Relational processes are also inserted to explain broader geopolitical developments, particularly in relation to new participants/circumstances in TT2 (e.g. TT1.75.1b → TT2.75.1c). Furthermore, TT2 expands metaphorical or reflective passages into more concrete military narratives, as illustrated by the transformation of “*even the high sky was a blind alley*” (TT1.160.1b) into a sequence detailing scouts, withdrawal, wounded soldiers, and movement towards the Cambodian border (TT2.160.1c). Collectively, additions in TT2 increase the density of military and geopolitical processes beyond what is present in TT1.

From a DTS perspective, the patterns identified in Table 5.16 suggest that TT2 reconstructs geopolitical conflict through a process of explicitation and historical contextualization. Whereas TT1 often represents conflict through condensed experiential images and implicit political references, TT2 frequently supplements

these representations with explanatory information that clarifies military alignments, strategic developments, and regional political relationships. The extensive addition of Material and Relational processes concerning Cambodia, China, and post-war border tensions illustrates a tendency to expand the geopolitical frame beyond the immediate experiential horizon of the original narrative.

The process shifts also reveal changes in narrative perspective. The transformation of Mental processes into Relational processes reduces the prominence of subjective perception of memory while increasing categorization and explanation. Similarly, the conversion of relational descriptions into materialized depictions of military activity foregrounds observable events rather than interpretive states. These shifts align with the broader tendency identified throughout TT2 to favour explicit narrative presentation over the more impressionistic and experiential style characteristic of TT1.

Process omissions

The process omissions observed in TT2 are equally significant. The removal of explicit attack processes (TT1.11.1b) and perceptive evaluations (TT1.93.1b) reduces certain aspects of military liability and experiential judgement. Most notably, the shift from “*the American fired down artillery*” to “*the American backed these ARVN units up with artillery*” does not merely alter wording but presents the same activity as a form of military assistance. Such modifications demonstrate that process shifts in TT2 occasionally involve not only linguistic reformulation but also reinterpretation of geopolitical events and participant roles.

In general, the process shifts, omissions, and additions indicate that TT2 reconstructs geopolitical conflict as a more explicitly narrated and historically contextualized phenomenon. While TT1 frequently represents geopolitical conflict through experiential fragments, symbolic images, and implicit political references, TT2 tends to transform these into more detailed accounts of military operations, political actors, and regional historical contexts.

Table 5.17 continues to present the experiential meanings conveyed in the representation of participants and circumstances in the domain of Geopolitical Conflict.

Table 5.17. Prominent participant and circumstantial shifts in Geopolitical Conflict (TT1 – TT2)

Shift category	Typical pattern	Example(s)
Participant shifts	Participant specification through military-political labelling	<p>“The Saigon forces” (TT1.20.1b) → “The Saigon defence forces” (TT2.20.1c); “staff of the Police Department...counterattacked” 9TT1.109.1b) → “the southern government’s police force...defended themselves” (TT2.109.1c); “our armed forces” (TT1.32.1b) → “the NVA forces” (TT2.32.1c); “It took the NVA regulars more than an hour could the Northern troops enter the main hall.” (TT1.110.2b) → “It took the NVA regulars more than an hour to fight their way into the main police building.” (TT2.110.2c); “The enemy on the pass and the revolutionary forces at Khanh Duong area were measuring their forces in artillery firing.” (TT1.157.1b) → “Behind them to the east the southern forces were now using artillery, setting their sights with ranging shots at the northern forces to the west, who were returning the artillery fire,” (TT2.157.1c-3c)</p>
	Participant specification through institutional agency	<p>“people were ordered...” (TT1.72.2b) → “the authorities ordered the population” (TT2.72.2b);</p>
Circumstantial shifts	Circumstantial specification through historical-political anchoring	<p>“War was about to break” (TT1.75.1b) → “Another war was about to break out! Pol Pot had been chased out of Cambodia by Vietnamese troops and because of that Pol Pot’s allies, the Chinese, were threatening Vietnam’s northern border.” (TT1.75.1c); “The 1972 dry season, the post Paris Agreement.” (TT1.123.2b) → “The Tet Offensive, Second Tet, the 1972 dry season, the post-Paris Agreement battles.” (TT2.123.2c); “It was then the unfortunate time, extremely bitter during the withdrawal of the</p>

		Tet Offensive attack.” (TT1.159.1b) → “It was during the retreat after the Tet Offensives in 1968, an unfortunate time for them.” (TT2.159.1c)
	Circumstantial specification through military-operational framing	“Every night, express trains full of soldiers continuously passed through Hanoi.” (TT1.77.1b) → “And night after night express trains packed with soldiers rumbled through Hanoi on the way to the northern front.” (TT2.77.1c); “Those days, before the eyes of ordinary soldiers like Kien himself, even the high sky was a blind alley.” (TT1.160.1b) → “For the infantry scouts even the sky was dangerous in those two weeks of withdrawal, carrying the wounded, dragging their feet though the jungles, heading west to the Cambodian border” (TT2.160.1c1-c4);
	Circumstantial specification through geographical anchoring	“attacking the Lang Cha Ca buildings,” (TT1.155.1b) → “attacking the Lang Cha Ca building in Saigon,” (TT2.155.1c); “at Khanh Duong area” (TT1.157.1b) → “They were at each end of the Khanh Duong valley with the three surviving scouts in no-man's-land between them.” (TT2.157.5c)
Circumstantial shifts	Omission of historical-cultural circumstantial reference	“Thang Long – Hanoi’s former name” (TT1.72.1b) → “Hanoi was considered a non-combat area” (TT2.72.1c);
	Intensification through evaluative temporal framing	“the last moments of the fighting” (TT1.155.1b) → “the dying moments of fighting” (TT2.155.1c);

Participant shifts

As shown in Table 5.17, participant shifts in the domain of Geopolitical Conflict are characterized primarily by increasing specificity in the representation of military, political, and institutional actors. A recurrent pattern is participant specification through military-political labelling. Context-dependent references in TT1 are replaced with more explicit geopolitical designations in TT2. For example, “*our armed forces*” becomes “*the NVA forces*” while “*the enemy*” and “*the revolutionary forces*” are reformulated as “*the southern forces*” and “*the northern forces*”. Similarly, “*the Saigon forces*” becomes “*the Saigon defence forces*”, and references to “*the Police Department*” are expanded into “*the southern government’s police force*”. In Baker’s (2018) terms, these changes are associated with the narrative framing strategies of relabelling and participant repositioning. The result is a clearer military and political categorization of participants, and the reader is thus encouraged to view the conflict through a more explicitly geopolitical lens rather than through the experiential perspective of participant embedded within the conflict itself.

A second pattern involves participant specification through institutional agency. In TT1, agency is sometimes backgrounded or left implicit, as in “*people were ordered...*”. TT2 explicitly identifies the Actor as “*the authorities ordered the population...*”, thereby assigning institutional responsibility for the action. Such repositioning increases the visibility of political and administrative structures within the conflict narrative.

Circumstantial shifts

Circumstantial shifts are even more prominent. The most recurrent pattern is circumstantial specification through historical-political anchoring. TT2 frequently supplements TT1’s relatively condensed references with explicit historical markers. For instance, In TT1, *war* functions as a relatively open and context-dependent reference (“*War was about to break out*”) while in TT2, the notion of “*another war*” is introduced before it is immediately connected to a detailed explanation involving *Pol Pot*, *Cambodia*, *China* and tensions on Vietnam’s “*northern border*”. These elements are largely absent from TT1 yet are introduced in TT2 through newly added

Material and Relational processes. Rather than simply clarifying existing meanings, these additions extend the geopolitical scope of the narrative by introducing explanatory frameworks external to the original experiential representation. In terms of Toury's matricial norms, these constitute substantial additions that expand the textual boundaries of the source representation. From the perspective of Lefevere's rewriting theory, they may also be viewed as interpretive interventions that reposition the conflict within a broader Cold War and regional political narrative. Likewise, references such as "*the 1972 dry season, the post Paris Agreement*" are expanded to include "*the Tet Offensive, Second Tet, the 1972 dry season, the post Paris Agreement battles*". Similar additions occur in the specification of the "*Tet Offensive in 1968.*"

Another recurrent pattern is circumstantial specification through military-operational framing. General movement or setting descriptions are supplemented with military objectives and operational contexts (accompanied by the additions of processes as discussed in the process shifts). Therefore, "*trains passing through Hanoi*" becomes trains moving "*on the way to the northern front*", while the metaphorical description of the sky as "*a blind alley*" is transformed into a detailed military circumstance involving infantry scouts, wounded soldiers, jungle withdrawal, and movement towards the Cambodian border. TT2 also introduces circumstantial specification through geographical anchoring. Locations that are implicit or assumed in TT1 are explicitly identified in TT2, as in "*the Lang Cha Ca buildings*" becoming "*the Lang Cha Ca buildings in Saigon*". Similarly, the broad reference to "*Khanh Duong area*" is expanded into a more detailed spatial configuration involving opposing forces positioned.

Taken together, the participant and circumstantial shifts suggest that TT2 reconstructs geopolitical conflict through a process of narrative framing involving selective appropriation, labelling, participant repositioning and spatial-temporal framing. Military actors are more explicitly categorized, political institutions are more clearly identified, and events are more firmly embedded within broader historical and geopolitical contexts. However, several shifts go beyond explicitation and introduce interpretive connections, participant identities and causal relations that

are less evident in TT1. From Baker's (2018) perspective, these changes demonstrate how translation and editorial mediation participate in the re-narration of war, shaping not only how events are represented but also how readers are invited to understand the geopolitical realities underlying those events.

5.4.3. From Operational Norms to Rewriting Orientations

The preceding analyses have examined TT2 through Toury's operational norms, focusing on both matricial interventions and textual-linguistic reconfigurations. Across the four representational domains of Physical Brutality, Psychological Trauma, Collective Memory, and Geopolitical Conflict, TT2 exhibits recurrent patterns of omission, addition, expansion, participant specification, circumstantial explicitation, and process reconfiguration. While these interventions operate at different textual levels, their cumulative effect extends beyond local linguistic modification. In general, they reveal broader translational orientations that shape how war reality is reconstructed in the mediated English version. The present section therefore synthesizes the findings of operational norms and considers their implications in relation to Toury's adequacy – acceptability continuum and Venuti's domestication – foreignization framework.

5.4.3.1. Adequacy and Acceptability

The findings suggest that TT2 demonstrates a predominantly acceptability-oriented translational tendency. According to Toury's (2012), acceptability is characterized by a translator's orientation towards target-cultural norms and expectations, whereas adequacy involves closer adherence to the textual and representational configurations of the source text. The operational norms identified throughout this chapter indicate that TT2 consistently privileges readability, contextual accessibility, and narrative coherence over the preservation of TT1's experiential and narrative organization.

Evidence for this tendency can first be observed at the matricial level. The quantitative profile presented in Section 5.4.1 showed extensive patterns of addition, omission, and expansion throughout the corpus. Rather than preserving TT1 as a relatively stable textual source, TT2 frequently reorganizes, condenses, supplements,

and redistributes narrative material. Such interventions are particularly pronounced in the domains of Collective Memory and Geopolitical Conflict, where entire memory sequences are recomposed and additional historical explanations are inserted. These operations indicate a willingness to reshape textual structure in order to facilitate target-reader comprehension.

The textual-linguistic norms identified through transitivity analysis provide further support for an acceptability-oriented tendency. Across the corpus, TT2 exhibits a general orientation to reduce Mental and Behavioural processes while increasing the relative prominence of Material processes. Experiential meanings are therefore reconstructed in a manner that foregrounds observable actions and narratively reportable events rather than subjective reflection, ambiguity, or internally mediated experience. This tendency is especially visible in the domains of Psychological Trauma and Collective Memory, where introspective and memory-oriented representations are frequently replaced by more explicit, event-centred configurations.

Participant and circumstantial shifts reinforce the same orientation. Throughout the corpus, TT2 repeatedly specifies previously implicit participants, identifies military and political actors more explicitly, and introduces historical, geographical, and temporal information absent from TT1. In many instances, these interventions function as forms of explicitation intended to reduce inferential demands on target readers. References that depend upon contextual knowledge in TT1 are frequently supplemented with explanatory information that renders political affiliations, military organisations, historical events, and narrative relationships more immediately accessible.

However, the findings also indicate that TT2 occasionally moves beyond explicitation into interpretive rewriting. Certain additions do not merely recover information implicit in TT1 but introduce meanings that are not recoverable from the source representation. Examples include the expansion of references to impending conflict through explanations involving *Pol Pot*, *Cambodia*, and *China*, as well as participant reformulations such as the transformation of a warning against claims of

merit into a politically specific reference to “*the South having fought valiantly*”. Such interventions demonstrate that TT2 does not simply adapt TT1 to target language conventions but actively reinterprets aspects of the narrative. Acceptability in TT2 therefore involves not only adjustments to target-reader expectations but also a degree of editorial mediation that reshapes experiential meaning.

Nevertheless, the data do not support a conclusion of complete departure from adequacy. The major representational domains of war reality remain recognizable throughout TT2. Physical brutality, psychological trauma, collective memory, and geopolitical conflict continue to constitute the principal experiential dimensions of the narrative. Material patterns of violence, memory, loss, and conflict are broadly preserved even when reorganized through additions, omissions, and reformulations. TT2 therefore occupies a position closer to the acceptability pole of Toury’s continuum while maintaining a substantial, though mediated, relationship with the experiential structure of TT1.

5.4.3.2. *Domestication and Foreignisation*

The operational norms also reveal a translational orientation that is predominantly domesticating, although not uniformly so. Following Venuti’s (2017), domestication refers to translation strategies that reduce cultural and textual distance for target readers, while foreignization seeks to preserve aspects of source-language and source-cultural identities.

At the textual level, TT2 repeatedly exhibits domesticating tendencies through explicitation, contextualisation, and narrative clarification. Historical events, military organisations, geographical references, and political alignments are frequently reformulated into categories likely to be more readily understood by Anglophone readers. Ambiguous or culturally embedded references are often replaced with explicit labels and explanatory descriptions. The repeated addition of historical markers such as “*V-Day*”, “*the Fall of Saigon*”, references to “*ARVN forces*”, or explanations involving regional geopolitical conflicts illustrates this tendency. Rather than requiring readers to infer contextual meanings, TT2 frequently supplies interpretive frameworks that facilitate comprehension within an Anglophone reading environment.

The domesticating tendency is particularly evident in the reconstruction of collective memory and geopolitical conflict. In these domains, experiential representations that are fragmented, implicit, or dependent upon shared Vietnamese historical knowledge are often transformed into more historically anchored and narratively coherent accounts. Through participant specification, historical labelling, and geopolitical explanation, TT2 frequently recasts wartime experiences into forms that align with the expectations of international readers who may possess limited familiarity with Vietnamese historical contexts.

At the same time, TT2 does not entirely erase source-cultural specificity. Numerous Vietnamese locations, military references, cultural terms, and historical events remain visible through the text. The narrative continues to foreground Vietnamese experiences of war rather than relocating the story into a target-cultural framework. Consequently, the version does not represent an extreme form of domestication in which cultural difference is systematically neutralized. Instead, TT2 preserves many source-cultural referents while simultaneously supplying explanatory mechanisms that make those referents more accessible to target readers.

The relationship between domestication and foreignization in TT2 is therefore best understood as asymmetrical rather than binary. Foreignising elements remain present at the level of cultural content, historical setting, and narrative subject matter, yet domesticating interventions frequently shape how those elements are presented and interpreted. Consequently, TT2 presents itself as a version that retains the Vietnam war as its narrative centre while increasingly guiding readers through explanatory, contextualizing, and interpretive framing.

Viewed alongside the initial and preliminary norms reconstructed earlier in the chapter, these tendencies are unsurprising. TT2 did not emerge as a direct interlingual translation but as a mediated English version produced for international publication and readership. The operational norms identified throughout the chapter constitute the textual manifestation of that production context. Through recurrent patterns of addition, omission, participant specification, circumstantial explicitation, and narrative recomposition, TT2 reconstructs war reality in ways that favour target-

reader accessibility and interpretive guidance. As a result, the overall translational orientation of TT2 may be characterized as predominantly acceptability-oriented and moderately domesticating, while still retaining significant traces of the source text's experiential and cultural specificity.

5.5. Chapter Summary

This chapter has examined the reconstruction of war reality in TT2 through the framework of Descriptive Translation Studies, focusing on Toury's (2012) initial, preliminary, and operational norms. Treating TT2 as a mediated rewriting of TT1 rather than a direct interlingual translation of the Vietnamese source text, the chapter has investigated how experiential meanings are reconfigured across the four representational domains of Physical Brutality, Psychological Trauma, Collective Memory, and Geopolitical Conflict.

The findings indicate a substantially higher degree of editorial intervention in TT2 than in TT1. At the matricial level, TT2 exhibits recurrent patterns of omission, addition, expansion, condensation, and recomposition, reflecting extensive restructuring of narrative material. At the textual-linguistic level, the transitivity analyses reveal systematic modifications to process configurations, participant representations and circumstantial framing. While many of these shifts function as forms of explicitation that increase historical, political, and contextual accessibility others extend beyond clarification and introduce new interpretive emphases. Interpreted through Baker's (2018) narrative framing strategies, the observed shifts frequently involve selective appropriation, participant relabelling, temporal-spatial re-anchoring, and the reconfiguration of causal and geopolitical relations. Consequently, TT2 not only reorganizes experiential meanings but also reshapes the narrative framing through which war reality is represented.

In general, the evidence suggests that TT2 is predominantly acceptability-oriented in Toury's (2012) sense. The mediated English version consistently privileges readability, narrative coherence, and contextual accessibility for an international readership, even when this entails substantial departures from TT1's original organization of experiential meanings. From the perspective of Venuti's

(2017) framework TT2 may be characterized as moderately domesticating, retaining much of the Vietnamese historical and cultural setting while increasingly contextualizing, explicating, and reframing that material for Anglophone readers. These findings establish TT2 as a mediated reconstruction of war reality in which editorial intervention functions not merely as linguistic transfer but as a form of narrative rewriting. They also provide the foundation for Chapter 6, which synthesises the findings from TT1 and TT2 and discusses their implications for translation, rewriting, and the reconstruction of war reality across the two English versions of *The Sorrow of War*.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

6.1. Introduction

The preceding chapters have examined how war reality is reconstructed in the two English versions of Bao Ninh's *The Sorrow of War* through the analytical framework developed in this study. Chapter 4 investigated TT1 (Phan Thanh Hao's translation) by reconstructing its initial, preliminary, and operational norms, and analysing the ways in which experiential meanings are reproduced across the four representational domains of Physical Brutality, Psychological Trauma, Collective Memory, and Geopolitical Conflict. Chapter 5 extended the analysis to TT2 (Frank Falmos's mediated English version), treating it as a case of editorially mediated rewriting and examining how additional layers of intervention reshape the representation of war reality.

Generally, the findings reveal that the two English versions differ not only in the degree of textual intervention but also in the ways they reconstruct experiential meanings, organize narrative relations, and position readers in relation to the war. While TT1 generally preserves the representational structures of the Vietnamese source text through relatively limited modifications, TT2 exhibits more extensive patterns of omission, addition, expansion, recomposition, and contextualization. These differences raise broader questions concerning the relationship between translation and rewriting, the operation of translational norms in indirect or mediated translation, and the role of editorial intervention in the circulation of war narratives across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

The purpose of this chapter is therefore to synthesise and interpret the findings presented in Chapter 4 and 5. Rather than examining TT1 and TT2 separately, the discussion adopts a comparative perspective in order to identify the principal similarities and differences in their reconstruction of war reality. Drawing on Toury's (2012) Descriptive Translation Studies, Venuti's (2017) concepts of domestication and foreignization, Baker's (2018) narrative framing theory, and Lefevere's (2016) notion of rewriting, the chapter considers the broader implications of the observed translational shifts for the presentation of war, memory, and historical experience.

6.2. Reconstruction of War Reality across the Two English Versions

6.2.1. War Reality as Physical Brutality

Physical Brutality constitutes one of the most prominent dimensions through which war reality is represented in *The Sorrow of War*. Across the Vietnamese source text and the two English versions, brutality is primarily construed through Material processes that depict killing, bodily injury, military attack, destruction, and physical devastation. The findings from Chapter 4 and 5 indicate that both TT1 and TT2 preserve this fundamental representational distribution. However, the two English versions differ substantially in the degree and nature of their intervention, resulting in distinct reconstructions of wartime violence.

In TT1, the representation of Physical Brutality remains closely aligned with the source text. Material processes continue to dominate the experiential profile of the domain, and most process, participant, and circumstantial shifts operate as local adjustments rather than large-scale restructuring. Although TT1 occasionally transforms Relational processes into Material ones, specifies military actors, or adds spatial detail, these modifications generally serve to clarify relationships already present in the source narrative. As demonstrated in Chapter 4, omissions and additions are comparatively limited and tend to function as forms of explicitation rather than reinterpretation. Consequently, violence in TT1 remains strongly grounded in the experiential logic of the source text, preserving the fragmented immediacy, sensory density, and causal ambiguity that characterize Bao Ninh's representation of war.

TT2, by contrast, exhibits a more interventionist pattern of reconstruction. Although Material processes remain dominant, the operational norms identified in Chapter 5 reveal more extensive patterns of omission, addition, expansion, and recomposition. Process-level modifications frequently increase the visibility of military actions, clarify causal relations, and reorganize violent events into more coherent narrative sequences. Participant shifts similarly tend towards greater specification of military actors and institutional agencies, while circumstantial additions provide more explicit temporal, geographical, and battlefield

contextualization. As a result, scenes of violence that are often compressed, fragmented, or impressionistic in TT1 are reconstructed in TT2 through more clearly articulated event structures and explanatory connections.

These differences suggest that the two English versions reconstruct physical brutality through different translational priorities. TT1 largely reproduces violence as immediate experience. The narrative frequently presents destruction through sensory fragments, bodily consequences, and locally situated perceptions, requiring readers to infer broader causal relations from the unfolding narrative. TT2, on the other hand, tends to represent violence through more explicitly organized chains of actions and consequences. Rather than merely depicting what happened, the rewriting often clarifies who performed the action, under what circumstances it occurred, and how individual events relate to larger military progresses. Violence therefore becomes more narratively structured and causally transparent.

Viewed through Toury's framework, these differences reflect contrasting operational norms. TT1 exhibits stronger orientation towards adequacy, preserving the source text's experiential organization while introducing only limited explicitation. TT2, by contrast, demonstrates a more acceptability-oriented tendency, frequently reshaping experiential meanings to increase readability and accessibility for an international readership. The higher incidence of participant specification, circumstantial expansion, and explanatory additions in TT2 suggests a greater willingness to intervene in the representation of violence in order to facilitate interpretation.

The findings may also be interpreted through Baker's (2018) narrative framing strategies. In TT1, framing primarily takes the form of selective appropriate and labelling that support comprehension without substantially altering the narrative logic of violent events. TT2, however, employs more extensive participant repositioning, spatial-temporal anchoring, and contextual enrichment. These interventions do not generally remove the brutality of war, but they influence how that brutality is understood. Violence is increasingly framed as a sequence of identifiable military actions situated within clearer historical and operational contexts. Consequently, TT2

shifts the readers' experience from witnessing violence as fragmented and immediate experience towards understanding violence as a more organized and interpretable narrative phenomenon.

To sum up, the comparison suggests that both TT1 and TT2 preserve Physical Brutality as a central component of war reality, but they do so through different representational strategies. TT1 primarily reproduces the source text's experiential representation of violence, whereas TT2 reconstructs violence through greater contextualization, clarification, and narrative organization. Physical brutality therefore provides an early indication of the broader distinction that emerges throughout this study: TT1 functions largely as a source-oriented translation, while TT2 operates as a mediated rewriting that systematically reorganizes experiential meanings for a different readership and publishing context.

6.2.2. War Reality as Psychological Trauma

Psychological Trauma constitutes one of the four distinctive dimensions of war reality of *The Sorrow of War*, as operationalised in the present study. Unlike Physical Brutality, which is largely represented through observable acts of violence and destruction, psychological trauma is constructed through memory, perception, emotional disturbance, existential reflection, and the lingering effects of war on individual consciousness. The findings from Chapter 4 and 5 indicate that both English versions preserve trauma as a central component of war reality. However, they differ substantially in how traumatic experience is linguistically construed and narratively framed.

In TT1, the representation of psychological trauma remains broadly aligned with the experiential organization of the source text. While the translation introduces some redistribution from Material processes towards Relational and Behavioural configurations, Mental processes remain relatively stable, preserving the centrality of memory, perception, and consciousness in the representation of trauma. Participant specification, temporal framing, and occasional explanatory additions increase the explicitness of experiential relations, but the overall narrative continues to foreground subjective experience and psychological disturbance. Trauma is therefore represented

primarily as an internal condition experienced through fragmented memories, intrusive recollections, bodily manifestations, and ongoing emotional suffering.

TT2 exhibits a more interventionist pattern of reconstruction. Although the domain remains broadly trauma-oriented, the operational norms identified in Chapter 5 reveal a tendency to reduce the prominence of Mental and Behavioural processes while increasing Material, Existential, and Verbal configurations. Internal perceptions, memories, and emotional responses are frequently reformulated as externally observable conditions, evaluative statements, or communicatively articulated judgements. Participant shifts further contribute to this tendency through evaluative labelling, autobiographical positioning, and broader historical categorization, while circumstantial additions repeatedly situate traumatic experiences within explicit temporal, geographical, and political frameworks. Trauma consequently becomes less dependent on subjective recollection and more closely integrated into a historically contextualized narrative.

The contrast between the two versions is particularly evident in their treatment of memory and consciousness. In TT1, traumatic memories frequently emerge through fragmented perception, subjective association, and ambiguous experiential boundaries. Memories are often presented as partially formed impressions, emotional residues, or recurring psychological intrusions. TT2, by contrast, often supplements such experiences with explanatory, evaluative, and contextual information. Historical references, autobiographical details, and causal explanations are introduced to guide readers' interpretation of traumatic experience. As a result, memories that are represented in TT1 as subjective and open-ended recollections are often reconstructed in TT2 as more clearly situated episodes within a broader historical narrative.

These differences can be interpreted through Toury's operational norms. The shifts identified in TT1 are largely compatible with an adequacy-oriented approach, in which modifications primarily clarify experiential relations while preserving the source text's psychological orientation. Although TT1 occasionally introduce evaluative or explanatory elements, these interventions generally remain subordinate to the representation of trauma as an internal and subjective experience. The

translation therefore retains much of the ambiguity, fragmentation, and introspective density that characterize Bao Ninh's portrayal of post-war suffering. In contrast, TT2 exhibits a more acceptability-oriented pattern of reconstruction. The recurrent omission of Mental processes, the reduction of extended introspective passages, and the introduction of explanatory, evaluative, and contextualizing additions collectively suggest a preference for making psychological experience more immediately interpretable to target readers. Trauma is no longer represented primarily through fragmented consciousness and subjective recollection but increasingly through externally observable conditions, retrospective evaluations, and historically situated explanations. In this respect, TT2 does not simply reproduce traumatic experience but reorganizes the conditions through which that experience is understood.

The differences are equally revealing when interpreted through Baker's (2018) narrative framing framework. In TT1, framing strategies are primarily realised through selective appropriation, participant specification, and temporal anchoring that assist reader comprehension while preserving the broader narrative logic of the source text. The framing of trauma therefore remains largely experiential, with memories, perceptions, and emotional responses continuing to occupy the centre of the narrative. In TT2, however, framing becomes more interventionist. Evaluative labels such as "*lost generations*", autobiographical positioning through references to the narrator's age and wartime experiences, and the repeated insertion of historical markers such as 1965, 1968, 1975, and the Tet Offensive all contribute to a process of narrative recontextualization. Trauma is increasingly framed not only as a personal psychological condition but also as a historically interpretable experience situated within broader national and geopolitical narratives.

A particular significant consequence of this shift concerns the relationship between memory and history. In TT1, traumatic memory often appears fragmented, recursive, and resistant to chronological organization, reflecting the psychological dislocation experienced by survivors. In TT2, many of these memories are re-anchored through additional temporal, spatial, and causal circumstances. Experiences that originally emerge through subjective recollection are frequently linked to

identifiable historical events, locations, and explanatory backgrounds. Consequently, trauma becomes more firmly embedded within historical chronology and narrative connectedness.

In conclusion, the comparison suggests that TT1 and T2 reconstruct psychological trauma through fundamentally different representational priorities. TT1 largely preserves the source text's emphasis on memory, consciousness, and subjective suffering, thereby reproducing trauma as lived experience. TT2, while retaining trauma as a central thematic concern, increasingly contextualises, interprets, and historically identifies that experience through processes of explicitation, evaluation, and narrative framing. Psychological trauma therefore becomes not only something remembered and ensured but also something explained, interpreted, and situated throughout the study: whereas TT1 tends to reproduce the experiential organization of war reality, TT2 more actively reconstructs and reframes that reality through editorial mediation and narrative intervention.

6.2.3. War Reality as Collective Memory

Collective Memory constitutes one of the central mechanisms through which war reality is constructed in *The Sorrow of War*. Rather than representing war solely as a sequence of military events, the novel repeatedly reconstructs the past through shared recollections, remembered losses, recurring images, and communal experiences that connect individual suffering to a broader historical consciousness. The findings from Chapters 4 and 5 indicate that both TT1 and TT2 preserve collective memory as a major representational domain. However, the two English versions differ substantially in the ways they organize, contextualise, and narratively frame remembered experience.

In TT1, collective memory remains closely aligned with the experiential organization of the source text. Material processes continue to dominate the transitivity profile, while changes in process distribution remain relatively limited. Process shifts primarily involve local redistributions between Material and Relational representations, together with selective additions and omissions that clarify causal relations or military activities without fundamentally altering the memorial

orientation of the narrative. Participant specification and spatial framing likewise increase referential explicitness, but these modifications generally serve to facilitate comprehension rather than reshape the underlying representation of memory. As a result, TT1 largely preserves collective memory as a fragmented yet shared record of wartime experience, maintaining that balance between remembered events, emotional residues, and communal recollection that characterizes the source text.

The reconstruction of collective memory in TT2 differs considerably. As demonstrated in Chapter 5, this domain exhibits some of the highest rates of omission, addition, expansion, and recomposition identified in the entire corpus. Process-level shifts reveal the removal of certain reflective and memory-oriented sequences, the addition of explanatory historical information, and the recombination of narrative units into more explicitly organized structures. Participant shifts frequently involve the specification of military, political, and ideological identities, while circumstantial additions repeatedly introduce historical, geographical, and temporal anchoring. Consequently, memories that are often presented in TT1 through associative recollection and experiential fragmentation are reconstructed in TT2 through more explicit historical narration and contextual explanation.

The contrast between the two versions is particularly evident in their treatment of the relationship between memory and history. In TT1, collective memory regularly emerges through partial recollections, recurring images, and subjective associations that restrict strict chronological organization. Remembering is often represented as an act of retrieval in which past events resurface through emotional resonance rather than historical sequencing. In TT2, on the contrary, memories are repeatedly situated within identifiable historical backgrounds through references to specific campaigns, political positions, military organisations, and geopolitical events. The addition of historical labels explanatory passages, and contextual information transforms many remembered experiences into more clearly bounded historical episodes. Consequently, the memorial discourse becomes less dependent as associative recollection and more closely integrated into a structured account of wartime history.

The differences can be interpreted through Toury's framework of operational norms. The relatively limited modifications observed in TT1 are broadly consistent

with an adequacy-oriented approach in which the translation seeks to preserve the experiential organization of the source text while making selected meanings more explicit. TT2, however, displays a markedly stronger acceptability-oriented tendency. The recurrent additions, omissions, and recompositions suggest a sustained effort to increase narrative coherence, contextual accessibility, and interpretive transparency for an international readership. The extensive use of participant specification and historical contextualization indicates that memory is not merely translated but actively reorganized according to the perceived needs of target readers.

From the perspective of Baker's (2018) narrative framing theory, the differences between TT1 and TT2 are even more revealing. In TT1, framing strategies such as selective appropriation, labelling, and spatial framing generally support the accessibility of remembered experience without significantly altering its narrative orientation. TT2, however, employs more extensive forms of narrative framing. Through participant relabelling, historical anchoring, temporal specification, and explanatory additions, remembered events are repeatedly repositioned within broader historical and political narratives. Memories are no longer presented primarily as subjective recollections emerging from lived experience; instead, they are increasingly framed as components of an interpretable historical account. The recurrent introduction of contextual information encourages readers to understand remembered experiences through established historical reference points rather than through the fragmented and affective logic of memory itself. This distinction has important implications for the reconstruction of war reality. In TT1, collective memory functions primarily as a mode of remembering, preserving the subjective, fragmented, and often discontinuous nature of post-war recollection. In TT2, collective memory increasingly functions as a mode of historical narration, in which remembered experiences are reorganized, contextualised, and explained within broader frameworks of historical meaning. In other words, TT1 tends to preserve memory as memory, whereas TT2 frequently transforms memory into history.

In sum, the findings suggest that Collective Memory represents the domain in which the divergence between the two English versions is most pronounced. While

TT1 remains largely aligned with the source text's memorial structure, TT2 reconstructs collective memory through extensive contextualization, historical anchoring, and narrative reorganization. The result is a version of war reality that is more historically explicit, more chronologically structured, and more interpretively guided than either the source text or TT1. This pattern provides some of the strongest evidence in the study that TT2 functions not simply as a translation of remembered experience but as a mediated rewriting that re-narrates the memory of war for a different readership and cultural context.

6.2.4. War Reality as Geopolitical Conflict

The domain of Geopolitical Conflict concerns the representation of war through political actors, military organisations, territorial divisions, ideological affiliations, and broader conflict relations. Unlike Physical Brutality and Psychological Trauma, which foreground bodily violence and individual suffering, Geopolitical Conflict situates war within larger political and military structures. The findings from Chapters 4 and 5 indicate that both TT1 and TT2 preserve this dimension of war reality as an important component of the narrative. However, the two English versions differ significantly in the extent to which they explicate, contextualise, and reframe the political meanings embedded in the original narrative.

In T2, geopolitical conflict remains broadly aligned with the source text's experiential organization. The overall transitivity profile shows only limited redistribution, with Material processes continuing to dominate the representation of military actions and political events. Most process shifts involve relatively local reformulations, particularly the conversion of some Existential meanings into Material or Relational configurations. Participant shifts are primarily realised through ideological and geopolitical relabelling, while circumstantial additions introduce clearer temporal-political and spatial references. Collectively, these modifications increase the explicitness of political and military reference without substantially altering the underlying representation of conflict. As a result, TT1 largely preserves the source text's geopolitical perspective while making historical and political relations more accessible to readers unfamiliar with the Vietnamese context.

TT2 exhibits a considerably more interventionist pattern of reconstruction. Although the overall transitivity distribution remains broadly stable, qualitative analysis reveals extensive additions, participant reclassification, circumstantial expansion, and historical contextualization. Political and military actors are repeatedly relabelled through more explicit geopolitical categories, while historical events, military campaigns, and regional conflicts are introduced through additional processes, participants, and circumstances. In contrast to TT1, which primarily clarifies existing references, TT2 frequently expands the geopolitical frame itself by introducing new explanatory information concerning *Cambodia*, *China*, *Pol Pot*, border conflicts, military campaigns, and post-war regional tensions. Consequently, geopolitical conflict is reconstructed not merely as the background against which events unfold but as an explicitly narrated and historically contextualized dimension of the war experience.

The contrast between the two versions is particularly evident in their treatment of political and military actors. In TT1, ideological labels from the Vietnamese source text such as “*bọn ngụy*” and “*quân ta*” are generally reformulated into more internationally recognizable military designations such as “*the Saigon forces*”, “*our armed forces*”, or “*the revolutionary forces*”. These modifications reduce culture-specific assumptions while preserving the essential relationships between wartime actors. TT2 extends this process considerably further. References such as “*our armed forces*” become “*the NVA forces*” while “*the enemy*” and “*the evolutionary forces*” are reformulated as “*the southern forces*” and “*the northern forces*”. Such shifts do not merely increase referential clarity but reposition participants within a more explicit geopolitical framework. Military actors are increasingly categorized according to internationally recognizable political alignments rather than the experiential perspective embedded in the wartime narrative itself.

The differences become even more pronounced in the treatment of historical context. In TT1, temporal-political explicitation generally involves the clarification of references already present in the source text, such as “*Mậu Thân*” becoming “*the 1968 Tet Offensive*” or “*thời hiệp định*” becoming “*following the Paris Agreement*”.

These additions provide contextual support while remaining closely tied to the source text's historical references. TT2, however, repeatedly introduce new historical material that extends beyond the immediate experiential horizon of TT1. References to *Cambodia*, *Pol Pot*, *China*, border conflict, and post-war regional situations are incorporated into the narrative through additional processes, participants, and circumstances. As a result, episodes that are represented in TT1 through relatively localized wartime experience are repositioned within broader regional and geopolitical narratives.

From the perspective of Toury's operational norms, these differences reflect contrasting translational orientations. TT1 remains broadly adequacy-oriented, preserving the experiential organization of geopolitical conflict while introducing limited explicitation to facilitate comprehension. TT2, by contrast, displays a markedly stronger acceptability-oriented tendency. The extensive addition of explanatory information, historical anchoring, and geopolitical categorization demonstrates a sustained effort to make the political dimensions of the war more readily interpretable for an international readership. Unlike TT1, which primarily clarifies, TT2 frequently reorganizes and supplements geopolitical meanings through substantial editorial intervention.

Baker's (2018) narrative framing framework provides further insight into the significance of these modifications. In TT1, narrative framing is largely realised through labelling, temporal framing, and spatial framing that increase the accessibility of political references while preserving the narrative's original orientation. In TT2, however, framing becomes considerably more interventionist. Participant relabelling repeatedly repositions actors within broader political categories, while circumstantial additions embed events within expanded historical and geopolitical backgrounds. The addition of references to Cambodia, China, and post-war border conflicts exemplifies what Baker describes as selective appropriate and temporal-spatial framing. By establishing new connections between events and historical contexts. TT2 encourages readers to interpret the Vietnam War not only as a national experience but also as part of a wider regional geopolitical narrative.

Particularly significant are those cases in which TT2 moves beyond explicitation into interpretive framing. The reformulation of a general reference to an impending conflict as “*another war*”, subsequently linked to *Cambodia, Pol Pot, China*, does not simply clarify historical background but actively direct interpretation towards a specific geopolitical trajectory. Similarly, the transformation of references to wartime merit into statements concerning “*the South having fought valiantly*” introduces evaluative meanings that are not recoverable from TT1. These examples suggest that TT2 occasionally participates not only in the transmission of geopolitical memory but also in its reinterpretation.

In conclusion, the findings indicate that Geopolitical Conflict represents the domain in which TT2’s narrative intervention is most overtly political. While TT1 generally preserves the source text’s geopolitical perspective through moderate explicitation, TT2 reconstructs geopolitical conflict through extensive contextualization, participant repositioning, and historical expansion. The resulting narrative is more explicitly anchored within regional political history, more dependent upon explanatory framing, and more strongly oriented towards the interpretive needs of an international readership. This pattern provides further evidence that TT2 functions as a mediated rewriting, rather than a translation of wartime experience, that re-narrates the political dimensions of war through a different set of historical and ideological perspective.

6.2.5. Narrative Framing and the Reconstruction of War Reality

The differences identified above become most visible when examined through Baker’s (2018) theory of narrative framing. While the preceding sections have analysed the reconstruction of war reality in terms of transitivity patterns and textual shifts, Baker’s framework provides a means of synthesizing these findings at a broader narrative level. It is suggested that the differences between TT1 and TT2 are not confined to isolated process, participant, or circumstantial shifts but emerge from broader patterns of narrative framing.

Across the four representational domains, TT1 generally employs framing strategies that facilitate comprehension while preserving the source text’s experiential priorities. Participant specification, temporal anchoring, spatial framing, and

selective appropriation occur throughout the translation, yet these interventions rarely alter the underlying narrative logic of events. Violence remains immediate and experiential; trauma remains psychologically fragmented; memory remains associative and retrospective; and geopolitical conflict remains grounded in the perspectives of wartime participants.

TT2 exhibits a more interventionist pattern of narrative framing. Through participant relabelling, historical contextualization, temporal specification, and explanatory addition, the mediated version repeatedly repositions events within broader historical and political narratives. Physical brutality becomes more causally organized; psychological trauma becomes more explicitly contextualized; collective memory becomes more historically anchored; and geopolitical conflict becomes more firmly embedded within regional and international political frameworks. These modifications do not simply clarify existing meanings but frequently influence how readers interpret the relationships between events, actors, and historical backgrounds.

The most significant divergence emerges in the domains of Collective Memory and Geopolitical Conflict. In TT1, memory is largely presented as remembered experience, characterized by fragmentation, retrospection, and subjective association. In TT2, memory is increasingly transformed into historical narrative through contextualization, chronological anchoring, and explanatory supplementation. Similarly, geopolitical conflict in TT1 remains primarily connected to the wartime experiences of participants, whereas TT2 frequently expands the frame to include broader regional contexts involving *Cambodia*, *China*, border conflicts, and post-war political transformations. These additions reposition local experiences within larger geopolitical narratives and encourage readers to interpret the war through a broader historical lens. The contrasting framing practices between TT1 and TT2 provide an important basis for examining the broader translational orientations underlying the two versions, which are discussed in the following section.

6.3. From Translational Orientations to Rewriting

6.3.1. Adequacy and Acceptability

The comparison between TT1 and TT2 suggests a movement along Toury's adequacy-acceptability continuum rather than a simple opposition between two

discrete categories. Both versions remain recognizably connected to the Vietnamese source text and preserve the four representational domains through which war reality is constructed. However, they differ considerably in the degree to which they retain or reorganize the source text's experiential and narrative structures.

TT1 consistently remains closer to the adequacy end of the continuum. Across the four domains, the translation largely preserves the source text's narrative architecture, experiential organization, and representational priorities. Matricial interventions remain relative limited, and textual-linguistic modifications frequently operate as forms of explicitation that clarify meanings already present in the source text. As a result, the translation reproduces war reality in a manner that remains broadly aligned with Bao Ninh's original representation of violence, trauma, memory, and conflict.

TT2 occupies a different position. The cumulative evidence from the operational norms indicates a greater willingness to reorganize experiential meanings in accordance with target-reader expectations. Additions, omissions, expansions, participant specification, and circumstantial explicitation occur with considerably greater frequency than in TT1. These interventions are especially prominent in the domains of Collective Memory and Geopolitical Conflict, where historical contextualization and explanatory additions frequently reshape the organization of experiential meanings. Consequently, TT2 reconstructs war reality in a form that is more accessible, more explicitly contextualized, and more narratively guided than TT1.

The distinction therefore concerns more than textual modification alone. It reflects differing assumption about the relationship between reader and text. Whereas TT1 generally preserves the source text's fragmented memories, implicit political references, and experiential ambiguities, TT2 frequently seeks to reduce interpretive uncertainty through contextualisation and explanation. The movement from TT1 to TT2 may thus be understood as a movement from greater adequacy towards greater acceptability, with corresponding implications for how war reality is represented and understood.

6.3.2. Foreignisation and Domestication

A similar pattern emerges when the two versions are examined through Venuti's (2017) distinction between foreignization and domestication. Neither TT1 nor TT2 can be described as entirely foreignizing or entirely domesticating. Nevertheless, the findings suggest a gradual movement from a predominantly foreignizing mode of mediation in TT1 towards a more domesticated form of representation in TT2.

TT1 remains firmly anchored in the Vietnamese historical and cultural context of the text. Vietnamese geographical locations, military organisations, historical events, and political categories are largely preserved, while explicitation generally takes the form of clarification rather than substitution. References such as *the Tet Offensive*, *the Paris Agreement*, and Vietnamese military actors are rendered in ways that increase accessibility without removing their source-cultural specificity. The translation therefore encourages readers to engage with the war through a recognizably Vietnamese historical framework.

TT2, by contrast, repeatedly supplements such references with explanatory and contextualizing information. Historical events are more explicitly identified, military actors are more precisely categorized, and geopolitical relations are more extensively elaborated. These interventions reduce the cultural and interpretive distance between the narrative and its target readership. However, TT2 does not erase Vietnamese historical specificity altogether. The war remains situated within Vietnam, and Vietnamese experiences continue to constitute the narrative centre. What changes is the manner in which those experiences are presented and interpreted.

The relationship between the two versions is therefore best understood as a shift in emphasis rather than a complete transformation. TT1 primarily preserves source-cultural perspectives while selectively assisting reader comprehension. TT2, meanwhile, increasingly mediates those perspectives through explanatory frameworks designed for readers who may possess limited knowledge of Vietnamese history. The movement from TT1 to TT2 may therefore be characterized as a movement from stronger foreignization towards greater domestication, though

without abandoning the Vietnamese cultural and historical foundations of the narrative.

6.3.3. Translation and Rewriting

Until now it can be concluded that the two English versions appear to operate according to different modes of textual mediation. While TT1 largely functions as an interlingual translation that reproduces the experiential organization of the Vietnamese source text, TT2 exhibits characteristics more commonly associated with rewriting. The distinction is not absolute, since both versions involve forms of mediation and reconstruction. Nevertheless, the cumulative evidence indicates that TT1 and TT2 occupy different positions on a continuum between translation and rewriting.

From the perspective of Descriptive Translation Studies, TT1 displays a relatively strong orientation toward adequacy. Across the four representational domains, the translation preserves the source text's transitivity profile, narrative organization, and experiential priorities. Although participant specification, temporal framing, and explanatory additions occur throughout the corpus, these interventions generally function to clarify meanings already present in the source text rather than to reorganize them. At the matricial level, omission, addition, and recomposition remain comparatively limited. At the textual-linguistic level, shifts frequently involve local adjustments that increase explicitness while preserving the underlying experiential structure. Consequently, TT1 reconstructs war reality in a manner that remains closely aligned with the source text's representation of violence, trauma, memory, and geopolitical conflict.

TT2 presents a markedly different pattern. The analysis of initial norms demonstrated an editorial orientation that explicitly prioritized readability, accessibility, and narrative coherence for an international Anglophone readership. The preliminary norms further revealed that TT2 emerged not as a direct translation from Vietnamese but as a mediated English version produced through editorial intervention and rewriting. These conditions are reflected in the operational norms identified throughout Chapter 5. Compared with TT1, TT2 exhibits substantially

higher rates of omissions, addition, expansion, condensation, and recomposition. More importantly, these interventions frequently alter the organization and distribution of experiential meanings rather than merely clarifying them.

The distinction becomes particularly visible in the domains of Collective Memory and Geopolitical Conflict. In Collective Memory, TT1 largely preserves the fragmented, associative, and retrospective logic through which memories emerge in the source text. TT2, by contrast, repeatedly supplements recollections with new historical markers, explanatory information, and chronological anchoring. Memories that function in TT1 as subjective acts of remembering are frequently reconstructed as historically contextualized narratives. Similarly, in the Geopolitical Conflict domain, TT1 generally explicates political references already present in the source text, whereas TT2 expands the geopolitical frame through additions concerning *Cambodia*, *China*, *Pol Pot*, border conflicts, and post-war regional backgrounds. In these instances, TT2 does not simply transmit existing meanings but actively participates in the reconfiguration of historical and political narratives.

Lefevere's (2016) concept of rewriting provides a useful framework for understanding those differences. For Lefevere, rewriting refers to the ways texts are adapted, manipulated, and represented in accordance with the ideological, cultural, and institutional conditions of the target system. Rewriting does not necessarily imply distortion or mistranslation. Rather, it highlights the fact that texts are often reshaped to meet the expectations of new audiences and new literary environments. The evidence presented in this study suggests that TT2 operates precisely in this manner. Through extensive contextualization, participant relabelling, historical anchoring, explanatory additions, and narrative recomposition, TT2 reconstructs war reality according to the expectations of its target readership and publishing context.

Baker's (2018) narrative theory further illuminates the mechanisms through which this rewriting occurs. Across the four representational domains, TT2 repeatedly employs strategies of selective appropriation, participant repositioning, relabelling, and temporal-spatial framing. These interventions do not simply make the narrative more explicit; they also shape how readers understand the relationships

between actors, events, memories, and political backgrounds. Particularly in the domains of Collective Memory and Geopolitical Conflict, TT2 frequently introduces interpretive connections and explanatory contexts that are less evident in TT1. As a result, the narrative is not only translated but reframed.

The comparison therefore suggests that TT1 and TT2 differ not simply in degree but also in mode of mediation. TT1 remains primarily concerned with reproducing the source text's experiential organization, while TT2 increasingly reorganizes, contextualises, and reframes that organization. In this sense, TT1 may be characterized predominantly as a translation, whereas TT2 is more appropriately understood as a mediated rewriting. The distinction does not imply that TT2 ceases to be a translation altogether. Rather, it indicates that the mediated English version occupies a position where translational transfer and editorial rewriting become deeply intertwined.

In general, the findings suggest that the reconstruction of war reality in the two English versions of *The Sorrow of War* reflects two different approaches to cross-cultural mediation. TT1 seeks to reproduce war reality as presented in the Vietnamese source text, whereas TT2 seeks to reinterpret and re-present that reality for a different readership and historical context. The movement from translation towards rewriting therefore explains why the two English versions construct different narratives of the same war.

6.4. Conclusion

This study set out to investigate how war reality is reconstructed across the Vietnamese source text *Nỗi Buồn Chiến Tranh* and its two English versions through the analytical lens of Descriptive Translation Studies, Systemic Functional Linguistics, and narrative framing theory. By examining transitivity patterns across the four representational domains of war reality: Physical Brutality, Psychological Trauma, Collective Memory, and Geopolitical Conflict, the study explored how experiential meanings are reproduced, modified, and reconfigured through successive stages of translational mediation. Drawing together the findings and discussions presented in the preceding chapters, this section provides direct answers to the three research questions that guided the study.

Research Question 1:

How is war reality construed in the Vietnamese source text in terms of transitivity patterns across its representational domains of physical brutality, psychological trauma, collective memory, and geopolitical conflict?

This study found that war reality in *Nỗi Buồn Chiến Tranh* is construed through a distinct experiential organization that varies across four representational domains. Physical brutality is predominantly realised through Material processes, producing a dynamic representation of warfare characterized by bodily destruction, military action, and continuous movement. Psychological trauma is largely encoded through Mental and Behavioural processes, foregrounding memory, perception, fear, grief, and emotional disorientation. Collective memory combines Material, Mental, and Relational processes to represent war as a remembered and continually reconstructed experience, often characterized by retrospection, fragmentation, and subjective association. Geopolitical conflict is similarly dominated by Material processes, but is supplemented by Relational processes that position military actors, political entities, and wartime relationships within broader structures of conflict.

In general, these transitivity patterns construct war reality as a multidimensional experiential reality encompassing physical violence, psychological suffering, collective remembrance, and political conflict. The source text therefore presents war as a lived and remembered experience rather than merely a sequence of historical events.

Research Question 2:

How are the transitivity patterns and experiential meanings identified in the Vietnamese source text reconstructed in TT1 and subsequently reconfigured in TT2?

The findings indicate that TT1 largely reproduces the source text's transitivity patterns and experiential organization. Although process, participant, and circumstantial shifts occur throughout the translation, these interventions are generally limited in scope and primarily function to clarify, explicate, or facilitate comprehension for English-language readers. Across the four representational domains, TT1 preserves the source text's emphasis on experiential immediacy,

psychological fragmentation, retrospective memory, and participant-centred representations of conflict.

By contrast, TT2 exhibits a substantially higher degree of intervention. At the matricial level, the mediated version introduces more additions, omissions, reconfigurations, and expansions than TT1. At the textual-linguistic level, TT2 frequently reconfigures process types, redistributes participant roles, and introduces additional circumstantial information. These interventions are particularly pronounced in the domains of Collective Memory and Geopolitical Conflict, where extensive contextualization, participant specification, historical anchoring, and narrative recomposition reshape the organization of experiential meanings. As a result, TT2 reconstructs war reality in a form that is generally more explicit, historically contextualized and narratively organized than either the source text or TT1.

Research Question 3:

How can the identified recurrent shifts in the two mediation stages (ST-TT1, and TT1-TT2) be interpreted in relation to narrative framing and translational orientations (adequacy/acceptability; domestication/foreignization)?

The recurrent shifts identified in the two mediation stages reveal two distinct patterns of narrative framing and translational orientation. In TT1, framing strategies such as participant specification, temporal anchoring, selective appropriation, and limited explicitation generally support reader accessibility while preserving the source text's experiential priorities. Consequently, TT1 remains largely adequacy-oriented and exhibits predominantly foreignizing tendencies, retaining much of the source text's cultural, historical, and narrative specificity.

TT2, however, demonstrates a more interventionist pattern of narrative framing. Through participant relabelling, historical contextualization, explanatory additions, temporal specification, and narrative recomposition, the mediated version frequently repositions events within broader historical and political frameworks. In several instances, these interventions move beyond clarification and introduce interpretive perspectives that are less explicit or totally absent in TT1. Such patterns

reflect a stronger orientation towards acceptability and a greater degree of domestication through contextual explanation and reader-oriented framing.

Overall, the findings suggest that TT1 primarily functions as a source-oriented translation, whereas TT2 occupies a position closer to rewriting. While TT2 remains recognizably connected to Bao Ninh's narrative, its cumulative interventions reconstruct war reality through a different interpretive framework, illustrating how literary texts may be repositioned through successive stages of translational and editorial mediation. These findings continue to provide the basis for the theoretical, methodological, and empirical contributions of the present study, which are outlined in the following section.

6.5. Contributions and Implications of the Study

6.5.1. Contributions of the Study

This study makes theoretical, methodological, and empirical contributions to Translation Studies.

Theoretically, the study provides a linguistically grounded account of how war reality is reconstructed through successive stages of translational mediation. By integrating Toury's (2012) Descriptive Translation Studies, Hallidayan transitivity analysis, Baker's (2018) narrative framing theory, it demonstrates how recurrent shifts in experiential meaning can be related to broader patterns of narrative framing and translational orientation. In particular, orientations such as adequacy and acceptability may be examined through systematic patterns of process, participant, and circumstantial reconfiguration rather than inferred solely from paratextual evidence or translator commentary. The findings therefore reinforce the descriptive translation studies view that translated texts should not be evaluated solely in terms of equivalence or fidelity but should be understood as products of norm-governed textual and cultural mediation.

Methodologically, the study develops a framework for investigating the reconstruction of literary reality through translation. By operationalizing war reality through four representational domains: Physical Brutality, Psychological Trauma, Collective Memory, and Geopolitical Conflict, it establishes a link between close

literary reading and clause-level linguistic analysis and of using aligned clause-process units as the basis for comparison. This domain-based approach makes it possible to identify which dimensions of war experience remain relatively stable across versions and which are more susceptible to translational intervention. The study also demonstrates the value of combining matricial analysis with textual-linguistic analysis. The distinction between macro-level structural operations and micro-level experiential reconfiguration provides a more comprehensive account of translational mediation than either approach alone.

Empirically, the study provides the first systematic transitivity-based comparison of the two English versions of Bao Ninh's *The Sorrow of War*. Through the analysis of process, participant, and circumstantial shifts, it offers a detailed account of how war reality is reconstructed across the two mediation stages from the Vietnamese source text to TT1 and from TT1 to TT2. More broadly, the study contributes to research on Vietnamese war literature in translation by providing an empirically grounded account of how representations of violence, trauma, memory, and conflict are reconstructed across languages and versions.

6.5.2. Implications for Literary Translation and Retranslation

The findings of this study have implications that extend beyond the two English versions of *The Sorrow of War*. They support the view that literary translation involves more than the transfer of linguistic content. Even when translators seek to preserve source-text meanings, modifications introduced through explicitation, participant specification, temporal anchoring, and contextualization influence how events, actors, and experiences are represented. The findings therefore support the view that literary translation is a process of reconstructing experiential meaning rather than reproducing a fixed original.

The study also highlights the value of examining indirect translation as a distinct form of translation mediation. Unlike TT1, which was translated directly from Vietnamese, TT2 emerged through editorial intervention based on an existing English version. The analysis of the present study suggests that such mediation should not be viewed merely as a secondary route of indirect translation or textual

transmission. Rather, it may function as an additional stage of narrative reconstruction in which editors, revisers, and mediators participate actively in the production of meanings while still remaining recognizably connected to the source narrative.

The findings also have implications for retranslation studies. Traditional formulations of the Retranslation Hypothesis propose that later translations tend to move closer to the source text after earlier translations have adapted the work to target-cultural expectations (Desmidt, 2009; Albachten & Gürçağlar, 2020; Peeters & Van Poucke, 2023). Although the hypothesis has been extensively debated, it continues to provide an important point of reference in discussions of retranslation (Paloposki & Koskinen, 2010). The relationship between TT1 and TT2 in the present study presents a more complex picture. Although TT2 presents a later English version of the novel, it does not indicate a stronger adequacy-oriented relationship to the source text than TT1. Instead, it frequently introduces additional contextualization, historical expansion, and interpretive framing. The difference between TT1 and TT2 are best understood not as differences in translational quality but as reflections of different readership assumptions, publishing contexts, and narrative priorities. From this perspective, later versions may introduce new forms of mediation that reshape how literary works are interpreted and circulated across cultural contexts. The case of *The Sorrow of War* thus illustrates how retranslation can function not only as textual renewal but also as a process of narrative renegotiation.

6.6. Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

6.6.1. Limitations of the Study

The first limitation of the present study is concerned with scope and corpus coverage. Although the study examines all four representational domains across the two English versions, the analysis is based on a purposive dataset consisting of passages that provide dense representations of war reality rather than exhaustive coverage of the entire novel. This design enables detailed clause-level analysis of analytically salient passages but may not capture all patterns of mediation occurring across the full narrative trajectory. Consequently, the findings should be understood as representative of recurrent tendencies within the selected corpus rather than

statistically generalizable to every section of the novel. Moreover, the study focuses primarily on the experiential metafunction through transitivity analysis. While this focus is consistent with the study's aim of investigating the reconstruction of war reality, it unavoidably leaves other dimensions of meaning unexplored. Interpersonal resources such as evaluation, modality, and attitudinal positioning, as well as textual resources such as thematic progression and information structure, may also contribute to the mediation of war narratives. The present findings therefore provide only a partial account of the linguistic mechanisms through which war reality is reconstructed.

Concerning the inference of translational norms and narrative positioning, the study yields certain issues. The discussion of translational orientations, narrative framing, and publishing influences is based primarily on textual evidence supplemented by available paratextual materials. Although such inference is consistent with the principles of Descriptive Translation Studies, direct evidence concerning editorial decision-making, translator-editor interaction, and reader reception was not available. Consequently, claims concerning the motivations underlying particular interventions should be understood as interpretive rather than definitive. In addition, while the study demonstrates that TT2 functions as mediated rewriting, it does not systematically differentiate between various forms of editorial intervention. Operations such as stylistic editing, explanatory supplementation, structural recomposition, and narrative reinterpretation are analysed collectively as manifestations of mediation. A more detailed typology of editorial agency falls beyond the scope of the present research.

Another limitation is concerned with the interpretive nature of linguistic coding. As with most qualitative discourse analysis research, the identification of process types, participant roles, domain classifications, and translation shifts involves a degree of analytical judgement. Although coding procedures, decision rules, and reliability checks were employed to enhance transparency and consistency, some classifications inevitably remain open to alternative interpretation, particularly in complex or multifunctional clause structures. Finally, the four-domain framework of

the present study provides a useful means of operationalizing war reality, but it inevitably simplifies the interrelationships between different dimensions of wartime experience. Physical brutality, psychological trauma, collective memory, and geopolitical conflict frequently overlap within the same narrative sequences. Assigning clause-process units to a primary domain facilitate systematic analysis but may not fully capture the multidimensional nature of literary representations of war.

6.6.2. Suggestions for Future Research

The limitations outlined above suggest several directions for future research. First, future studies could extend the present framework to larger corpora, including complete novel-length analyses or comparative investigations of multiple translated war narratives. Such work would help determine whether the patterns identified in this study are specific to *The Sorrow of War* or reflect broader tendencies in the translation of conflict literature. Secondly, the experiential focus adopted here could be complemented by analyses of interpersonal and textual meaning. Integrating transitivity with appraisal theory, modality analysis, or thematic structure analysis may provide a more comprehensive account of how evaluation, stance, and discourse organization contribute to the reconstruction of war reality.

Future research could further investigate the role of editorial mediation in indirect translation and rewriting. Studies drawing on archival materials, translator-editor correspondence, publishing records, or interviews may help clarify how institutional and editorial factors shape the transformations observed in mediated versions. Future work could also explore the ethical dimensions of literary mediation, particularly in relation to trauma narratives and war literature. Examining how explanatory additions, participant relabelling, and historical contextualization influence the representation of memory, responsibility, and witness perspectives may contribute to a deeper understanding of the ethics of translation and rewriting. Finally, the domain-based framework developed in this study may be applied to other literary genres, languages, and translational contexts. Such applications would help assess its broader usefulness as a methodological tool for investigating the reconstruction of experiential reality across different forms of translated literature.

In conclusion, this study has examined how war reality is reconstructed across two English versions of Bao Ninh's *The Sorrow of War* through successive stages of translational mediation. By combining Descriptive Translation Studies, Systemic Functional Linguistics, and narrative framing theory, the study has shown that translation involves not only the transfer of linguistic meanings but also the reconfiguration of experiential, historical, and narrative representations. The comparison between TT1 and TT2 demonstrates that different translational orientations can produce different constructions of the same literary reality, reflecting the influence of linguistic choices, publishing contexts, and mediating agents. It is hoped that the findings contribute to ongoing discussions of literary translation, indirect translation, and retranslation, while providing a foundation for future research on the translation and circulation of war narratives across languages and cultures.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Paratextual Evidence (ST – TT1 – TT2)

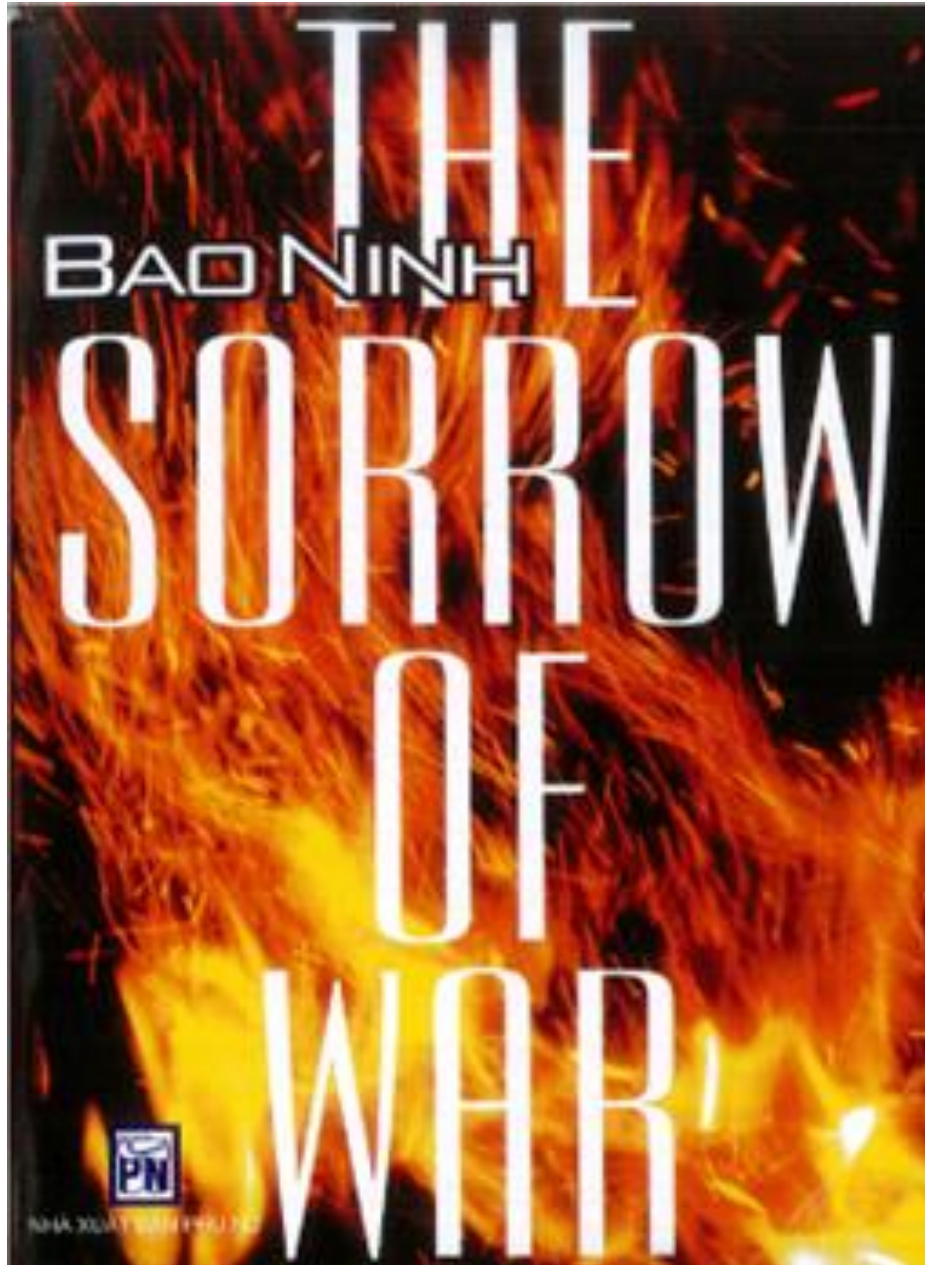


Figure 4.1. TT1 front cover: paratextual evidence for preliminary norms

BAO NINH

the Sorrow
Of War

Novel

Translated by: PHAN THANH HAO,
VO BANG THANH, *with* KATERINA A. PEIRCE

WOMEN'S PUBLISHING HOUSE

Figure 4.2. TT1 title page: author-translator hierarchy as preliminary norm evidence

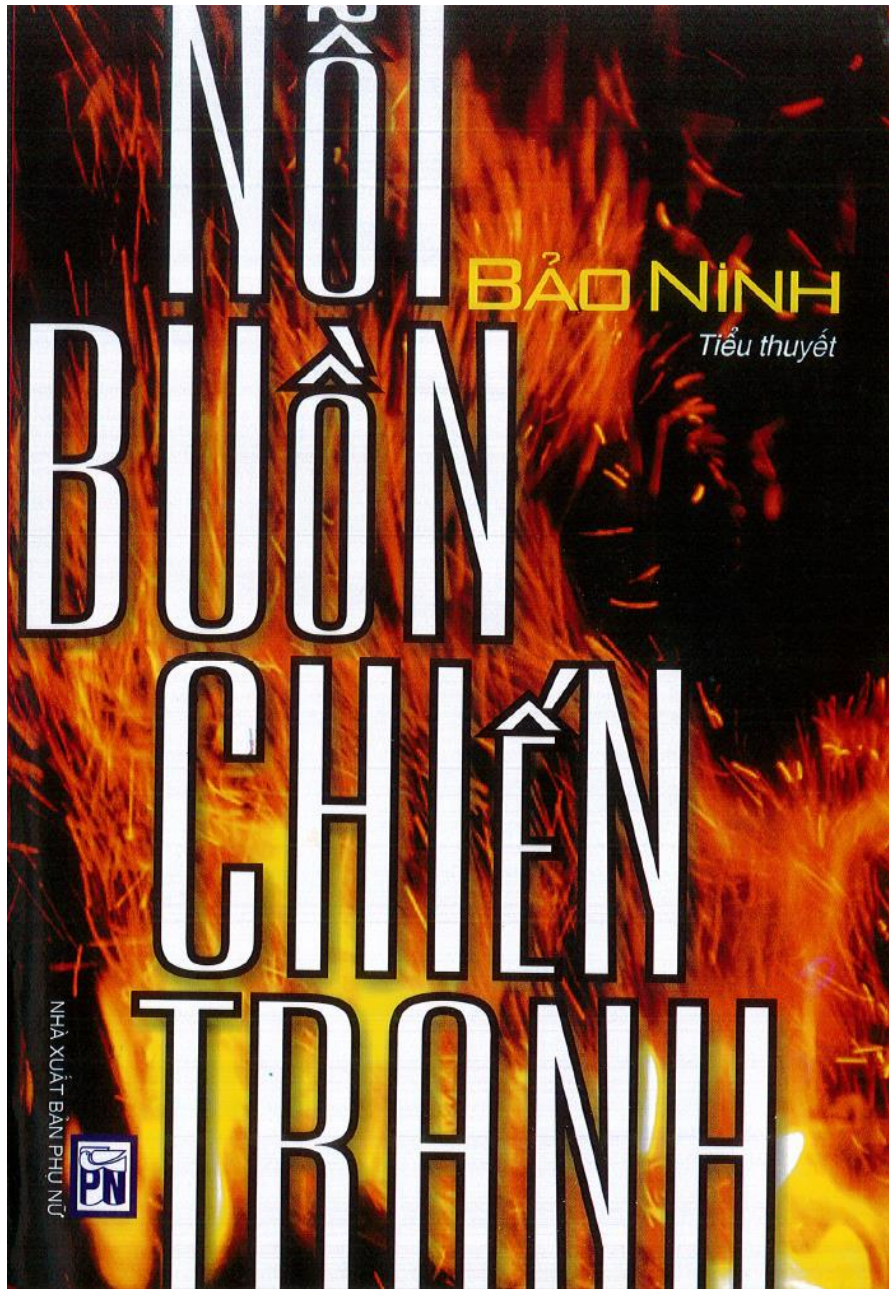


Figure 4.3. ST front cover (Vietnamese edition)

BẢO NINH

nỗi buồn
Chiến Tranh

Tiểu thuyết

NHÀ XUẤT BẢN PHỤ NỮ

Figure 4.4. ST title page (Vietnamese edition)

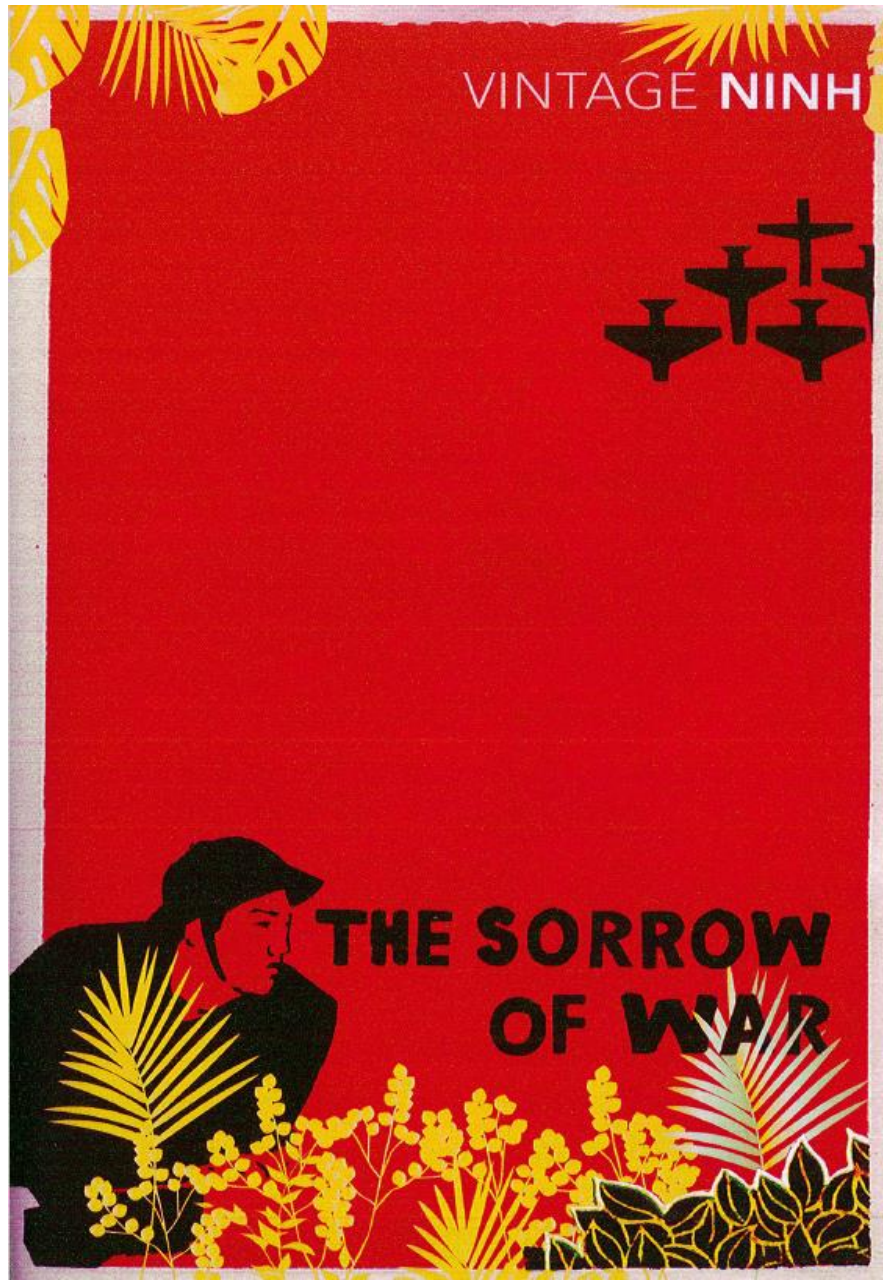


Figure 5.1. TT2 front cover: paratextual evidence for preliminary norms

THE SORROW OF WAR

Bao Ninh was born in Hanoi in 1952. During the Vietnam war he served with the Glorious 27th Youth Brigade. Of the five hundred who went to war with the brigade in 1969, he is one of ten who survived. A huge bestseller in Vietnam, *The Sorrow of War* is his first novel.

Figure 5.2. TT2 preface

BAO NINH

The Sorrow of War

ENGLISH VERSION BY
Frank Palmos

FROM THE ORIGINAL TRANSLATION BY
Phan Thanh Hao

VINTAGE BOOKS
London

Figure 5.3. TT2 title page

Published by Vintage 1998

38

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Figure 5.4. TT2 copyright page

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The famous American publisher Alfred A. Knopf (1892–1984) founded Vintage Books in the United States in 1954 as a paperback home for the authors published by his company. Vintage was launched in the United Kingdom in 1990 and works independently from the American imprint although both are part of the international publishing group, Random House.

Vintage in the United Kingdom was initially created to publish paperback editions of books bought by the prestigious literary hardback imprints in the Random House Group such as Jonathan Cape, Chatto & Windus, Hutchinson and later William Heinemann, Secker & Warburg and The Harvill Press. There are many Booker and Nobel Prize-winning authors on the Vintage list and the imprint publishes a huge variety of fiction and non-fiction. Over the years Vintage has expanded and the list now includes great authors of the past – who are published under the Vintage Classics imprint – as well as many of the most influential authors of the present. In 2012 Vintage Children's Classics was launched to include the much-loved authors of our youth.

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Figure 5.5. TT2 Publisher self-promotional page

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a magnificent achievement'

Independent

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Based on the true experiences of Bao Ninh and banned by the Communist Party, this novel is revered as the 'All Quiet on the Western Front for our era' (*New Statesman*).

See also: *All Quiet on the Western Front*



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Design by James Jones

Figure 5.6. TT2 back cover

Appendix B: Supplementary Data and Coding Sheets

