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**RECONSTRUCTING WAR REALITY IN TWO ENGLISH VERSIONS
OF BAO NINH'S *THE SORROW OF WAR***

Major: *English Linguistics*

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SUMMARY OF DOCTORAL THESIS

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background and Rationale of the Study

This section situates the study within the post-*Đổi Mới* transformation of Vietnamese war literature, which shifted from heroic, collective narratives toward introspective forms highlighting trauma, memory, and psychological ruin (Nguyen, 2021; Nguyen, 2022). Bao Ninh's *The Sorrow of War* is identified as a landmark of this shift due to its fragmented narrative and treatment of war reality (Ha, 2016; Nguyen, 2016; Doan & Le, 2017; Rísquez, 2017). The rationale for the study stems from the novel's complex translational history: it exists in two distinct English versions: an interlingual translation by Phan Thanh Hao (TT1) and an editorial rewriting (Pillière, 2024) by Frank Palmos (TT2). While Palmos's version is internationally recognized, the relationship between the three texts remains underexplored. The study introduces a linguistic operationalization of *war reality* (Nguyen, 2016) using Hallidayan transitivity, focusing on four experiential domains: Physical Brutality, Psychological Trauma, Collective Memory, and Geopolitical Conflict.

1.2. Aims, Research Questions and Objectives of the Study

The primary aim is to provide a descriptive, comparative account of how war reality is reconstructed across two stages of English-language mediation. The study is guided by three research questions:

- (1) How is the war reality construed in the Vietnamese source text (ST) 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; foreignization/domestication)?

Key objectives therefore include coding transitivity patterns (processes, participants, and circumstances), examining experiential representation and narrative framing across the four domains, and interpreting recurrent shifts through the lens of Toury's norms and Venuti's notion of domestication and foreignization.

1.3. Methods of the Study

This thesis uses a qualitative-dominant mixed-method design using close text-driven analysis supported by descriptive frequency data. Methodologically grounded in Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) the study treats the English versions as historically situated instances of mediation rather than evaluating them for *fidelity*. The research design follows two analytical trajectories: ST to TT1 (interlingual translation) and TT1 to TT2 (mediated rewriting). The analysis integrates Systematic Functional Linguistics (SFL) to examine micro-level lexico-grammatical evidence and Baker's narrative framing strategies to relate linguistic shifts to broader changes in narrative perspective and reader alignment.

1.4. Scope of the Study

The study focuses specifically on Bao Ninh's Vietnamese original text and its two English versions by Phan Thanh Hao (2005) and Frank Palmos (1998). The scope is delimited

to passages where “war reality” is prominently foregrounded, using the four experiential domains as criteria for corpus selection. Data alignment occurs at the clause-complex level to facilitate systematic comparison. While focusing on micro-level experiential representation, the study also selectively incorporates paratextual materials (interview and publishing remarks) to contextualise the translational and editorial norms.

1.5. Significance of the Study

The research contributes to several fields. First, for Vietnamese translation research, it provides the first systematic, text-based comparison of the two distinct English versions of this seminal novel. Second, it demonstrates an integral framework of Descriptive Translation Studies, Systemic Functional Linguistics and narrative framing theory for examining shifts in experiential meanings at a micro-linguistic level in Translation Studies. Third, the study offers a structured model for investigating the linguistic representation of trauma and memory, highlighting how translation functions as a form of intercultural representation. Finally, it foregrounds the ethical implications of editorial intervention in trauma narratives, where target-system pressures may risk simplifying or modifying complex historical experiences.

1.6. Structure of the Study

The thesis is organized into six chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the study, presenting its rationale, aims, research questions, scope, significance, and overall structure. Chapter 2 reviews the literature on war presentation, literary translation, narrative framing, and transitivity analysis, establishing the theoretical framework of the study. Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology, including the research design, corpus construction, data coding procedures, and analytical framework. Chapters 4 and 5 present the analyses of the two English versions of *The Sorrow of War*. Chapter 4 examines the reconstruction of war reality in TT1 as an interlingual translation, while Chapter 5 investigates the reconfiguration of war reality in TT2 as a mediated rewriting. Chapter 6 synthesises the findings, discusses narrative framing and translational orientations across the two English versions, highlights the study’s contributions and implications, and concludes with limitations and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

Chapter 2 reviews scholarship related to war literature, literary representation, literary translation, Descriptive Translation Studies, narrative framing, and Systemic Functional Linguistics. The review establishes the theoretical foundations for investigating how war reality is reconstructed in *Nỗi Buồn Chiến Tranh* and subsequently reconstructed in its two English versions. It also identifies gaps in existing scholarship and develops the integrated analytical framework employed in the study.

2.2. War Literature and the Representation of War Reality

2.2.1. The Nature of War Literature

War literature constitutes one of the oldest and most diverse literary traditions, encompassing genres such as novels, poetry, memoirs, diaries, and testimony (Calloway, 2013). Existing scholarship suggests that war literature performs multiple functions, including

aesthetic representation, historical remembrance, psychological processing, moral reflection, and ideological critique (Brosman, 1992). Modern war writing increasingly departs from heroic narratives and foregrounds brutality, trauma, disillusionment, and the human consequences of conflict (Burns, 2006; Fussell, 2009; Rísquez, 2017). Although these studies provide valuable insights into the themes and functions of war literature, they remain predominantly literary and interpretive, offering limited explanations of how war experience is linguistically represented in texts.

2.2.2. Representation of War Reality

The review adopts a constructivist view of representation, according to which literary texts do not simply mirror reality but actively construct it through narrative, linguistic, and cultural mediation. Scholars in literary theory, memory studies, trauma studies, and narrative theory argue that war reality becomes intelligible through processes of selection, organization, interpretation, and storytelling (Young, 1999; Webb, 2008; Jameson, 2009; Christodoulou, 2013; Davidsen, 2018). Concepts such as collective memory, cultural trauma, and narrative truth further suggest that literary representations of war are shaped not only by historical events but also by the ways communities remember and interpret those events (Fabiszak, 2007; Middleton, 2008; Eyerman et al., 2017). This perspective provides the conceptual foundation for treating war reality as a representational construct rather than a directly accessible historical reality.

2.2.3. The Vietnam War in Literature

Scholarship on Vietnam War literature demonstrates that the conflict has been represented through competing national, ideological, and experiential perspectives. American narratives often foreground trauma, ethical uncertainty, and national self-reflection, whereas Vietnamese writing tends to emphasise memory, collective suffering, and the long-term consequences of war (McInerney, 1981; Rollins, 1984; Lomperis & Pratt, 1987; Ringnalda, 1994; Sambanis, 2002; Taylor, 2003; Heberle, 2009; Ha, 2016; Wood, 2016; Calloway, 2017; Herzog, 2017). Studies also show that representations of the Vietnam War are closely connected to broader questions of memory, identity, and political interpretation. As a result, the Vietnam War emerges not as a single historical narrative but as a contested representational space shaped by different communities and cultural traditions (McMahon, 2002).

2.2.4. The Sorrow of War – A Vietnamese War Narrative

Scholarship identifies *The Sorrow of War* as a landmark post-*Đổi Mới* Vietnamese literary work. Unlike earlier heroic war narratives, the novel foregrounds trauma, memory, and psychological fragmentation through a non-linear narrative structure (Duong, 2016). Existing scholarship has extensively examined its themes, narrative techniques, and cultural significance, establishing the novel as a major intervention in Vietnam War literature (Nguyen, 1995; Skinnell, 2009; Nguyen, 2010; Ngo, 2011; Ng, 2014; Ha, 2016; Moore, 2017; Parsapour et al., 2017; Inani, 2018; Qui-Phiet, 2019; Oktaviani, 2022; Tran & Nguyen, 2024). However, most studies remain literary in orientation and pay little attention to the linguistic construction of war reality or to the ways in which such representations are transformed

through tradition and editorial mediation. This limitation provides an important point of departure for the present study.

2.3. Translation as Cultural Mediation and Norm-Governed Rewriting

2.3.1. Definition of Literary Translation

Literary translation is conceptualised as an interpretive and culturally situated practice rather than a process of mechanical transfer. Literary texts are characterized by stylistic complexity, aesthetic organization, and cultural embeddedness, requiring translators to negotiate between source-text meanings and target-culture expectations (Leech & Short, 2007; Boase-Beier, 2014; Hermans, 2014; Tymoczko, 2014). Consequently, literary translation involves interpretation, recreation, and cultural mediation. Contemporary scholarship therefore views literary translation as a form of intercultural communication shaped by literary, ideological, and institutional constraints operating within both source and target systems.

2.3.2. Literary Translation as Mediated Rewriting

Building on the cultural turn in Translation Studies, this section reviews approaches that conceptualise translation as rewriting and cultural mediation. Scholars such as Lefevere (2016), Bassnett (2013), and Katan (2012) argued that translated texts are shaped by ideological, institutional, communicative, and readership-related factors (Giraldo, 2018; Rossi et al., 2019). Translation, editing, adaptation, revision, and transediting are therefore viewed as interconnected forms of textual mediation (Pillière, 2024). The review also draws on scholarship on indirect translation and editorial rewriting to emphasise the importance of intermediary texts and successive stages of textual intervention. These perspectives provide a conceptual basis for examining TT2 as a mediated rewriting of TT1 rather than as a direct translation from Vietnamese.

2.3.3. The Role of Translated Literature

The role of translated literature is discussed through Even Zohar's polysystem theory (Even-Zohar, 2021). Translated literature is viewed as an active component of literary systems whose position may be central or peripheral depending on historical and cultural conditions. When occupying a central position, translated literature may introduce new literary models and stimulate innovation; when peripheral, it tends to conform more closely to existing target-culture norms. The theory highlights the relationship between the status of translated literature and the translational orientations adopted by translators.

2.3.4. Descriptive Translation Studies

Toury's (2012) Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) provides the principal macro-level framework for the thesis. DTS views translation as a norm-governed activity embedded within receiving cultures and emphasizes the description of actual translational behaviour rather than prescriptive evaluation. Particular attention is given to the concepts of adequacy and acceptability and to Toury's distinction between initial, preliminary, and operational norms. These concepts provide the theoretical foundation for examining recurrent translational patterns and relating them to broader translational orientations in the two English versions.

2.3.5. Domestication and Foreignisation

Venuti's (2017) domestication – foreignization continuum complements Toury's framework by providing a cultural perspective on translational orientation. Domestication seeks to reduce cultural distance by adapting texts to target-culture expectations, whereas foreignisation preserves aspects of source-cultural distinctiveness. Although the distinction should be viewed as a continuum rather than a rigid binary, it provides a useful framework for examining how the two English versions negotiate Vietnamese historical, cultural, and geopolitical realities for international readerships.

2.4. Translation as Re-narration

2.4.1. Baker's Narrative Turn in Translation Studies

Building upon cultural and descriptive approaches to translation, Baker's (Baker, 2007; Baker, 2014; Baker, 2018) socio-narrative framework shifts attention from translation as text transfer to participation in the construction and circulation of narratives. Drawing on narrative theory and social communication theory, Baker argued that individuals and communities understand social reality through narratives, and that translated texts inevitably contribute to the production, maintenance, and transformation of those narratives. Translation is therefore viewed not as the reproduction of a stable meaning but as a process of re-narration through which texts are repositioned within new linguistic, cultural, and institutional environments. This perspective is particularly relevant to conflict narratives because it highlights how translation may influence the interpretation of events, identities, responsibilities, and historical experiences.

2.4.2. Narrative Features and Ethical Accountability

Baker's (Baker, 2014; Baker, 2018) framework emphasizes that narratives are organized through a number of interconnected features, including selective appropriation, temporality, relationality, selective appropriation, and causal employment. These features shape how events are selected, connected, ordered, and interpreted within a narrative. The framework also highlights the ethical dimension of translation by recognizing that translators inevitably participate in the framing of narratives rather than functioning as neutral transmitters of meaning. Consequently, translational decisions may influence how readers understand conflict, memory, trauma, and identity. The framework therefore provides a means of interpreting the broader representational consequences of linguistic shifts identified through textual analysis.

2.4.3. Baker's Narrative Framing Strategies

To operationalize narrative analysis, the study adopts Baker's (2018) concept of narrative framing. Particular attention is given to framing strategies such as selective appropriation, labelling, temporal-spatial framing, and participant positioning. These strategies provide analytical tools for examining how translators and editors may foreground, background, expand, compress, or reinterpret particular aspects of a narrative. In the present study, narrative framing serves as an interpretive layer through which recurrent transitivity shifts can be related to broader patterns of narrative reconstruction and ideological positioning across TT1 and TT2.

2.5. SFL Transitivity as Experiential Representation

This section establishes Hallidayan transitivity as the main linguistic framework for analysing how war reality is construed in the source text and reconstructed in translation. Within Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2013), language is viewed as a resource for making meaning, and the clause functions as a key unit for representing experience. Transitivity is therefore appropriate for this study because it enables systematic analysis of how actions, perceptions, states, speech, existence, participants, and circumstances are configured in the representation of war.

2.5.1. Clause as Representation

Within Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2013), the clause is not treated merely as a grammatical structure but as a representation of experience. Through transitivity, each clause construes a particular configuration of process, participant and circumstance. This makes it possible to examine how events, actors, states, perceptions, and settings are linguistically organized. For the present study, the clause-process units provide the main basis for identifying how war reality is represented in *Nỗi Buồn Chiến Tranh* and how these representations are shifted across TT1 and TT2.

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

Process types provide a central resource for analysing what kinds of experience are foregrounded in the narrative. Material processes represent actions and events, making them especially important for analysing combat, killing, movement, destruction, and bodily violence. Mental processes construe perception, cognition, emotion, and memory, which are central to the representation of psychological trauma and recollection. Relational processes represent states, attributes, identity, and evaluation, while Behavioural, Verbal, and Existential processes help account for embodied reactions, speech, and presence or absence. These categories allow the study to trace how different dimensions of war reality are distributed across action, consciousness, evaluation, embodiment, existence, and discourse.

2.5.3. Participant Configuration and the Distribution Agency

Participant analysis addresses how agency, responsibility, and affectedness are distributed in the clause. It identifies who acts, who is acted upon, who senses, who speaks, and who is represented as existing or possessing particular attributes. This is especially important in war narratives because shifts in participant configuration may alter how responsibility, victimhood, military agency, political identity, and collective experience are represented. In the present study, participant shifts are therefore analysed to determine how TT1 and TT2 redistribute agency and reposition actors in the reconstruction of war reality.

2.5.4. Circumstantial Framing in Experiential Account

Circumstances provide the temporal, spatial, causal, manner, and contextual framing of experience. In war narratives, circumstantial choices are important because they locate violence, trauma, memory, and geopolitical conflict in specific times, places, causes, and conditions. Temporal circumstances may construct recurrence, memory, chronology, or historical anchoring, while spatial circumstances may connect experience to battlefields, landscapes, homes, or sites of loss. In this study, circumstantial shifts are examined as

resources for experiential framing, showing how translation and rewriting may make events more explicit, more historically situated, or more interpretively guided.

2.6. Research Gaps and Implications for the Present Study

The review identifies several major gaps. First, studies of war narratives have largely adopted literary and thematic approaches, paying limited attention to the linguistic mechanisms through which war reality is constructed. Second, translation studies research has predominantly focused on equivalence, stylistic correspondence, and local translational shifts, while comparatively little attention has been devoted to the reconstruction of experiential meaning, narrative representation, and ideological positioning (Luong, 2014; Trieu, 2018, 2019; Pham, 2021; Vu, 2023). Third, scholarship on mediated translation, editorial rewriting, and successive stages of textual mediation remains relatively limited. Finally, Vietnamese war narratives continue to receive considerably less attention than American narratives of the Vietnam War, particularly in translation research.

These limitations are particularly evident in research on *The Sorrow of War*. Existing studies have mainly examined the novel's treatment of trauma, memory, postwar consciousness, and its significance within Vietnamese and Vietnam War literature. Although these studies have contributed valuable literary and cultural insights, they rarely investigate how such representations are reconstructed through translation. More importantly, little attention has been paid to the relationship between the Vietnamese source text, Phan Thanh Hao's English translation, and Frank Palmos's edited version. No systematic study has examined how war reality is represented in the source text and subsequently reconfigured across the two stages of mediation.

2.7. Theoretical Framework of the Study

The present study adopts an integrated theoretical framework combining Hallidayan transitivity analysis, Toury's Descriptive Translation Studies, Baker's narrative framing theory, and Venuti's domestication – foreignization continuum. The integration of these perspectives enables the study to examine the reconstruction of war reality at multiple analytical levels, ranging from clause-level experiential meanings to broader translational orientations and narrative positioning.

At the linguistic level, Halliday and Mathiessen's (2013) transitivity system provides the principal analytical tool for identifying how war reality is represented through configurations of processes, participants, and circumstances. Through the analysis of process types, participant roles, and circumstantial elements, the framework makes it possible to investigate how the four representational domains of Physical Brutality, Psychological Trauma, Collective Memory, and Geopolitical Conflict are constructed in the source text and subsequently reconfigured in translation.

At the translational level, Toury's (2012) Descriptive Translation Studies provides the overarching framework for examining translational behaviour. The concepts of initial, preliminary, and operational norms enable the study to identify recurrent patterns of translational intervention and to relate local textual shifts to broader translational tendencies. Particular attention is given to operational norms, which are examined through matricial shifts and textual-linguistic shifts across the two mediation trajectories. The distinction between

adequacy and acceptability further provides a basis for interpreting the overall orientations of TT1 and TT2.

To account for the representational implications of these shifts, the study draws on Baker's (2018) narrative framing theory. While transitivity analysis identifies how experiential meanings are modified, narrative framing provides a means of interpreting how these modifications influence the representation of events, actors, memories, and historical relationships. Particular attention is paid to framing strategies such as selective appropriation, temporal-spatial framing, labelling, and participant positioning. These concepts enable the study to connect micro-level linguistic changes with broader processes of narrative reconstruction.

Finally, Venuti's (2017) domestication – foreignization continuum is employed as an additional interpretive framework for examining how the two English versions negotiate Vietnamese historical and cultural specificity for international readerships. This framework complements Toury's adequacy – acceptability continuum by providing a cultural perspective on translational orientation and reader positioning.

The relationship among these frameworks is hierarchical and complementary. Transitivity analysis serves as the primary analytical tool for identifying experiential shifts; narrative framing provides the interpretive mechanism for explaining their representational consequences. Additionally, DTS enables the reconstruction of translational norms and orientations from recurrent patterns of textual behaviour, while domestication – foreignization framework provides a broader cultural interpretation of the translational choices observed. Taken together, these perspectives allow the study to examine how war reality is represented in the source text, reconstructed through translation and subsequently reshaped through mediated rewriting.

2.8. Chapter Summary

The chapter reviewed the theoretical foundations of the study prior in order to identify key research gaps concerning the reconstruction of war reality across the Vietnamese source text *Nỗi Buồn Chiến Tranh* and its two English versions. In response, the study proposes an integrated framework combining transitivity analysis, Descriptive Translation Studies, narrative framing theory, and domestication – foreignisation as the basis for the methodological framework developed in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the methodological framework of the study. It outlines the research paradigm, research design, corpus construction procedures, data coding system, analytical procedures, and the integrated framework combining Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS), Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) transitivity analysis, narrative framing theory and cultural orientation.

3.2 Research Paradigm

The study adopts an interpretivist paradigm, viewing war reality as a discursively and experientially constructed phenomenon rather than a fixed historical reality. Within this

perspective, the Vietnamese source text (ST), TT1 and TT2 are treated as distinct representational artefacts whose meanings are shaped through translation and editorial mediation. The analysis therefore seeks to explain how experiential meanings are reconstructed and reframed across successive stages of mediation rather than evaluate translations in terms of fidelity.

3.3. Research Approach and Design

3.3.1. Research Approach

The study employs a predominantly qualitative approach supplemented by descriptive quantitative techniques. Qualitative analysis is used to examine how war reality is represented through transitivity patterns, while frequency counts support the identification of recurrent tendencies and cross-domain regularities.

3.3.2. Research Design

Methodologically, the study adopts a descriptive, comparative, and product-oriented case-study design. Two stages of mediation are examined: ST – TT1 (interlingual translation), and TT1 – TT2 (editorial rewriting). Analysis proceeds from micro-level transitivity shifts to broader narrative framing effects and translational orientations.

3.4. Research Method

3.4.1. Corpus Construction

The corpus consists of the Vietnamese source text *Nỗi Buồn Chiến Tranh*, Phan Thanh Hao's English translation (TT1), and Frank Palmos's edited English version (TT2). The texts were digitalized from their published versions into PDF format using a photocopier, after which the PDF files were converted into editable Microsoft Word document through Adobe Acrobat. The texts were manually aligned, organized into a three-column parallel corpus in their original paragraph formats. Comparison was then conducted through two coupled pairs: ST – TT1, and TT1 – TT2.

3.4.2. Corpus Scope

A purpose-built corpus was developed through purposive sampling of passages containing dense representations of war reality. Four analytical domains were identified: Physical Brutality (representations of killing, bodily injury, destruction and military violence), Psychological Trauma (representations of fear, memory, guilt, grief, loss and psychological suffering), Collective Memory (representations of remembrance, retrospection, shared historical experience and post-war recollection), and Geopolitical Conflict (representations of political actors, military organisations, ideological confrontation, and wartime alignments). The final corpus comprised 59 selected paragraphs from the source text, yielding 167 clause complexes (corresponding to 178 in TT1 and 183 in TT2), and 485 clause-process units in the source text (corresponding to 489 and 449 in TT1 and TT2, respectively).

3.4.3. Data Coding

The corpus was aligned at the clause-complex level across the three texts. Each aligned segment was assigned an identification code indicating chapter, paragraph and clause position (e.g. C1.P1.S1). Coding was organized through two paired comparisons: ST-TT1 (interlingual translation), and TT1- TT2 (editorial rewriting). This enables systematic identification of process, participant, and circumstantial shifts across the two stages of mediation.

Since clause-process units constitute the primary unit of analysis, each unit was coded for process type, participant configuration, and circumstantial elements based on Halliday and Matthiessen's transitivity framework. 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. 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.

Each clause-process unit was then assigned a unique identifier based on its position within the clause complex. Thus, 2.1a denotes Process 1 in Clause Complex 2 of the ST, with the corresponding aligned units coded as 2.1b (TT1) and 2.1c (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. This coding system preserves traceability to the original source-text location while facilitating systematic comparison across the two stages of mediation examined in the study (ST-TT1 and TT1-TT2).

3.4.4. Analytical Procedure

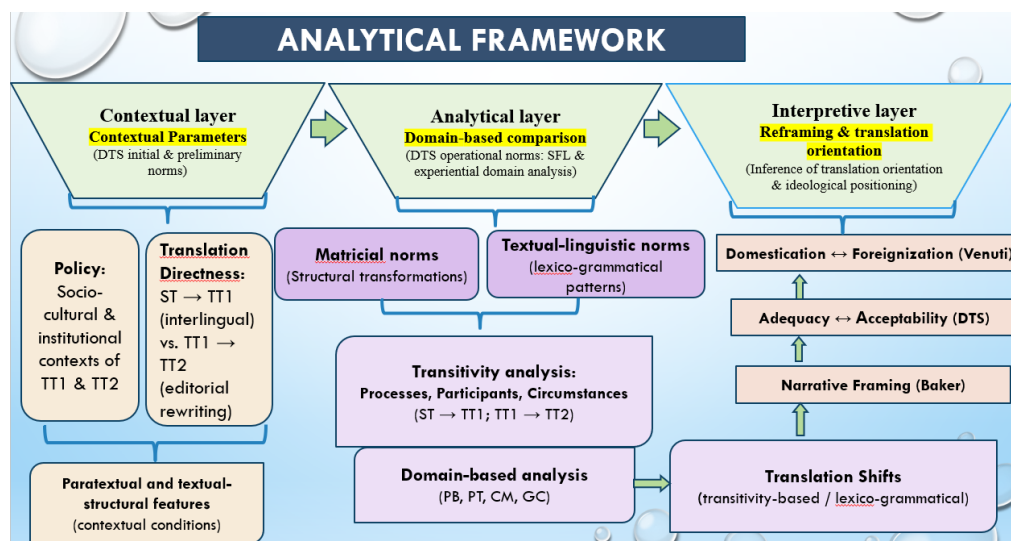
The analysis was conducted in three stages:

- (1) Identification of transitivity patterns and shifts at process, participant, and circumstantial levels.
- (2) Interpretation of recurrent shifts through Baker's narrative framing strategies, including selective appropriation, labelling, temporal-spatial framing, and participant repositioning.
- (3) Synthesis of recurring patterns to reconstruct operational norms and infer broader translational orientations.

3.5. Analytical Framework

The study adopts an integrated analytical framework combining DTS, SFL transitivity analysis, narrative framing theory and Venuti's cultural orientation. Following Toury's descriptive model, the analysis proceeds through three stages: (1) contextual positioning of the target texts, (2) comparative textual analysis through coupled pairs, and (3) synthesis of recurrent patterns to reconstruct translational norms and orientations. This framework enables clause-level linguistic evidence to be linked systemically to broader processes of translation, rewriting, and narrative mediation.

Figure 3.5.1. Analytical Framework of the Study



3.6. Ethical Considerations

The study follows principles of research integrity, transparency, and accountability throughout data collection, analysis, and reporting. As the corpus consists of published texts, issues of informed consent and participant anonymity do not arise; however, copyright regulations and fair-use principles were observed through limited quotation and appropriate citation of all primary and secondary sources. To enhance transparency and replicability, all coding procedures, datasets, and analytical decisions were systematically documented. Given the interpretive nature of transitivity analysis, coding consistency was maintained through iterative recoding, explicit decision rules, and supervisory consultation. All interpretive claims are grounded in observable textual evidence and triangulating findings across multiple theoretical frameworks. Finally, AI tools were used only to support language refinement did not participate in data coding, analysis, or interpretation.

3.7. Chapter Summary

This chapter has established the methodological foundation of the study. It has justified an interpretivist paradigm, presented a qualitative comparative research design, and described the construction coding of a purpose-built parallel corpus. It has also outlined the analytical framework through which transitivity patterns, narrative framing strategies, and translational orientations are examined across the two stages of mediation.

CHAPTER 4: RECONSTRUCTING WAR REALITY IN INTERLINGUAL TRANSLATION

4.1. Introduction

This chapter examines how war reality in the Vietnamese source text is reconstructed in Phan Thanh Hao's English translation (TT1). Drawing on Toury's framework of initial, preliminary, and operational norms, the chapter analyses how experiential meanings are reproduced, modified, or redistributed through translation and how these shifts reflect narrative framing tendencies and broader translational orientations.

4.2. Initial Norms: Translation Motivations

Analysis of contextual evidence suggests that TT1 was produced as a form of intercultural mediation intended to communicate Vietnamese wartime experience to international readers. The translator's retrospective reflections indicate a commitment to preserving the novel's central representation of war as sorrow and trauma rather than reshaping it according to target-culture expectations. The restoration of the title *The Sorrow of War* and the reported collaboration between translator and author further support an adequacy-oriented translational motivation.

4.3. Preliminary Norms: Context of Production

Paratextual analysis demonstrates that TT1 was produced under a translation policy emphasizing source-text visibility and cultural representation. The bilingual publication format, the prominence Bao Ninh's authorship, and the preservation of Vietnamese textual presence suggest an institutional orientation towards representing Vietnamese war experience rather than adapting the text extensively for Anglophone literary markets. The evidence also confirms that TT1 is a direct translation from the Vietnamese source text rather than an indirect translation through an intermediary language.

4.4. Operational Norms: Structural and Representational Mediation

4.4.1. Matricial Norms (ST – TT1)

At the structural level, TT1 demonstrates a high degree of retention of the source-text architecture. Retention accounts for 80.6% of all clause-process units, while additions (5.3%), omissions (8.8%), expansions (3.5%), condensations (2.6), and reordering (0.2%) remain comparatively limited.

Across the four domains, retention remains dominant, although the degree of intervention varies. In particular, Psychological Trauma shows the highest structural stability. Collective Memory exhibits the highest proportion of additions. Geopolitical Conflict contains the highest omission rate while Physical Brutality undergoes the greatest degree of structural repackaging through segmentation, expansion, and condensation. Overall, TT1 largely preserves the narrative architecture and sequencing of the source text while making limited structural adjustments to facilitate readability in English.

4.4.2. Textual-Linguistic Norms (ST – TT1)

Textual-linguistic norms were examined through transitivity analysis across the four representational domains of war reality: Physical Brutality, Psychological Trauma, Collective Memory, and Geopolitical Conflict. The analysis focused on process types, participant configurations, and circumstantial patterns in order to identify how experiential meanings were reconstructed in TT1. Domain-specific analyses were subsequently synthesized to identify recurring translational patterns and broader operational norms.

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	

As shown in Table 4.5, the overall transitivity profiles of ST and TT1 are highly similar. Material processes remain dominant in both texts (63.31% in ST and 62.21% in TT1), while the distributions of Relational, Mental, Behavioural, Existential and Verbal processes show only minor variation. The most notable changes involve a slight increase in Relational processes and a slight decrease in Mental processes. Overall, the findings indicate that TT1 largely preserves the experiential architecture of the source text, with shifts operating primarily as local adjustments rather than large-scale reconfigurations of war reality. This general stability provides the basis for the subsequent analysis of domain-specific transitivity shifts and their implications for TT1’s operational norms and translational orientations.

4.4.2.1. War Reality as Physical Brutality

The source text represents physical brutality predominantly through Material processes. TT1 largely preserves this action-oriented representation while slightly increasing the prominence of Material processes and reducing Relational ones. The most prominent tendencies include Relational to Material shifts that reconstruct violent consequences as explicit actors, limited omissions of sensory and descriptive details, additions that strengthen causal connections between military actions and their consequences. Moreover, there is greater participant specification and spatial anchoring besides more explicit military and battlefield labelling. These shifts primarily reflect Baker’s framing strategies of labelling, participant repositioning, and selective appropriation, resulting in a more explicit representation of violence while preserving the source text’s overall experiential orientation.

4.4.2.2. War Reality as Psychological Trauma

Psychological trauma remains one of the most stable domains in TT1. However, the translation redistributes experiential meanings away from Material processes and towards Relational and Behavioral processes. Trauma is therefore represented less through actions and impacts and more through states, evaluations, and embodied manifestations. Major tendencies include: Material to Relational shifts that foreground enduring psychological states, Mental to Behavioural shifts that make trauma more externally observable, selective omissions of sensory and bodily reactions, additions that increase evaluative and explanatory explicitness, and greater temporal and psychological-space framing. These shifts reconstruct trauma as a more explicitly articulated psychological condition while maintaining the source text’s overall representation of memory and suffering.

4.4.2.3. War Reality as Collective Memory

Collective Memory remains strongly event-oriented in both texts, with Material processes continuing to dominate. Nevertheless, TT1 exhibits a modest increase in Relational processes, indicating a tendency to present remembered experience through more descriptive and interpretive forms. Key patterns include: Material ↔ Relational shifts that redistribute emphasis between events and states, selective omission of perceptual and witnessing processes; additions that make military actions and causal relations more explicit; participant specification through clearer social and political labelling; and increased spatial framing of remembered experiences. Collective memory is therefore preserved as a record of wartime experience but is presented through a more explicit and systematically articulated network of experiential relations.

4.4.2.4. War Reality as Geopolitical Conflict

The Geopolitical Conflict domain remains predominantly Material in both ST and TT1. TT1 shows a reduction in Existential processes and a corresponding increase in Material and Relational representations. As a result, political and military realities are more frequently represented through actions, actors, and relationships rather than through statements of existence.

The analysis further reveals tendencies towards explicit naming of political and military actors, participant specification, stronger causal representation of conflict-related events, and selective neutralization of ideologically marked labels. These shifts increase referential clarity while generally maintaining the source text's geopolitical framing.

4.4.3. From Operational Norms to Translational Orientation

4.4.3.1. Adequacy and Acceptability

The analysis of operational norms indicates that TT1 is predominantly adequacy-oriented. At the matricial level, the translation exhibits a high degree of structural preservation, with 80.6 of clause-process units retained and only limited omission, addition, expansion, condensation, and reordering. This suggests that TT1 largely maintains the source text's narrative architecture and sequencing of experiential material.

At the textual-linguistic level, the transitivity profiles of ST and TT1 remain broadly similar across all four representational domains. Material processes continue to dominate, while the relative distribution of other process types shows only minor variation. These findings indicate substantial continuity in the experiential organization through which war reality is represented.

At the same time, TT1 introduces recurring forms of explicitation, including participant specification, geopolitical clarification, temporal anchoring, spatial framing, and causal elaboration. These interventions increase referential transparency and facilitate comprehension for readers unfamiliar with the Vietnamese historical context. Taken together, the evidence suggests that TT1 occupies a position closer to the adequacy end of Toury's continuum, while incorporating limited acceptability-oriented adjustments to enhance accessibility.

4.4.3.2. Domestication and Foreignisation

The operational norms identified throughout the chapter suggest that TT1 exhibits a predominantly foreignizing orientation. Across the four representational domains, the translation preserves the historical, geographical, political, and cultural framework of the Vietnam War. Vietnamese place names, military organisations, historical events, and political actors are generally retained rather than replaced by target-cultural equivalents.

This tendency is particularly evident in the domain of Geopolitical Conflict, where historical references are frequently clarified but rarely substituted. Expressions such as “*Mậu Thân*” and “*hiệp định*” are rendered through explanatory translations that preserve their historical specificity while improving accessibility. Similar patterns are observed in Collective Memory and Physical Brutality, where culturally embedded references are clarified rather than assimilated into target-cultural frameworks.

Nevertheless, TT1 also displays selective domesticating tendencies through explicitation, participant specification, temporal clarification, and causal elaboration. These interventions primarily function to support reader comprehension rather than reduce cultural difference. Overall, TT1 may therefore be characterized as a predominantly foreignizing translation that preserves that experiential and historical specificity of Bao Ninh’s war narrative while incorporating limited domesticating strategies to facilitate interpretation.

4.5. Chapter Summary

The findings suggest that TT1 reconstructs war reality in a manner broadly consistent with the source text. While the translation introduces local modifications that increase explicitness and readability, it preserves the principal experiential patterns through which physical brutality, psychological trauma, collective memory, and geopolitical conflict are represented. Overall, TT1 displays an adequacy-leaning orientation and may be characterized as a relatively source-oriented translation that seeks to communicate Vietnamese wartime experience to English-language readers while maintaining substantial continuity with the original narrative.

CHAPTER 5: RECONSTRUCTING WAR REALITY THROUGH MEDIATED REWRITING

5.1. Introduction

This chapter examines the reconstruction of war reality in TT2, Frank Palmos’s edited English version *The Sorrow of War*. Using the same analytical framework adopted in Chapter 4, it investigates the norms governing TT2 and identifies its overall translation orientation.

5.2. Initial Norms: Editorial Motivations

Analysis of Palmos’s paratextual statements suggests that TT2 was conceived as an “English version” intended for international circulation rather than a conventional translation. Editorial intervention, narrative accessibility, contextual clarification, and selective adaptation for Anglophone readers emerge as recurring priorities. At the same time, Palmos repeatedly expressed a desire to preserve the emotional tone and war-centra focus of Bao Ninh’s *The Sorrow of War*. These indicators suggest an initial norm broadly oriented towards

acceptability and domestication while remaining attentive to the experiential core of the source narrative.

5.3. Preliminary Norms: Contexts of Production

Paratextual evidence indicates that TT2 entered the Anglophone literary system as a mediated rewriting rather than a direct translation. The title-page attribution explicitly acknowledges production through an existing English translation, while publisher positioning and editorial visibility foreground international circulation and reader accessibility. The preliminary norms therefore point towards indirect translation, strong editorial mediation, and target-oriented literary positioning.

5.4. Operational Norms of Mediated Rewriting

5.4.1. Matricial Norms

TT2 exhibits extensive structural intervention. Although retention remains the dominant operation (58.14%), omission (29.90%), addition (22.68%), expansion (19.18%), condensation (6.19%), segmentation (4.17%), and reordering (2.27%) occur frequently. Intervention is unevenly distributed across domains. Collective Memory and Psychological Trauma display the highest levels of restructuring, whereas Physical Brutality remains comparatively stable. These findings indicate that TT2 involves substantial narrative recomposition rather than simple stylistic revision.

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

At the textual-linguistic level, TT2 displays a redistribution of transitivity patterns in comparison with TT1.

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

As shown in Table 5.5, the overall transitivity profile indicates a noticeable redistribution of experiential meanings in TT2. Material processes increase from 62.21% in TT1 to 66.4% in TT2, while Mental, Behavioural, and Relational processes decline. Verbal and Existential processes remain relatively limited, although Verbal processes show a slight increase. At the same time, the total number of clause-process units decreases from 471 in TT1 to 444 in TT2, reflecting a degree of textual compression. Overall, TT2 exhibits a stronger orientation towards actions, events, and externally observable developments, while reducing the prominence of cognition, memory, perception, and embodied responses. Compared with TT1, the mediated version therefore presents a more event-oriented and externally focused representation of war reality. The following domain-specific analyses

examine how these general tendencies are realised through recurrent process, participant, and circumstantial shifts across the four experiential domains.

5.4.2.1. War Reality as Physical Brutality

Physical brutality remains predominantly presented through Material processes in both TT1 and TT2. While the overall transitivity profile remains relatively stable, TT2 shows a slight increase in Relational and Mental processes, indicating a limited shift from action-centred representation towards states, consequences, and subjective perception. The most prominent tendencies include the omission of some descriptive and figurative details, the additions of processes that clarify agency and causation, and greater participant specification and contextual explicitation. These shifts primarily reflect Baker's framing strategies of selective appropriation, participant repositioning, and explanatory framing, resulting in a more explicit and interpretively guided representation of violence while preserving the domain's overall experiential orientation.

5.4.2.2. War Reality as Psychological Trauma

Psychological trauma in TT2 exhibits a shift towards more externally observable and narratively accessible forms of experience. The most prominent tendencies include reductions in Mental and Behavioural processes, the omission of some introspective and trauma-related elaborations, and the addition of evaluative and explanatory processes that clarify psychological states. TT2 also introduces greater participant specification, evaluative labelling, autobiographical positioning, and historical contextualization through expanded temporal and spatial framing. These shifts primarily reflect Baker's framing strategies of selective appropriation, participant repositioning, labelling, and temporal-spatial framing, resulting in a more explicit and historically anchored representation of trauma while reducing some of the ambiguity, fragmentation, and introspective density characteristic of TT1.

5.4.2.3. War Reality as Collective Memory

Collective Memory is the domain in which TT2 departs most substantially from TT1. The transitivity profile shows an increase in Material processes and reductions in Mental and Behavioural processes, indicating a shift from subjective recollection and reflective remembrance towards the representation of remembered events and actions. TT2 frequently compresses, omits, and recomposes memory sequences, reducing introspective commentary, sensory recollection, and retrospective reflection while foregrounding event development and historical outcomes.

The most prominent tendencies include the omission of Mental processes, the restructuring of extended memory narratives, and the addition of explanatory, evaluative, and verbal processes that increase narrative coherence and interpretive explicitness. Participant shifts involve greater specification, social categorization, and occasional ideological repositioning, while circumstantial shifts introduce stronger historical, temporal, and political anchoring through references to specific events, locations, and military actors. These shifts primarily reflect Baker's framing strategies of selective appropriation, labelling, participant repositioning, and temporal-spatial framing. Consequently, TT2 reconstructs collective memory as a more explicit, historically contextualized, and narratively organized account,

reducing the ambiguity, fragmentation, and associative memory structures that characterize TT1.

5.4.2.4. War Reality as Geopolitical Conflict

Geopolitical Conflict remains broadly stable in TT2, although the transitivity profile shows a slight increase in Material processes and reductions in Relational and Mental processes. This suggests a tendency to present conflict more through military actions, political events, and interactions between actors rather than through classification, description, or subjective perception.

The most prominent tendencies include the addition of military and geopolitical explanations, the specification of political and military actors, and the expansion of historical and regional contexts. TT2 frequently supplements implicit references with explicit labels, institutional identities, and geopolitical information relating to military organisations, political authorities, *Cambodia*, *China*, and post-war border conflicts. Participant shifts therefore increase military-political categorization, while circumstantial shifts introduce stronger historical, geographical, and political anchoring. These shifts primarily reflect Baker's framing strategies of labelling, participant repositioning, selective appropriation, and temporal-spatial framing. As a result, TT2 reconstructs geopolitical conflict as a more explicit, historically contextualized, and politically framed narrative, encouraging readers to interpret the war through broader regional and geopolitical perspectives than those foregrounded in TT1.

5.4.3. From Operational Norms to Rewriting Orientations

The analysis of operational norms reveals recurrent patterns of omission, addition, expansion, participant specification, circumstantial explicitation, and process reconfiguration across the four domains of war reality. These interventions extend beyond local linguistic modification and collectively indicate broader rewriting orientations in TT2

5.4.3.1. Adequacy and Acceptability

The findings indicate that TT2 is predominantly acceptability-oriented. At the matricial level, extensive patterns of omission, addition, expansion, and narrative recomposition demonstrate a willingness to restructure textual material for target-reader accessibility. At the textual-linguistic level, TT2 frequently increases participant specification, historical contextualization, temporal anchoring, and explanatory information, while reducing forms of subjective and memory-oriented representation. In some cases, additions move beyond explicitation to introduce interpretive reformulations not recoverably from TT1. Nevertheless, the four representational domains of war reality remain recognizable throughout the text. TT2 may therefore be characterized as an acceptability-oriented rewriting that maintains a mediated relationship with the experiential structure of TT1.

5.4.3.2. Domestication and Foreignisation

The findings suggest that TT2 exhibits a predominantly domesticating orientation. Through recurrent patterns of explicitation, contextualization, historical labelling, and narrative clarification, the text frequently reduces the interpretive demands placed upon target readers. This tendency is particularly evident in the domains of Collective Memory and Geopolitical Conflict, where historical events, political actors, and geopolitical relationships

are presented in more explicit and accessible forms. At the same time, TT2 retains many Vietnamese cultural, historical, and geographical references, preserving the Vietnam War as the narrative centre of the text. Consequently, TT2 may be characterized as a moderately domesticating rewriting that combines explanatory framing with the retention of significant source-cultural specificity.

5.5. Chapter Summary

This chapter examined the reconstruction of war reality in TT2 through the framework of Descriptive Translation Studies. The findings demonstrate that TT2 involves substantially greater editorial intervention than TT1, particularly in the domains of Psychological Trauma, Collective Memory, and Geopolitical Conflict. Through recurrent patterns of omissions, addition, expansion, participant specification, and historical contextualization, TT2 reorganises experiential meanings and reframes the narrative for an international readership. Overall, the mediated version reconstructs war reality as a more historically contextualized, narratively organized, and interpretively guided representation of war than TT1.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

6.1. Introduction

This chapter synthesizes the findings of Chapters 4 and 5 and compares how war reality is reconstructed in the two English versions of *The Sorrow of War*. The discussion focuses on the four representational domains of war reality, narrative framing, translational orientations, and the relationship between translation and rewriting.

6.2. Reconstruction of War Reality across the Two English Versions

6.2.1. War Reality as Physical Brutality

Both TT1 and TT2 preserve physical brutality as a central dimension of war reality through the dominance of Material processes. TT1 largely reproduces the source text's experiential representation of violence, whereas TT2 introduces greater participant specification, contextualization, and causal clarification. Consequently, violence is represented more as immediate experience in TT1 and more as organized sequence of military events in TT2.

6.2.2. War Reality as Psychological Trauma

Both English versions maintain psychological trauma as a major dimension of war reality. TT1 generally preserves the source text's emphasis on memory, consciousness, and subjective suffering. TT2, however, introduces greater contextualization, evaluation, and historical anchoring, resulting in a representation of trauma that is more explicitly interpreted and historically situated.

6.2.3. War Reality as Collective Memory

Collective Memory represents the domain in which divergence between the two versions is most pronounced. TT1 largely preserves memory as fragmented recollection and subjective remembrance. TT2 reconstructs memory through historical contextualization, chronological anchoring, and explanatory additions, transforming many remembered experiences into more structured historical narratives.

6.2.4. War Reality as Geopolitical Conflict

TT1 generally preserves the source text's geopolitical perspective while clarifying political and military references. TT2 exhibits more extensive participant relabelling, historical expansion, and geopolitical contextualization. As a result, wartime experiences are increasingly situated within broader regional and international political frameworks.

6.2.5. Narrative Framing and the Reconstruction of War Reality

The differences between TT1 and TT2 become most evident at the level of narrative framing. TT1 employs framing strategies that facilitate comprehension while preserving the source text's experiential priorities. TT2 adopts a more interventionist pattern of framing through participant relabelling, historical contextualization, temporal specification, and explanatory additions. These interventions reshape how readers interpret war, memory, trauma, and conflict.

6.3. From Translational Orientations to Rewriting

6.3.1. Adequacy and Acceptability

The comparison between TT1 and TT2 reveals different positions on Toury's adequacy - acceptability continuum. TT1 remains predominantly adequacy-oriented, preserving the source text's experiential organization through relatively limited intervention. Most shifts function as local forms of explicitation without substantially altering the source text's representational priorities. By contrast, TT2 exhibits a stronger orientation towards acceptability through extensive contextualization, explicitation, and narrative recomposition. These interventions are particularly evident in the domains of Collective Memory and Geopolitical Conflict, where historical contextualization and explanatory framing reshape experiential meanings. Consequently, TT2 reconstructs war reality in a more accessible, explicit, and narratively guided form for target readers than TT1.

6.3.2. Domestication and Foreignisation

The comparison between TT1 and TT2 also reveals different positions on Venuti's foreignisation – domestication continuum. TT1 is predominantly foreignizing, preserving Vietnamese historical, cultural, and geopolitical specificity while introducing limited clarification to facilitate comprehension. TT2 displays a stronger domesticating tendency. This is demonstrated by historical explanation, participant specification, and geopolitical elaboration. Nevertheless, TT2 does not eliminate Vietnamese cultural specificity; rather, it mediates that specificity through explanatory framing and contextual expansion for international readers. The movement from TT1 to TT2 therefore reflects a shift from stronger foreignization towards greater domestication while retaining the Vietnamese historical and cultural foundations of the narrative.

6.3.3. Translation and Rewriting

The findings suggest that TT1 and TT2 represent different modes of textual mediation. TT1 functions primarily as an interlingual translation, preserving the source text's experiential organization and representational priorities while introducing only limited explanatory adjustments. By contrast, TT2 exhibits many characteristics of mediated rewriting, including extensive omission, addition, expansion, contextualization, and narrative recomposition. These interventions are particularly evident in the domains of Collective Memory and

Geopolitical Conflict, where historical contextualization and explanatory framing frequently reorganize experiential meanings. Drawing on Lefevere's concept of rewriting and Baker's narrative framing theory, the study argues that TT2 is more appropriately understood as a mediated rewriting that reconstructs war reality for a different readership and publishing context.

6.4. Conclusion

Drawing together the findings and discussions from the preceding chapters, this section provides direct answers to the three research questions that guided this study.

Research Question 1:

War reality in the Vietnamese source text is constructed through four interconnected representational domains: Physical Brutality, Psychological Trauma, Collective Memory, and Geopolitical Conflict. These domains are realised through distinct transitivity patterns that collectively represent war as a lived, remembered, and historically situated experience.

Research Question 2:

TT1 largely preserves the source text's transitivity patterns and experiential organization through limited explicitation and clarification. TT2 introduces substantially higher levels of addition, omission, contextualization, and recomposition, resulting in a more explicit, historically contextualized, and narratively organized reconstruction of war reality.

Research Question 3:

The recurrent shifts identified in TT1 are associated with adequacy-oriented and predominantly foreignizing tendencies. TT2 demonstrates stronger acceptability-oriented and domesticating tendencies through participant relabelling, historical contextualization, explanatory additions, and narrative reframing. These interventions position TT2 closer to mediated rewriting than conventional translation.

6.5. Contributions and Implications of the Study

6.5.1. Contributions of the Study

The study makes theoretical, methodological, and empirical contribution to Translation Studies. From a theoretical perspective, the study contributes to research on literary translation by integrating DTS, SFL, narrative framing theory, and cultural orientation into a single analytical framework. The findings demonstrate how recurrent shifts in process types, participant configurations, and circumstantial framing may be related to broader translational orientations and narrative positioning. The study also contributes to discussions of indirect translation and mediated rewriting by demonstrating how editorial intervention may reshape experiential meanings and narrative representations across successive stages of mediation.

Methodologically, the study develops a domain-based framework for investigating the reconstruction of literary reality through translation. By operationalize war reality through four representational domains of Physical Brutality, Psychological Trauma, Collective Memory, and Geopolitical Conflict, the study establishes a connection between close literary reading and clause-level linguistic analysis. The combination of matricial analysis, transitivity analysis, and narrative framing provides a systematic procedure for examining both structural and experiential dimensions of translational mediation.

Empirically, the study provides the first systematic transitivity-based comparison of the two English versions of *The Sorrow of War*. Through detailed analysis of process, participants, and circumstantial shifts, it demonstrates how representations of violence, trauma, memory, and geopolitical conflict are reconstructed across two stages of mediation. The findings contribute to scholarship on Vietnamese literature in translation by offering a linguistically grounded account of how war narratives are transformed as they circulate across languages, cultures, and publishing contexts.

6.5.2. Implications for Literary Translation and Retranslation

The findings have implications for literary translation, indirect translation and retranslation studies. First, they support the view that literary translation involves more than the transfer of linguistic content. Across both English versions, modifications in transitivity patterns demonstrate that translation inevitably participates in the reconstruction of experiential meaning. Even relatively local shifts in processes, participants, and circumstances may accumulate into broader changes in narrative representation and reader interpretation. Second, the findings highlight the importance of editorial mediation as indirect translation. The comparison between TT1 and TT2 demonstrates that mediation through revision and rewriting can significantly reshape representations of historical experience, collective memory, and geopolitical conflict. Indirect translation should therefore be understood not merely as a secondary route of textual transmission but also as a potential site of narrative reconstruction and ideological intervention.

The study also contributes to ongoing debates concerning retranslation. The relationship between TT1 and TT2 does not support the assumption that later versions necessarily move closer to the source text. Instead, TT2 frequently introduces additional contextualization, historical expansion, and interpretive framing. The findings therefore support contemporary approaches that view retranslation as a process of narrative repositioning shaped by changing readerships, publishing environments, and cultural expectations rather than as a progressive movement toward greater source orientation.

6.6. Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

6.6.1. Limitations of the Study

Despite its contributions, the present study has several limitations. First, the analysis is based on a purposively selected corpus representing the four domains of Physical Brutality, Psychological Trauma, Collective Memory, and Geopolitical Conflict. Although this design enables detailed clause-level investigation of analytically significant passages, it does not provide exhaustive coverage of the entire novel. The findings should therefore be understood as representative of recurrent patterns within the selected corpus rather than statistically generalizable across all sections of the text.

Second, the study focusses primarily on experiential meaning through Hallidayan transitivity analysis. However, other dimensions of meanings, including interpersonal resources such as evaluation, modality, and stance, as well as textual resources such as thematic organization and information flow remain beyond the scope of the present investigation.

Finally, the interpretation of translational orientations, narrative framing and editorial mediation is based on textual evidence and available paratextual materials. While such inference is compatible with the principles of DTS, direct evidence concerning editorial decision-making, translator-editor interaction, and reader reception was not available. In addition, the qualitative nature of transitivity coding inevitably involves a degree of analytical subjective judgement despite the use of explicit coding procedures and reliability checks.

6.6.2. *Suggestions for Future Research*

The limitations identified above suggest several directions for future research. Future studies may extend the present framework to larger corpora, including complete novel-length analyses or comparative investigations of other translated war narratives. Such studies would help determine whether the patterns identified in *The Sorrow of War* reflect broader tendencies in the translation and circulation of conflict literature.

Further research may also complement the experiential focus of the present study by incorporating interpersonal and textual metafunctions. Combining transitivity analysis with appraisal theory, modality analysis, or thematic structure analysis could provide a more comprehensive account of how evaluation, stance, and discourse organization contribute to the reconstruction of war reality. Another promising direction concerns the study of editorial mediation and indirect translation. Research drawing on archival materials, translator-editor correspondence, publishing records, interviews, or reader reception data may provide deeper insights into the institutional and ideological factors shaping mediated rewritings. Finally, the domain-based framework developed in this study may be applied to other literary genres, languages, and translational contexts to evaluate its broader usefulness for investigating the reconstruction of experiential reality across translated literature.

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