AN EXPANSION RESOURCES ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE POLITICAL EDITORIALS IN THE LIGHT OF APPRAISAL THEORY

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ABSTRACT

The paper investigates the use of Expansion resources in the English and Vietnamese political editorials about North Korea by drawing on Appraisal Theory. Firstly, the paper provides a brief account of Appraisal Theory, especially Expansion and subtypes of Expansion, namely Entertain and Attribution. Then, it is about the data and the methods applied. The findings indicate that there exist the similarities and differences in the resources of realizing Expansion and in the ways the writers negotiate with readers by means of using these resources.

Keywords: Appraisal Theory, Engagement, Expansion, Entertain, Attribution.

TÓM TẮT

***Phân tích các yếu tố Khai triển trong các bài bình luận chính trị tiếng Anh
và tiếng Việt theo thuyết Đánh giá***

Bài báo nghiên cứu sự sử dụng các yếu tố Khai triển theo thuyết Đánh giá của các bài bình luận chính trị tiếng Anh và tiếng Việt về Bắc Triều Tiên. Đầu tiên, bài báo trình bày tóm tắt thuyết Đánh giá, đặc biệt là chiến lược Khai triển với các yếu tố như Trao đổi và Quy kết. Sau đó bài báo trình bày dữ liệu và phương pháp nghiên cứu được áp dụng. Kết quả nghiên cứu cho thấy có nhiều điểm giống nhau và khác nhau trong các yếu tố thực hiện Khai triển và trong cách các nhà bình luận sử dụng các yếu tố này để tương tác với độc giả.

Từ khóa: Thuyết đánh giá, Thỏa hiệp, Khai triển, Trao đổi, Quy kết.

1.   Introduction

Appraisal Theory which has mainly developed in Australia for the last 15 years is a semantic network of Systemic Functional Linguistics proposed by Halliday [5]. Its most important contributers are Martin, Martin and White, White [7], [8], [12]. Since then, the Appraisal framework has been further developed and applied on a range of areas such as: writing in secondary school history [2], popular science [4], and teaching reading at tertiary level [6]. In Vietnam, the research of the Vietnamese discourse and the contrastive research between English and Vietnamese discourse within the Appraisal framework have gradually become a new trend. D. D. Vo [11] applied this

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theory in comparing and contrasting patterns in the ideological positions and orientations in the business news reporting of the two languages: English and Vietnamese. V. T. H. Tran [10] used this theory to examine the feelings and attitudes of the people toward the quality issues of postgraduate education in Vietnam. However, until now we have not found any contrastive studies concerning English and Vietnamese political editorials applied this framework. This paper evaluates the operability of the Appraisal framework into English and Vietnamese political editorials but focuses on Expansion resources in Engagement. It helps answer three following research questions: what Expansion resources are used in English and Vietnamese political editorials, how these resources resemble and differ from each other, and especially how the writer gets engaged with the reader by employing these resources.

2.   Theoretical background

The Appraisal framework consists of three subtypes: Attitude, Graduation and Engagement. The first makes an exploration of emotions and judgements. The second is for an investigation of how things are valued by degree. The last accounts "*for the linguistic resources whereby the authorial voice positions itself with respect to other textual voices and alternative positions at stake in a given communicative context*" [8, p.94].

Under Engagement, there exist two subsystems, namely Contraction and Expansion, depending on whether they challenge and restrict their scope or actively make allowances for alternative voices [9]. Within Contraction, according to White [12], the authorial voice explicitly or implicitly invests in the current proposition as "true" or "valid" and sets itself against an actual or potential proposition; meanwhile, Expansion refers to ways in which the dialogical voice can be opened up to alternative viewpoints. It "*actively makes space for alternative positions and voices*" [8, p.102] by either entertaining an evaluation through Entertain resources, or attributing it to a named or unnamed source external to the text by using Attribution resources.

2.1. *Entertain*

Entertain is the dialogic Expansion of modality and evidentiality. Martin and White define Entertain resources are "*those wordings by which the authorial voice indicates that its position is but one of a number of possible positions and thereby, to greater or lesser degrees, makes dialogic space of those possibilities*" [8, p.104]. The authors also clarify that Entertain refers to a semantic domain which is traditionally considered as "epistemic modality" by Palmer [9]. Under Entertain, modality includes expressions of likelihood by means of modal auxiliaries (*could, may, might, must,…*), modal adjuncts (*perhaps, probability, definitely,…*), modal attributes (*it's likely that…., it's possible that,…*), some mental verbs or opinions (*I suspect that…., I think…., I believe…, I'm convinced that..., I doubt that...*), by evidence/appearance-based postulations (*it seems, it appears, apparently, the research suggests,…*) and certain types of rhetorical or "pseudo" questions. White and Martin hold that the primary

functionality of such locutions is "*to make allowances for, and hence to make space for, alternative voices and value positions in the ongoing colloquy within which the text is located*" [8, p.108].

2.2. Attribution

Attribution, another dialogically expansive element, refers to lexical items by which the author advances his/her position by attributing it to certain external resources. According to Martin and White [8], it involves the presence of an external voice which takes over the responsibility for an evaluation or claim from the authorial voice. Droga and Humphrey [3] state that Attribution means the writer uses the words or thoughts of an outside source to validate or challenge attitudes including those of the writer.

White [12] uses several terms to indicate Attribution: "intertextual positioning", "source", or "extra-vocalisation". He says that the attributed proposition may be presented according to the different degrees of integration into the text: insertion and assimilation.

Insertion: The textual voice uses direct speeches, which purportedly present the words of the external voice, the attributed source, by separating them from the text.

Assimilation: There may be varying degrees of assimilation in the use of indirect speeches, the words of the attributed source are assimilated in the text in such a way that the distinction between the voices has been blurred.

Martin and White [8] distinguish between Entertain and Attribution by saying that Entertain resources refer to the internal voice of the speaker/writer (*I believe, in my view,…*) while Attribution resources refer to some external voice (*many Americans believe, in Thomas' view, there is an argument that,…*)

Attribution can be introduced either by an Acknowledge or a Distance. In the studies of Martin and White [8] and White [12], Acknowledge is a "neutral" way of introducing an external voice which obscures the authorial voice's stance concerning the propositions that are made. It is typically realized through the use of a reporting device: '*say*', '*report*', '*suggest*', '*declare*',…. Meanwhile, Distance, according to these authors, "*involves formulations in which, via the semantics of the framer employed, there is an explicit distancing of the authorial voice from the attributed material*" [8, p.113]. This is achieved through the use of reporting verbs such as *claim, maintain, purport* and the use of "*scare*" quotes which refer quotations without specific references where punctuation is used to signal that someone else's words are being used [8].

3.   Research Methodology

In the study, the qualitative method was used as a collection method for the search of information. The forty political editorials about North Korea in English and Vietnamese (twenty from each language) were observed and examined. These

editorials were collected from two newspapers with high prestige and wide circulation rates - the New York Times and the Nhan Dan - at the same period of time from March to June, 2013. The twenty English editorials were symbolized from EE1 to EE20 and the twenty Vietnamese editorials were marked from VE1 to VE20 according to the date of publication. When selecting the data, we took into account the length of each editorial but the Vietnamese editorials (a mean length of 815 words per editorial) tended to be longer than the English ones (800 words per editorial on average). The data analysis process applied was the quantitative and the qualitative analytic methods. The quantitative method was employed through systematizing the frequency of the occurrence of each feature of the Expansion resources. The qualitative strategy was utilized to identify linguistic features of Expansion in the editorials by a close analysis of each text and to explain how the editor employs these features to interact with his/her audiences by illustrating with examples taken from the data.

4.   Findings and discussions

4.1. *Overall usage of Expansion*

Table 1. Expansion resources in the English and Vietnamese editorials

EXPANSION	English Editorials	Vietnamese Editorials
Entertain	7.5%	5.5%
Attribution	1.7%	1.5%
Total	9.2%	7%

It is evident from the figure provided that the English and Vietnamese editorials share some common characteristics. Both rely on Entertain items; however, the former seems to favor these resources than the latter, 7,5% compared to 5,5%. As the case of Attribution resources, results show that they are less frequently used in the English and Vietnamese editorials accounting for 1,7% and 1,5% respectively.

4.2. *Findings and discussions of Entertain*

Table 2. Entertain resources in the English and Vietnamese editorials

ENTERTAIN	English editorials	Vietnamese editorials
Modality	7.05%	5.02%
Opinion	0%	0.21%
Rhetorical Question	0.11%	0.14%
Postulation	0.34%	0.13%

With regard to Entertain resources between the English and Vietnamese editorials, the table denotes that the English and Vietnamese editorials are not comparable in terms of overall usage, they both rely mostly on modality resources but

the number of modality instances in the English editorials is greater than that of the Vietnamese editorials, 7.05% in comparison with 5.02%. One observation to emerge from the data is the usage of opinion resources. There are no instances of these resources in the English editorials; meanwhile, in the Vietnamese editorials, this number accounts for 0.21%. Another difference is that the Vietnamese editorials appear to favor more on rhetorical questions than the English ones, 0.14% in comparison with 0.11%. The last difference is the frequent use of postulation resources. The English editorials make the preference of these resources more than the Vietnamese ones, 0.34% in comparison with 0.13%.

4.2.1. Modality

As for the case of modality in the English and Vietnamese editorials, it can be seen that modality instances are quite frequently used for a persuasive purpose. They occur in every editorial and help open the discourse up to alternative opinions as well as the degree of commitment the writers make to the information presented. The modals of prediction and possibility are prominent features in the editorials. This finding also agrees with the previous study, revealing that the prediction and possibility modals appear more often than the other modals [1]. The first possible reason is that most of the English and Vietnamese editorials are commenting on the menace of using nuclear weapons of North Korea which may or may not happen in the future; thus the future is preferred. The second possible reason is that, through the editorials, the writers are likely to show their stance in an unambiguous way, and they do not intend to offend readers; therefore, the modals of possibility are preferred.

*1. It **would** be impossible to persuade North Korea to "denuclearize" the Korean Peninsula, under a two-decade-old agreement between North and South. (EE7)*

*2. Việc gia hạn thêm hai năm các biện pháp trừng phạt Triều Tiên .... **sẽ có thể** không có gì mới. (VE4)*

In the first excerpt, the writer predicts that any efforts in convincing North Korea of abandoning nuclear weapons are probably unimplemented. Since this is a prediction *would* be a more appropriate choice. Or in the second excerpt, it appears that the use of *sẽ có thể* is a manifestation of a non-assertive claim. In both examples, the information is presented in a hesitating manner. The authors expect negotiations.

*3. It **could** prove more useful to encourage Ms. Park, who has talked of engaging the North, to take the lead, perhaps by exploring Mr. Kim's recent comments about wanting to talk about development. (EE5)*

*4. Trong bối cảnh hiện tại trên bán đảo Triều Tiên nó **có thể** mở ra một cuộc khủng hoảng tiếp theo vì các lý do kinh tế. (VE9)*

To say *could, có thể* instead of *proved, mở*, for example, is somewhat weaker and apologetic. It presupposes blaming which is toned down by the usage of these words. They even make the statements more tentative and moderate the writers' claim, helping the writers avoid a full responsibility for the statements. Furthermore, by using these

modals, the writers expect someone to oppose them. They expect another voice.

4.2.2. Opinion

The American writers do not make use of opinion resources. It may mean that they tend to make their voice more objective. In contrast, the Vietnamese writers who rely more on opinion resources rather than postulation elements seem to have the tendency of making their own voice subjective opinions than objective observations as in 5.

5. ***Chúng tôi nghi ngờ*** *là Mỹ sẽ dùng những biện pháp mạnh để trừng phạt Triều Tiên. (VE18)*

4.2.3. Rhetorical Question

As with the case of rhetorical questions, the American and Vietnamese writers seem to use them to advance one's position, seek solidarity, and interact with readers.

6. *How long are we going to repeat this vicious cycle where the North Koreans create tensions and we give them compromises and aid?" (EE4)*

7. *Mỹ sẽ đàm phán trực tiếp với Triều Tiên? (VE6)*

In 6 and 7, the questions are employed to put the proposition into play as one of possible views, to guide readers towards a certain possibility that would be discussed next and to give impression that the writers want to know about the reader's answer. *"The addressee is positioned to supply a particular answer"* [8, p.110].

In the English and Vietnamese editorials, rhetorical questions are mostly found in the middle of the editorial, adding an informal and conversational feel to the editorial. More particularly, rhetorical questions are more frequent in the Vietnamese editorials than in the English ones and three titles of the Vietnamese editorials are formed by a rhetorical question working together with the modality to express what the writers think may be true and to create a certain audience for the texts as well as engage the audience into the texts.

4.2.4. Postulation

The resources of postulation are used more in the English texts than in the Vietnamese ones. They may be aimed at emphasizing the writers' own opinion and seem to clearly favor it over other possible positions, even though they basically acknowledge it valid.

8. ***It appears*** *some politicians in both countries are pushing their government to develop their own nuclear weapons programs. (EE11)*

9. ***Dường như*** *sự hạ giọng của Mỹ vào thời điểm hiện nay là thích hợp, vừa mở rộng không gian cho giải pháp đàm phán hòa bình. (VE18)*

In 8 and 9, the words *seemed* and *dường như* are used to emphasize the writer's own opinions. They allow alternative possibilities and appear to render the editorial less powerful and less assertive [6].

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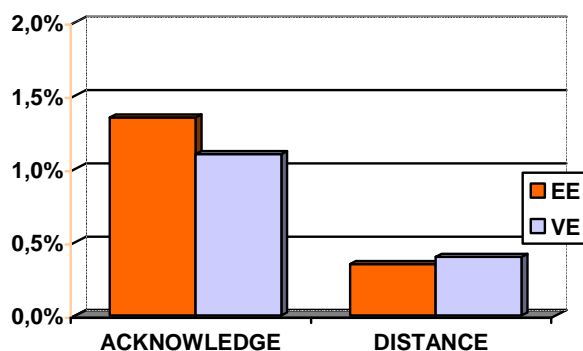### *4.3.   Findings and discussions of Attribution*

Figure 1. *Attribution resources in the English and Vietnamese editorials*

As shown in figure 1, both the English and Vietnamese editors tend to use more Acknowledge than the other group, making up 1.35% in the English data and 1.10% in the Vietnamese data. Distance resources consist of 0.35% in the English data and 0.40% in the Vietnamese data.

4.3.1. Acknowledge

Acknowledge resources are often used in the English and Vietnamese editorials. By using these resources, the writers want to express their viewpoints which are confirmed and given credibility and to establish a kind of public discourse from which the writers attempt to keep a distance. The difference lays in the fact that when reading the English editorials, it is made clear who this value position is coming from. It means that the value position is credited to a specific person. The writers position themselves outside the public discourse as its presenter, not as a participant within it.

*10. **Mr. Obama said** "President Park and South Koreans have stood firm, with confidence and resolve." (EE12)*

*11. **he said** (Secretary of State- John Kerry "the United States would defend its South Korean and Japanese allies..." (EE7)*

In 10 and 11, the writers refer to the famous people (Mr. Obama and Secretary of State - John Kerry) who are to build confidence in their readers by guaranteeing the source of information. It appears the writers try to create homogeneous voices rather than attempting to let their individual voices be heard completing with other voices.

However, in the Vietnamese editorials, Acknowledge resources are often unidentified to any particular person, but taken as widely circulated information in the particular social context for establishing the writers' own arguments. Moreover, it is noteworthy that the Vietnamese editors often assimilate external resources into the

editorial rather than insert them as direct quotes. They do not strongly endorse from the external resources.

*12. **Các nhà hiện thực chính trị cho rằng** những hành động tự vệ chính đáng, như tăng cường binh bị của một quốc gia vô hình chung lại luôn là mối đe dọa đối với các quốc gia khác.(VE8)*

*13. **Theo các chuyên gia quân sự** thì mức cao của sự phô trương lực lượng lần này cũng chỉ là một bắn thử tên lửa thay vì thực hành phát động chiến tranh với Mỹ và Hàn Quốc như tuyên bố. (VE10)*

In 12 and 13, the phrases *các nhà hiện thực chính trị cho rằng, theo các chuyên gia quân sự* denote that the ideas are unidentified to any particular person, but are widely considered. By using these words, the writers attempt to keep a distance from the external sources; therefore, the reader may find the arguments presented in the editorials less persuasive or even biased to some extent.

4.3.2. Distance

Regarding the category of Distance, it is not the popular one of Attribution. Both the American and Vietnamese editors prefer using "*scare*" quotes to the verbs of claiming. The use of scare quotes may mean that someone comes up with the terms and the writers prefer not to use the terms without some indication of the origin of the terms or they might disalign them from readers who have a different understanding of what is meant by *"already volatile, potentially dangerous situation", "nói suông"* as in 14 and 15.

*14. to proceed with the test in an **"already volatile, potentially dangerous situation"** (EE7)*

*15. lời đe dọa chiến tranh của Bình Nhưỡng chỉ là **"nói suông"**(VE8)*

5.   Conclusion

Expansion is the frequent orientation of Engagement in the English and Vietnamese political editorials, within which, Entertain is the most used type. This result denotes that the writers select to open up a dialogic space, representing the proposition as one of a range of possible positions. The English and Vietnamese editorials show a consistent preference of high value of the modals of prediction and probability which have linked with less powerful and less assertive speakers. However, the English editorials which show a much higher number of modality seem to allow for intersubjectivity and readers' involvement, the Vietnamese editors who appear to use less modality resources may assume that the reader is already aligned with the writer's view and thus alternative positions need not be entertained or negotiated with. By Attribution resources, the American and Vietnamese writers want to express their viewpoints which are determined. The difference emerges in the fact that the American editors prefer the value positions which are credited to a specific person; therefore, their viewpoints may be more objective. In contrast, the Vietnamese editors rely more

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on attributed resources which are not from a particular person, and they attempt to exploit intertextual sources in various ways to support their views and orientate readers to follow their thinking. Therefore, they tend to make their voice more subjective.

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