
RESEARCH

“BÁNH TRÔI NƯỚC” AND THREE ENGLISH VERSIONS OF TRANSLATION: A SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL COMPARISON

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Abstract: This paper is concerned with a comparison of the three English versions of translation: “The Floating Cake” translated by John Balaban, “The Cake That Drifts In Water” translated by Huỳnh Sanh Thông and “Floating Sweet Dumpling” translated by Marilyn Chin with the source poem “Bánh trôi nước” by the Vietnamese renowned poetess Hồ Xuân Hương. The theoretical framework employed for analysis and comparison of the texts is systemic functional linguistics. The results show that there are both similarities and differences between the translated versions and the source poem, and between the translated versions in terms of ideational, interpersonal and textual meanings. The results also indicate that there are more differences in lexical choice (the choice of words and groups/phrases) than in syntactic choice (the choice of transitivity, mood, and thematic patterns) between the three translated versions and the original poem, and between the three translated versions.

Keywords: systemic functional linguistics, context, text, ideational metafunction, interpersonal metafunction, textual metafunction, source poem, translated versions

1. Introduction

In this paper, an attempt is made to compare three English versions of translation: “The Floating Cake” translated by John Balaban, “The Cake That Drifts In Water” translated by Huỳnh Sanh Thông, and “Floating Sweet Dumpling” by translated by Marilyn Chin with the Vietnamese source poem “Bánh trôi nước” written by Hồ Xuân Hương. The theoretical framework employed for analysis and comparison of the texts is systemic functional linguistics. There are various reasons for choosing this topic, but four seem to be prominent. First,

both the source poem and the translated versions are short (each consists of five lines including the title). Secondly, the source poem is written by Hồ Xuân Hương – one of the most popular poets in Vietnam who is so renowned for her poetic skills that she is considered by the Vietnamese “bà chúa thơ Nôm” (the Princess of Vietnamese folk poetry). Thirdly, the poem is translated into English by three famous translators: John Balaban, an American poet, who is “twice a National Book Award finalist for his own poetry and is one of the preeminent American authorities on Vietnamese literature” (<https://www.amazon.com/Spring-Essence-Poetry-Xu%C3%A2n-Huong/dp/1556591489>), Huỳnh Sanh Thông, a Vietnamese-born American Yale scholar who is famous for his

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translation of *Truyện Kiều* (The Tale of Kieu) from Vietnamese into English, and Marilyn Chin, also a famous American poetess. And fourthly, the source poem is written in a folk style; it is not difficult to uncover its meaning through linguistic analysis. So the choice of this topic is perfect for “comparing the various translations done of the same original text by different translators into a single TL (target language) in order to systematize and objectify the teaching of translation” (Wilss, 1982: 28). The paper will fall into five parts. Following Part 1 – Introduction, Part 2 states the aim of the study and raises research questions for the study. Part 3 provides an overview of systemic functional linguistics, paying particular attention to those concepts of the model that are relevant to the analysis and comparison of the translated versions and the source poem. Part 4 deals with the design and methodology of the study in which I will present data collection, data analysis, and discuss and compare the results obtained from the analysis to establish the similarities and differences between the three translated versions and “Bánh trôi nước”, and between the three translated versions. Finally, Part 5 – Conclusion – summarizes the main points of the study, points out limitations of the study, and makes suggestions for further research.

2. Aim of the study and research questions

As stated, the overarching aim of this study is to make a comparison between the three English versions of translation and the original poem “Bánh trôi nước”, and between the three translated versions to establish the similarities and differences between them. To fulfil this aim, two questions are raised for exploration:

1. How are the source poem and the translated versions constructed in terms of ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings?
2. To what extent are the translated versions

similar to and different from the source poem and to what extent are the translated versions similar to and different from one another in terms of ideational, interpersonal and textual meanings?

3. The theoretical framework

The theoretical framework adopted in this study is systemic functional linguistics (SFL). SFL is a model of language in context. It was originally developed by Halliday in the early 1960s. Since then the model has constantly evolved toward perfection and has been used as the theoretical framework for a great number of works in language description, discourse analysis, text generation, translation studies, dictionary compilation, etc. Accounts of the SF framework are now widely available in works by Halliday (1973, 1978, 1992, 1996), Matthiessen (1995), Halliday & Martin (1993), Halliday & Hasan (1985), Halliday & Matthiessen (1999), Matthiessen & Bateman (1991), Martin (1992), Burns (1990), Eggins (2004), Hoang (2001a, 2001b, 2005, 2012), Schleppegrell (2008), Hasan (2011), Hasan & Perrett (1994), Thompson (2004), Webster (2015), and many others. For the purpose of their study, however, each scholar approaches the model from a different perspective. As this paper is about a comparison of texts (a source poem and its three English versions of translation), I will try to be selective, relating my review of the SF model to those contents that appear to be relevant to its concern. To make the task manageable, I will begin by examining the notion of text. Then I will discuss the relationship between social context and functional organization of language. The review will end with a brief description of three strands of meaning (metafunctions) and their respective lexicogrammatical realizations as postulated in the SF model.

3.1. *What is a text?*

There are many ways to define a text/discourse (see Brown & Yule, 1983; Cook, 1989; Nunan, 1993; McCarthy, 2000; Hoang, 2005; Crystal, 2008; and many others), but in this paper, the definition by Halliday and Hasan will be adopted. In two of their seminal and most-cited books entitled *Cohesion in English* published by Longman in 1976 and *Language, Context, and Text: Aspects of Language in Social-semiotic Perspective* published by Deakin University Press in 1985, Halliday and Hasan conceptualize text as “any passage, spoken or written, of whatever length, that does form a unified whole” (1976: 1); it is “language that is functional” – “language that is doing some job in some context” (1985: 10). They emphasize that a text is essentially a semantic unit (1985: 10) – a unit of language in use (1976: 1). It is not a grammatical unit, like a clause or a sentence (1976: 1), not something that can be defined as being just another kind

of sentence, only bigger (1985: 10). Halliday & Hasan (1985: 10) further state that a text is both an object in its own right (it may be a highly valued object, for example something that is recognized as a great poem) and an instance of social meaning in a particular context of situation. “It is an instance of the process and product of social meaning in a particular context of situation” (1985: 11). They suggest that there is a close relation between the text and the social context and that “If we treat both text and context as semiotic phenomena, as ‘modes of meaning’, we can get from one to the other in a revealing way” (1985: 11-2).

3.2. *The relationship between social context and functional organization of language*

Halliday (1991: 8) provides the best model for interpreting the relationship between the social context and the functional organization of language which is reproduced in Figure 1 below:

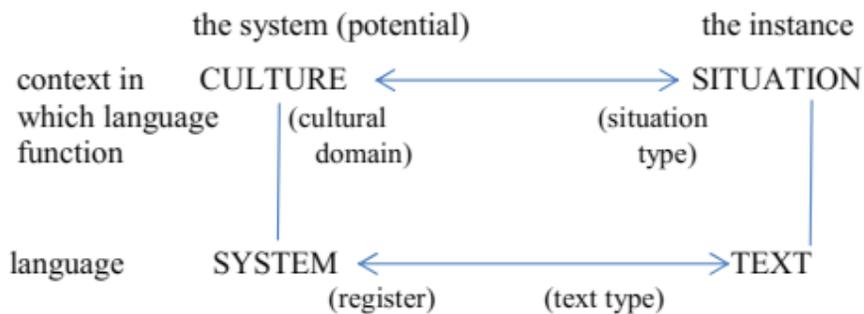


Figure 1. The relation between language and social context

* Notes: left – right: instantiation, top – bottom: realization

As Figure 1 shows, Halliday’s model consists of four constructs: (context of) CULTURE, (context of) SITUATION, (language) SYSTEM, and TEXT. According to Halliday (Ibid.), the context of culture is the context for meaning potential (for language as system), and the context of situation is the context for the particular instances (for

language as text). Halliday suggests that the relationship between context of culture and context of situation and that between language and text are that of instantiation: (context of) situation instantiates (context of) culture and text instantiates language. By contrast, the relationship between context of culture and language and that between context of situation

and text is that of realization: language realizes context of culture and text realizes context of situation. As this study is concerned mainly with the analysis and comparison of texts, it is useful to explore in some more detail the relationship between text and context of situation – the immediate environment in which the texts under study function.

It can be noted that although Figure 1 shows us the general realizational relationship between text and context of situation, it does not tell us “how to characterize a text in its relation to its social context”; neither does it show us “how to get from the context of situation to the text” (Halliday & Hasan, 1985: 12). To solve these problems, Halliday & Hasan (1985: 38) suggest we need to develop and incorporate into the general theory of SFL a “concept of a variety of languages, corresponding to a variety of situations”. The concept they propose is REGISTER – a conceptual framework of three headings: field of discourse, tenor of discourse, and mode of discourse. Halliday & Hasan then characterize these register dimensions as follows:

1. The field of discourse refers to what is happening, to the nature of the social action that is taking place: what is it that the participants are engaged in, in which the language figures as some essential components?
2. The tenor of discourse refers to who is taking part, to the nature of the participants, their statuses and roles: what kinds of role relationship obtain among the participants, including permanent and temporary relationships of one kind or another, both the types of speech role that they are taking on in the dialogue and the whole cluster of socially significant relationships in which they are involved?
3. The mode of discourse refers to what the language is playing, what it is that the participants are expecting the language to do for them in that situation: the symbolic organization of the text, the status that it has, and its function in the context, including the channel (is it spoken or written or some combination of the two?) and also the rhetorical mode, what is being achieved by the text in terms of such categories as persuasive, expository, didactic, and the like.

(Halliday & Hasan, 1985: 12)

3.3. Three strands of meaning and their lexicogrammatical realizations

Metafunction is a fundamental principle of language (Hoang, 2013). At the contextual level, the register (the context of situation) of a text can be analyzed in terms of the field of discourse, the tenor of discourse and the mode of discourse. At the linguistic level, a text can be analyzed respectively in terms of three metafunctions or strands of meaning realized through three respective lexicogrammatical structures: the ideational metafunction which comprises the experiential metafunction realized through the transitivity system and the logical metafunction realized through the expansion and projection systems, the interpersonal metafunction realized through the mood system, and the textual metafunction realized through the theme system. For analysis of the internal structure of the elements below the clause, some groups and phrases are also re-examined in this review.

3.3.1. The experiential metafunction and its realization through the transitivity system

The ideational metafunction is a general social function of language that we use to construe/represent reality in the linguistic system. It is a function of language

that expresses the ‘reflective’ as well as ‘experiential’ aspect of meaning through the system of transitivity. Transitivity refers to the different process (clause) types. Basically, there are three components in the process that provide the frame of reference of what goes on (Halliday, 1985: 101, 1994: 107). These are: the process itself, the participants in the process and the circumstances associated with the process. There are three main types of process: material, mental, and relational. In addition to these, there are three subtypes of process: behavioural, verbal, and existential.

Material process is the process of doing: action and event such as *kicking, striking, running, walking*. Related to the process itself, there may be one, two or even three participants. When a material process has one participant this role is referred to as **Actor** (one that does the deed) as in *He (Actor) was coming* (Process: material); when it has two participants, these roles are referred to respectively as **Actor** and **Goal** (one that is affected by the action) as in *I (Actor) shot (Process: material) an arrow (Goal) into the air* (Circumstance) (from “I Shot an Arrow into the Air” by Longfellow); and when it has three participants, these roles are referred to respectively as **Actor**, **Goal** and **Receiver** (one that benefits from the process) as in *He (Actor) gave (Process: material) a book (Goal) to her (Receiver)*. In terms of voice, like all other process types in the transitivity system, a material process can come in either the middle voice as in *The boy came in* or the effective voice as in *The boy kicked the ball*; it can also come in either the active voice as in *The boy kicked the ball* or the passive voice as in *The ball was kicked by the boy*.

Behavioural process is the process of physiological and psychological behaviour such as *breathing, crying, drinking*. Typical of

this type of process is that there is usually one participant referred to as **Behaver** (one who behaves) as in *She (Behaver) cried* (Process: Behavioural) *softly* (Circumstance), and this participant is always a conscious being, not a lifeless thing; e.g. *He laughed* but not *The tree laughed, The dog barked* but not *The door barked*, etc. However, when a behavioural process has two participants, these roles are referred to respectively as **Behaver** and **Range** (one that specifies the scope of the behavioural process) or **Phenomenon** (one that is behaved) as in *I (Behaver) breathed* (Process: behavioural) *a song (Range/Phenomenon) into the air* (Circumstance) (from “I Shot an Arrow into the Air” by Longfellow).

Mental process is the process of sensing such as *thinking, loving, wanting, hoping*. It consists of four main subtypes: cognitive (*thinking, knowing, realising*), perceptive (*hearing, sensing, feeling*), affective (*loving, hating, adoring, pampering*), and desiderative (*wanting, desiring, wishing*). In a mental process, there are usually two participants referred to respectively as **Senser** (one who senses, feels, thinks, or wants) and **Phenomenon** (one that is sensed, felt, thought of, or wanted) as in *The boy (Senser) loved* (Process: mental) *the girl (Phenomenon)*, and *I in I (Senser) heard* (Process: mental) *a noise (Phenomenon) from outside* (Circumstance). Like the Behaver in a behavioural process, the Senser in a mental process is always a human being.

Verbal process is the process of saying such as *saying, telling, speaking, talking*. This type of process covers not only verbs of saying but any kind of symbolic exchange such as *showing, indicating*. Unlike behavioural and mental process, a verbal process may not require a conscious participant and it can contain one participant referred to as **Sayer** (one that puts out a signal) as in *He (Sayer)*

said (Process: saying) *loudly* (Circumstance); two participants referred to respectively, depending on each particular subtype of verbal process, as **Sayer** and **Target** (one that the verbalisation is directed to) as in *They* (Sayer) *told* (Process: verbal) *me* (Target) *so* (Circumstance), and **Sayer** and **Verbiage** (the name of the verbalisation itself) as in *He* (Sayer) *ordered* (Process: verbal) *two beers* (Verbiage); and even three participants referred to respectively as **Sayer**, **Target** and **Recipient** (one that benefits from the verbal process) as in *She* (Sayer) *spoke* (Process: verbal) *French* (Target) *to me* (Recipient).

Relational process is the processes of being, having, and being at. It comes under three subtypes: (i) the intensive as in *She's good* and *She's the teacher in charge*; (ii) the circumstantial as in *She is in the room*; and (iii) the possessive as in *She has a beautiful voice*. Like other process types which have the middle and effective voice, relational process comes under two modes: attributive (middle voice) and identifying (effective voice). When a relational process is in the attributive mode, it has one participant referred to as **Carrier** and the quality or the thing showing that the Carrier belongs to a class of things which is referred to as **Attribute** as in *She* (Carrier) *is* (Process: relational) *good* (Attribute), *My life* (Carrier) *is* (Process: relational) *like a red red rose* (Attribute). The Carrier is realised by a nominal group and the Attribute is realised by an adjective or an indefinite nominal group. When a relational clause is in the identifying mode, it has two equating participants, one identifying the other, which are referred to respectively in two pairs of terms as **Identified/Identifier** and **Token/Value**; e.g. *He* (Identified/Token) *is* (Process: relational) *the best doctor* (Identifier/Value). Intensive process is the process which expresses being

in terms of 'x is a' as in *She is the teacher* and 'x is an instance of a' as in *She is a teacher*. Circumstantial process is the process which expresses being in terms of circumstantial elements such as time, place, distance, reason. The relation between the participant and its circumstantial element is that of **Carrier** and **Attribute**. Possessive process expresses being in terms of ownership, the relation between the two terms can be characterised as Possessor and Possessed but for generalisation and convenience, they are referred to as **Carrier** and **Attribute**; e.g. *He* (Carrier/Possessor) *had* (Process: relational) *a big car* (Attribute/Possessed).

Existential process is the process of existing, indicating that something or some natural force exists. In this type of process, there is generally a participant, the **Existent** and one or two circumstantial elements; e.g. *There is* (Process: existential) *a man* (Existent) *in the room* (Circumstance). (For details of process types in English, see Halliday, 1985, 1994; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; and for details of process types in Vietnamese, see Hoang 2005, 2012; Diep, 2005).

3.3.2. *The logical metafunction and its realization through the systems of expansion and projection*

In everyday communication, the speaker is less likely to focus on construing things or events as single, isolated phenomena. On the contrary, s/he often uses the infinite resources of language to form complex categories such as *Leave a kiss within the cup, and I'll not ask for wine* (from "To Celia" by Ben Jonson, cited in Halliday & Hasan, 1985: 18), in which two single states of affair *Leave a kiss within the cup* and *I will not ask for wine* are combined to form a clause complex having a logico-semantic or rhetorical pattern of *If x ... then y*. Clause

complex, according to Halliday (1985, 1994), Halliday & Hasan (1985), and Halliday & Matthiessen (2004), is the resource for forming two general systems: (1) taxis and logico-semantic relation. Taxis is concerned with degrees of interdependency. It has two delicate systems each of which indicates a kind of logical relation between clauses: paratactic relation and hypotactic relation. When two clauses in a complex are of equal status, they are said to be in paratactic relation. In contrast, when two clauses in a complex are of unequal status, they are said to be in hypotactic relation. In systemic functional grammar, logico-semantic relation comprises two fundamental relationships: expansion and projection. Expansion refers to a complex in which the secondary clause expands the primary clause by means of (i) elaboration: “one clause elaborates on the meaning of another by specifying or describing it” (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 396) (e.g. *My watch stops; it’s broken down*), (ii) extension: “one clause extends of the meaning of another by adding something new to it” (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 405) (e.g. *Winter has gone, and spring has come*), and (iii) enhancement: “one clause [or subcomplex] enhances the meaning of another by qualifying it in one of a number of possible ways: by reference to time, place, manner, cause or condition” (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 410) (e.g. *When he came, she had gone*). Projection refers to a complex in which the secondary clause is projected through the primary clause which instates it as a locution or an idea. Related to locution and ideas are two logico-semantic relations referred to respectively as quoting and reporting. Quoting refers to a complex in which one clause projects another clause and the projected clause represents that which is said (e.g. *He said: “She’s coming.”*), and the projected clause(s) and the projecting clause are of equal status. In contrast, reporting refers to a complex in

which one clause projects another clause and the projected clause represents the idea of that which is said/thought, and the projected clause and the projecting clause are of unequal status (e.g. *He said that she was coming*). (For more details of clause complexing, see Halliday, 1994, Chapter 7; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, Chapter 7; Hasan, 1993; Hoang, 2012, 2013).

3.3.3. *The interpersonal metafunction and its realization through the mood system*

The interpersonal metafunction is another general social function that we use language to enact roles and relations between speaker and addressee as meaning (Matthiessen et al., 2010: 128; Martin & Rose, 2013: 7). According to Halliday (1985, 1994) and Halliday & Matthiessen (2004), when a speaker interacts with others to exchange information or to influence their behaviour and get things done, he adopts for himself a certain role such as ‘questioner’ and, in so doing, assigns a complementary role, such as ‘informant’, to his addressee. Unless the conversation is very one-sided, the roles of ‘questioner’ and ‘informant’ tend to alternate between the interlocutors engaged in a conversation. Halliday (1994) provides a table to characterise the primary speech roles which can be represented in Figure 2 below.

Commodity exchange Role in exchange	(a) goods-&-services	(b) information
(i) giving	‘offer’ Would you like this teapot?	‘statement’ He’s giving her the teapot
(ii) demanding	‘command’ Give me that teapot!	‘question’ Is she giving me the teapot?

Figure 2. Primary speech roles (Halliday, 1994: 69)

As Figure 2 shows, all the roles are traced back to a form of either giving or demanding. These roles are simultaneously related to the two general categories of commodity negotiated between people: goods-&-services or information. When speech roles interact with types of commodity they produce four general speech roles: giving goods-&-services = offer, giving information = statement, demanding goods-&-services = command, and demanding information = question. Giving goods-&-services can be realised

either by a declarative clause as in *He's giving her the teapot* or by an interrogative clause as in *Would you like this teapot?*; giving information is typically realised by a declarative clause as in e.g. *He's giving her the teapot*; demanding goods-&-services is typically realised by an imperative clause as in *Give me that teapot!*; and demanding information is typically realised by an interrogative clause as in *Is she giving me the teapot?* Figure 3 below represents a fragment of the mood system in English.

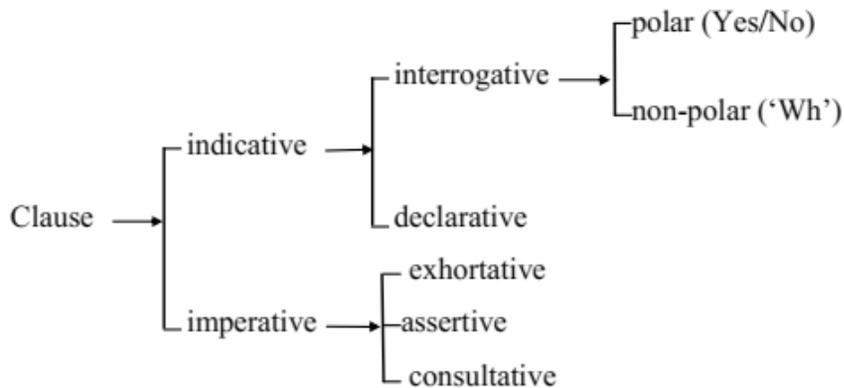


Figure 3. A fragment of the English MOOD system

Figure 3 shows that in the mood system, there are two choices: 'indicative' and 'imperative'. If 'indicative' is chosen, it will allow two more choices: 'interrogative' as in *Is Bánh trôi nước a lyric?* and 'declarative' as in *Bánh trôi nước is a lyric*; and between 'interrogative' and 'declarative', if 'interrogative' is chosen, it will open for two more delicate choices: 'polar' (requiring the answer "Yes/No") as in *Is Bánh trôi nước a lyric?* and 'non-polar' (requiring the answer to the missing information) as in *What kind of poem is Bánh trôi nước?* In contrast, if 'imperative' is chosen, it will allow three delicate choices: 'exhortative' as in *Read the poem*, 'assertive' as in *You have to read the poem*, and 'consultative' as in *Can you read the poem?*

As an exchange or interactive event, an English clause can be seen as consisting of two components: **Mood (M)** and **Residue (Res)**. The Mood is the component whose function in the clause is to carry the syntactic burden of the exchange and to carry the argument forward. In English, the Mood component consists of two functional elements: **Subject (Subj)** and **Finite (Fin)**. The Subject is the nominal component of the Mood; it is the thing by reference to which a proposition can be affirmed or denied. The Finite is the verbal element in the Mood which has the function of making the proposition finite; that is to say, it brings the proposition down to earth so that something can be argued about. The Residue is the remainder of the clause. It consists of

three functional components: (i) **Predicator (Pred)**, (ii) **Complement (Compl)**, and (iii) **Adjunct (Adjct)**. The Predicator is present in all non-elliptical major clauses. It is realised by a verbal group; the Complement is an element within the Residue which has the potential of being Subject, and like the Subject it is

typically realised by a nominal group; and the Adjunct is the element also within the Residue which is typically realised by an adverbial group or a prepositional phrase. Below is an example of the functions of these elements in the interpersonal clause in English:

<i>She</i>	<i>is</i>	<i>reading</i>	<i>a book</i>	<i>in the library</i>
Mood		Residue		
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement	Adjunct

Mood is concerned with polarity which can be positive (yes) or negative (no). Between positive and negative polarity, there lies an area of meaning referred to in systemic functional grammar as modality. Modality as an interpersonal subsystem has two main choices (types): modalization and modulation. Modalization (epistemic modality in traditional semantics) is concerned with some degree of probability as *can* in *She can be a poetess* and usuality as *always* in *He always changed his mind*. In contrast, modulation

(deontic modality in traditional semantics) is concerned with some degree of obligation as *should* in *He should tell her* and inclination as *won't* in *They won't go*. (For details of mood and modality in the English interpersonal clause, see Halliday, 1985, 1994, 2012; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; Matthiessen et al, 2010; Martin & Rose, 2013; and for details of mood and modality in the Vietnamese interpersonal clause, see Thai, 2004; Diep, 2005; Hoang, 2009). Figure 4 represents the basic choices of the modality system.

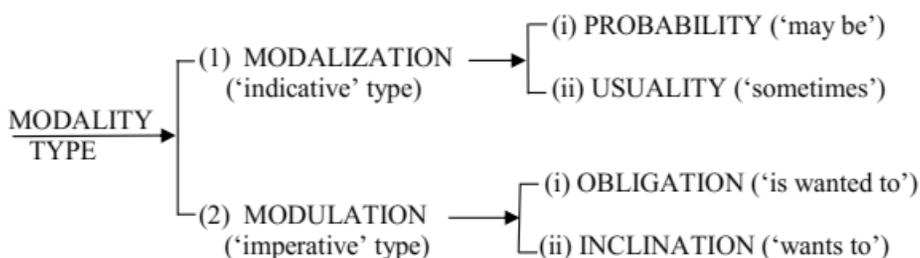


Figure 4. System of modality: basic types (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 618)

3.3.4. *The textual metafunction and its realization through the theme system*

The textual metafunction is the third strand of meaning that we use “to organize our enactments and representation as meaningful text” (Martin & Rose, 2013: 7). It is concerned with creating relevance between parts of what is being said and between the text and the

context of situation. It is expressed through the system of theme. Relevant to the realization of the system of theme are two functional elements: **Theme (Th)** and **Rheme (Rh)**. The Theme serves as the point of departure of the message, which coincides with the initial element(s) of the clause; and the Rheme is the remainder of the message. By analysing the thematic structure of the clauses

in a text we can find out the text's mode of development: how a topic is developed in the text and in what ways different parts of the text are related to each other semantically and logically. Theme may be realised by a nominal group, a prepositional phrase, an adverbial group, or even a clause in the case of predicated theme in English. In terms of structure, Theme may be single or multiple; in terms of meaning Theme may be marked or unmarked; and in terms of function, Theme may be topical, interpersonal or textual. A Theme is single when the thematic element itself is represented by just one constituent - a nominal group, an adverbial group, or a prepositional phrase. In contrast, a Theme is multiple when it has a further internal structure of its own. Here we distinguish between topical Theme, interpersonal Theme and textual Theme. A topical Theme is one that is conflated with an experiential element of the clause: it can be Actor/Agent, Goal/Medium or Circumstance. An interpersonal Theme represents the interpersonal element with which the speaker or writer acts on the listener or reader. An interpersonal Theme may contain (i) a modal Theme which consists of a modal adjunct, the definite element in the case of *yes/no* interrogative clauses, and (iii) a vocative element. And a textual Theme represents the meaning that is relevant to the context: both the preceding and the following text (co-text) and the context of situation. It may have any combination of three textual elements: (i) a continuative element; e.g., *yes, no, well*; (ii) a structural element, e.g., *and, but*; and (iii) a conjunctive element, e.g., *also, although*. An unmarked Theme is one that is usual or typical, whereas a marked Theme is one that is unusual. In the declarative clause, an unmarked Theme is one that conflates with the Subject, while a marked Theme is a constituent functioning as some element of

the rest of the interpersonal clause, including Predicator, Complement, and Adjunct.

Another aspect of the textual meaning has to do with what Halliday (1985, 1994, 2012) and Halliday & Matthiessen (2004) refer to as the **Given** and **New** information. To illustrate these two textual functions, let us consider the clause taken from the poem *Ozymandias* by the British poet Percy Bysshe Shelley *I met a traveller from an antique land* (cited in Hayakawa, 1959: 157). From the point of view of traditional grammar, this clause has a standard word-order of Subject (*I*) + Verb (*met*) + Object (*a traveller from an antique land*) (SVO). However, there are numerous other ways in which the semantic content of the clause can be realised. For example:

A traveller from an antique land was met by me.

It was me who met a traveller from an antique land.

It was a traveller from an antique land that I met.

Who I met was a traveller from an antique land.

Which of these options is actually selected by the writer/speaker will depend on the context in which the utterance occurs and the status of information within the discourse. One important consideration is whether the information has already been introduced into the discourse or is assumed to be known to the reader/listener. Such information is referred to as **Given** information (**G**). In contrast with information which is given, there is what Halliday calls **New** information (**N**) — information which is introduced for the first time. It is important to bear in mind, when considering the issue of given and new information in discourse, that the speaker/writer who decides what information should be considered given or new. Halliday (1985, 1994, 2012) and Halliday & Matthiessen

(2004) suggest that characteristically the speaker/writer will order given information before new information. They maintain that this should be considered a rule of thumb. Thus, in the clause *I met a traveller from an antique land*, the assumed or given knowledge is that “I met someone” and the new information is that “it was the traveller from an antique land that was met”.

Halliday (1985, 1994, 2012) and Halliday & Matthiessen (2004) further suggest that there is a close semantic relationship between thematic structure and information structure. All things being equal, a speaker will choose the Theme from within what is Given and locate the New somewhere within the Rheme. This way of patterning the textual clause is referred to as the unmarked (usual) case. Thus, in the clause *I met a traveller from an antique land*, *I* functions as Theme/Given and *met a traveller from an antique land* as Rheme/New, represented as follows:

<i>I</i>	<i>met a traveller from an antique land</i>
Theme	Rheme
Given → New	

There are cases, however, in which Theme/Given and Rheme/New are not conflated. This way of patterning is referred to as marked case, exemplified as follows:

<i>those</i>	<i>two</i>	<i>splendid</i>	<i>old</i>	<i>electric</i>	<i>trains</i>	<i>with pantographs</i>
Deictic	Numerative	Epithet 2	Epithet 1	Classifier	Head/Thing	Qualifier

Verbal group is the constituent serving as Process in the transitivity structure and Predicator in the mood structure. In terms of experiential structure, it has lexical (main) verbs having the function of Event and grammatical verbs, including modal verbs such as *can, may, must*, having the function of

<i>A traveller from an antique land,</i>	<i>I met</i>
Theme	Rheme
New → Given	

(For more details of the concepts Theme, Rheme, Given and New, see Halliday, 1994, Chapter 3; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, Chapter 3; Fries, 1981; and Hoang, 2007).

3.3.5. Groups and phrases

Below the clause, there are groups and phrases having different functions in the experiential, interpersonal and textual clause. For the purpose of this review, however, two groups and one phrase are in focus: nominal group, verbal group and prepositional phrase. Nominal group is a group of nominal words which serves as participant roles (Actor, Goal, Behaver, Range, Senser, Phenomenon, etc.), in the experiential clause and Subject or Complement in the interpersonal clause. Experientially, a nominal group is organized by one or more of the functional elements such as Deictic, Numerative, Epithet and Classifier which precede the head noun serving as Head/Thing and Qualifier(s) which follow(s) the Head/Thing. Unlike the functional elements that precede the Head/Thing, which are words or word complexes, the Qualifier is either a phrase or a clause. Halliday (1994: 180) provides a good example of the English nominal group which can be reproduced below for illustration:

Finite/Auxiliary (in English) and Auxiliary (in Vietnamese). Below is an example of a verbal group in Vietnamese:

<i>có thể</i>	<i>sẽ</i>	<i>hát</i>
may be	shall/will	sing
(modal) Auxiliary 1	(modal) Auxiliary 2	Event

Prepositional phrase consists of a preposition plus a nominal group, such as *into the air* in *I shot an arrow into the air* (from “I Shot an Arrow into the Air” by Longfellow). A prepositional phrase can be treated as a mini-clause. The reason is that unlike group, the structure of a prepositional phrase is like the transitivity structure of the clause in which the preposition functions as Minorprocess and the nominal group as Minirange. Thus in *into the air*, *into* functions as Minorprocess and *the air* as Minirange (see Matthiessen et al, 2010).

4. Research design and methodology

4.1. Data collection

The source poem “Bánh trôi nước” by Hồ Xuân Hương and the three English versions of translation: “The Floating Cake” translated by John Balaban, “The Cake That Drifts in Water” translated by Huỳnh Sanh Thông, and “Floating Sweet Dumpling” translated by Marylin Chin were collected from <http://www.chopsticksalley.com/single-post/2016/10/03/A-Tale-of-Three-Translations-in-Poetry>. The source poem was then double-checked and re-edited to ensure its originality.

4.2. Data analysis

The analysis of the source poem and the three translated versions will follow the

following steps:

- i. the source poem is analyzed in terms of field, tenor, and mode to relate the elements of context to the components of meaning in the text,
- ii. the source poem and the three translated versions are analyzed for baseline information,
- iii. the source poem and the three translated versions are analyzed for transitivity, mood and theme to uncover their experiential, logical, interpersonal and textual meanings,
- iv. the findings obtained from the analysis are discussed and compared to establish the similarities and differences between the three translated versions and the source poem, and between the translated versions.

4.2.1. Contextual analysis of “Bánh trôi nước”

The context of situation of a written text tends to be complex and that of “Bánh trôi nước” is about as complex as it is possible for it to be. Based on Halliday & Hasans’ (1985) conceptual framework, the context of situation in which the source poem functions can be briefly described as follows:

Field:	A lyric (poem) describing a rice flour cake that the Vietnamese serve in thickened coconut milk or syrup. Literally, it is about food; but figuratively, the cake becomes a metaphor signifying the hard and vagabond plight of a Vietnamese feudal woman.
Tenor:	Poetess to general readers, readers unseen, poetess addresses herself to readers intimately and assigns their role as senior/older, and adopts her role as junior/younger (<i>em</i>). Poetess as describer of the cake encoded in declarative clauses where the sense is that is how I (<i>em</i>) in the name of the cake am, and despite my hard and vagabond life, I am resolute to be a faithful/loyal woman.
Mode:	Written to be recited or read; text as “self-sufficient” as only form of social action by which situation is defined.

4.2.2. Baseline data analysis

To get baseline information for further analysis and discussion, the source poem and the three translated versions are counted for the number of words; then they are analyzed for the number of clause complexes, the number of clauses (clause simplexes), and the number of embedded clauses. Due to the fact that there are no softwares for doing these things in Vietnamese, but fortunately, the source poem and the three versions of translation are all short, the counting and the analysis are done manually. Following Halliday (1985, 1994), Halliday & Matthiessen (2004), and Hoang (2005, 2006), I shall use the following notational conventions in my analysis:

- Three vertical strokes ||| to indicate the boundary of the clause complex
- Two vertical strokes || to indicate the boundary of the clause (clause simplex)
- Double square brackets [[]] to indicate the boundary of the embedded clause
- Roman numerals I, II,... to indicate the number of clause complex
- Arabic numerals 1, 2,... to indicate the number of clause (simplex)

- The Greek letter α to indicate the paratactic (main) clause in relation to the hypotactic (subordinate) clause in a clause complex
- The Greek letter β to indicate the hypotactic (subordinate) clause in relation to the paratactic clause in a clause complex
- The sign = to indicate the expansion: elaboration relation between clauses in a clause complex
- The sign + to indicate the expansion: extension relation between clauses in a clause complex
- The sign x to indicate the expansion: enhancement relationship between clauses in a clause complex.
- The sign ^ to indicate the sequence of elements within a clause.

To avoid confusion that may cause, I shall use “Bánh trôi nước”, the source poem, the original poem or the source text interchangeably; but I shall use the Balaban version to refer to the version translated by John Balaban, the Huynh version to the version translated by Huỳnh Sanh Thông, and the Chin version to the version translated by Marilyn Chin. The data baseline analysis of the four texts is provided in Figure 5 below.

Bánh trôi nước	
(I) ¹ α Thân em vừa trắng lại vừa tròn ² + β 1 Bày nôi ³ + β 2 ba chìm với nước non	
(II) ⁴ x1 Rắn nát mặc dầu tay kẻ nặn ⁵ 2 Mà em vẫn giữ tấm lòng son (25 words)	
The Balaban version (The Floating Cake)	
(I) ¹ α 1 My body is white; ² + α 2 my fate, softly rounded, ³ + β 1 Rising ⁴ + β 2 and sinking like mountains in streams.	
(II) ⁵ x1 Whatever way hands may shape me, ⁶ 2 At center my heart is red and true. (32 words)	

The Huynh version (The Cake That Drifts In Water)	
	¹ My body is both white and round
(I)	² 1 In water I now swim, ³ +2 now sink.
(II)	⁴ x1 The hand +[[that kneads me]] may be rough—
	⁵ 2 I still shall keep my true-red heart (35 words)
The Chin version (Floating Sweet Dumpling)	
	¹ My body is powdery white and round
(I)	² 1 I sink ³ and +2 bob like a mountain in a pond
(II)	⁴ x1 The hand +[[that kneads me]] is hard and rough
	⁵ 2 You can't destroy my true red heart (36 words)

Figure 5. Baseline data analysis

As can be seen in Figure 5, both the source poem and the three translated versions are organized in five lines including the title. According to our analysis, “Bánh trôi nước” has the total number of 25 words, five clauses structured in 2 clause complexes of which complex (I) consists of three clauses: ||¹ *Thân em vừa trắng lại vừa tròn* ||² *Bảy nổi* ||³ *ba chìm với nước non* |||, and complex (II) consists of two clauses: ||⁴ *Rắn nát mặc dầu tay kẻ nặn* ||⁵ *Mà em vẫn giữ tấm lòng son* |||, and no embedded clause. The Balaban version has the total number of 32 words, six clauses structured in two clause complexes of which complex (I) consists of four clauses: ||¹ *My body is white*; ||² *my fate, softly rounded*, ||³ *Rising* ||⁴ *and sinking like mountains in streams* |||, and complex (II) consists of two clauses: ||⁵ *Whatever way hands may shape me*, ||⁶ *At center my heart is red and true*. |||, and no embedded clause. The Huynh version has the total number of 35 words, five clauses structured in one independent clause: ||¹ *My body is both white and round* ||, and two clause complexes of which complex (I) consists of two clauses: ||² *In water I now swim*, ||³ *now sink*. |||, and complex (II) consists of two clauses: ||⁴ *The hand [[that kneads me]] may be rough—* ||⁵ *I still shall keep my true-red heart* |||, and one

embedded clause: [[*that kneads me*]] in clause 4. And the Chin version has the total number of 36 words, five clauses structured in one independent clause: ||¹ *My body is powdery white and round* ||, two clause complexes of which complex (I) consists of two clauses: ||² *I sink* ||³ *and bob like a mountain in a pond* |||, and complex (II) consists of two clauses: (II) ||⁴ *The hand [[that kneads me]] may be hard and rough* ||⁵ *You can't destroy my true-red heart* |||, and one embedded clause: [[*that kneads me*]] in clause 4.¹

The baseline information of “Bánh trôi nước” and the three translated versions can be summarized in Table 1 below.

¹ There may be some other ways of analysing the source text into clauses and clause complexes. One other way, based on traditional grammar, may treat the first line *Thân em vừa trắng lại vừa tròn* as a compound sentence which consists of two clauses sharing the same subject *Thân em* as in *Thân em vừa trắng* and [*Thân em*] *lại vừa tròn*; the second line *Bảy nổi ba chìm với nước non* as a simple sentence having implicit subject [*Em/Thân em*] *Bảy nổi ba chìm với nước non*; and the third and the fourth lines *Rắn nát mặc dầu tay kẻ nặn* and *Mà em vẫn giữ tấm lòng son* as a complex sentence of which *Rắn nát mặc dầu tay kẻ nặn* is the subordinate clause and *Mà em vẫn giữ tấm lòng son* is the main clause.

Table 1. “Bánh trôi nước” and the three versions of translation: baseline information

	Bánh trôi nước	The Balaban version	The Huynh version	The Chin version
Number of words	25	32	33	36
Number of clause complexes	2	2	2	2
Number of clause simplexes	5	6	5	5
Number of embedded clauses	0	0	1	1

4.2.3. *Transitivity, mood, and theme analysis*

In transitivity, the texts are analyzed for:

- (i) types of process: material, behavioural, mental, verbal, relational, and existential
- (ii) types of participants in the process
- (iii) types of incumbent circumstances
- (iv) embedded clauses

In mood, the texts are analyzed for:

- (i) types of clause mood: declarative, imperative, and interrogative
- (ii) clause mood components: Subject and its semantic features, Finite (in English),

Predicator, Complement, and Adjunct

- (ii) types of modality: modalization (probability and usuality) and modulation (obligation and inclination)

In theme, the texts are analyzed for:

- (i) types of clause theme: topical/experiential theme, interpersonal theme, textual theme, single theme, multiple theme, marked theme, and unmarked theme
- (ii) themeless clause
- (iii) thematic progression

Details of the analysis are provided in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Transitivity, mood and theme analysis of “Bánh trôi nước” and the three translated versions

Bánh trôi nước

(I)	¹ <i>Thân em</i>		<i>vừa trắng lại vừa tròn</i>
Tran	Carrier	Process: relational (implicit)	Attribute
Mood D*	Subject (human; female; junior; intimate)		Complement
Theme	Theme (single; topical; unmarked)		

	² <i>Bảy</i>	<i>nổi</i>
Tran	Circumstance: extent	Process: material
Mood D	Adjunct	Predicator
Theme	Rheme	

	³ <i>ba</i>	<i>chìm</i>	<i>với nước non</i>
Tran	Circumstance: extent	Process: material	Circumstance: accompaniment
Mood D	Adjunct	Predicator	Adjunct
Theme	Rheme		

(II)	⁴ <i>Rắn nát</i>	<i>mặc dầu</i>	<i>tay kẻ nặn</i>
Tran	Attribute		Carrier
Mood D	Complement	Adjunct	Subject (human)
Theme	Theme (single; topical; marked)	Rheme	

	⁵ <i>Mà</i>	<i>em</i>	<i>vẫn</i>	<i>giữ</i>	<i>tắm lòng son</i>
Tran		Behaver		Process: behavioural	Range
Mood D	Adjunct	Subject (human; female; junior; intimate)	Adjunct	Predicator	Complement
Theme	Theme (multiple; topical; unmarked)		Rheme		

The Balaban version (The Floating Cake)

(I)	¹ <i>My body</i>	<i>is</i>	<i>white;</i>
Tran	Carrier	Process: relational	Attribute
Mood D	Subject (human)	Finite	Predicator Complement
Theme	Theme (single; topical; unmarked)	Rheme	

	² <i>my fate,</i>		<i>softly rounded</i>
Tran	Carrier	(Process: relational)	Attribute
Mood D	Subject (human)		Complement
Theme	Theme (single; topical; unmarked)	Rheme	

	³ <i>Rising</i>
Tran	Proc: material
Mood D	Predicator
Theme	Rheme

	⁴ <i>and</i>	<i>sinking</i>	<i>like mountains</i>	<i>in streams</i>
Tran		Process: material	Circumstance: manner	Circumstance: location
Mood D		Predicator	Adjunct	Adjunct
Theme	Rheme			

(II)	⁵ <i>Whatever way</i>	<i>hands</i>	<i>may</i>	<i>shape</i>	<i>me</i>
Tran	Circumstance: manner	Actor	Process: material		Goal
Mood	Adjunct	Subject (non-human)	Finite (modal: probability)	Predicator	Complement
Theme	Theme (single; topical; marked)	Rheme			

	⁶ <i>At center</i>	<i>my heart</i>	<i>is</i>	<i>red and true</i>	
Tran	Circumstance: location	Carrier	Process: relational		Attribute
Mood D	Adjunct	Subject (human)	Finite	Predicator	Complement
Theme	Theme (single; topical; marked)	Rheme			

The Huynh version (The Cake That Drifts In Water)

	¹ <i>My body</i>	<i>is</i>	<i>both white and round</i>		
Tran	Carrier	Process: relational		Attribute	
Mood D	Subject (human)	Finite + Predicator		Complement	
Theme	Theme (single; topical; unmarked)	Rheme			

(I)	² <i>In water</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>now</i>	<i>swim,</i>	
Tran	Circumstance: location	Actor	Circumstance: time	Process: material	
Mood D	Adjunct	Subject (human)	Adjunct	Finite	Predicator
Theme	Theme (single; topical; marked)	Rheme			

	³ <i>now</i>	<i>sink</i>
Tran	Circumstance: time	Process: material
Mood D	Adjunct	Predicator
Theme	Rheme	

(II)	⁴ <i>The hand</i> [[<i>that kneads me</i>]]	<i>may be</i>	<i>rough—</i>		
Tran	Carrier	Process: relational		Attribute	
Mood D	Subject (non-human)	Finite (modal: probability)	Predicator	Complement	
Theme	Theme (single; topical; unmarked)	Rheme			

	⁵ <i>I</i>	<i>still</i>	<i>shall keep</i>	<i>my true-red heart</i>	
Tran	Behaver	Circumstance	Process: behavioural		Range
Mood	Subject (human)	Adjunct	Finite (modal: determination)	Predicator	Complement
Theme	Theme (single; topical unmarked)	Rheme			

The Chin version (Floating Sweet Dumpling)

	¹ <i>My body</i>	<i>is</i>	<i>powdery white and round</i>
Tran	Carrier	Process: relational	
Mood D	Subject (human)	Finite	Predicator
Theme	Theme (single; topical; unmarked)	Rheme	

(I)	² <i>I</i>	<i>sink</i>
Tran	Actor	Process: material
Mood D	Subject (human)	Finite
Theme	Theme (single; topical; unmarked)	Rheme

	³ <i>and bob</i>	<i>like a mountain</i>	<i>in a pond</i>
Tran		Process: material	Circumstance: location
Mood D		Predicator	Adjunct
Theme	Rheme		

(II)	⁴ <i>The hand</i> [[<i>that kneads me</i>]]	<i>is</i>	<i>hard and rough</i>
Tran	Carrier	Process: relational	
Mood D	Subject (non-human)	Finite	Predicator
Theme	Theme (single; topical; unmarked)	Rheme	

	⁵ <i>You</i>	<i>can't destroy</i>	<i>my true red heart</i>
Tran	Actor	Process: material	
Mood	Subject (human)	Finite (modal: inability)	Predicator
Theme	Theme (single; topical; unmarked)	Rheme	

D* = Declarative

4.3. Discussion and comparison

4.3.1. Transitivity patterns of “Bánh trôi nước” and the three translated versions

The transitivity analysis in Table 1 shows that of the five processes (clauses) in “Bánh trôi nước”, two are relational (clauses 1, 4), two are material (clauses 2, 3), one is behavioural (clause 5), and no embedded clause; of the six clauses in the Balaban

version, three are relational (clauses 1, 2, 6), three are material (clauses 3, 4, 5), and no clause is embedded; of the five clauses in the Huynh version, two are relational (clauses 1, 4), two are material (clauses 2, 3), one is behavioural (clause 5), and one is embedded: *that kneads me* in clause 4: *The hand* [[*that kneads me*]] *may be rough*; and of the five clauses in the Chin version, two are relational (clauses 1, 2), three are material (clauses 2, 3,

5), and one clause is embedded: *that kneads me* in clause 4: *The hand* [[*that kneads me*]] *is hard and rough*.

A closer observation shows that quantitatively the Huynh version is more similar to the source poem than the other two translated versions in that both have five processes, of which two are relational, two are material, and one is behavioural. What makes it slightly differ from the source poem is that in clause 4, there is an embedded clause (relative clause in traditional grammar) [*that kneads me*] expanding the meaning of the head nominal group *The hand*. Ranked second in similarity to the source poem is the Chin version: it is also organized into five processes of which two are relational. What makes it differ from the source poem, however, is that it has three material processes and, like the Huynh version, in clause 4, there is an embedded clause [*that kneads me*] expanding the meaning of the head nominal group *The hand*. The biggest difference from the source poem is perhaps the Balaban version. Here instead of representing the poem in five clauses as the source poem, it is organized into six; and unlike the source poem, it has three relational processes and three material processes.

The quantitative results have revealed enough similarities and differences between the source poem and the translated versions, and between the translated versions themselves. But they still do not tell us much about similarities and differences between them at a more delicate level. To do this, we need one more step: taking a qualitative look at the transitivity pattern and the lexical choice of the texts — what Halliday (1961, cited in Hasan, 1987: 184) refers to as “most delicate grammar”. We will go through the source text and the translated versions line by line.

The first line. Our transitivity analysis in Table 1 shows that the first line in the source poem *Thân em vừa trắng lại vừa tròn* is a relational process having the transitivity pattern of Carrier ^ Process: relational ^ Attribute, in which the Carrier is realized by a nominal group consisting of the noun *Thân* (body) functioning as Head/Thing and the noun *em* (*I* [junior/younger]) functioning as Qualifier (post modifier in traditional grammar), the relational Process is implicit, and the Attribute is realized by two adjectives in parallel paratactic relation (*vừa trắng* (both white) and (*lại vừa tròn* (and round).

A similar transitivity pattern and lexical choices can be found in the first line in the Huynh version *My body is both white and round*. It is also a relational process having the pattern of Carrier ^ Process: relational ^ Attribute, in which the Carrier is realized by a nominal group consisting of the possessive adjective *My* functioning as Deictic and the noun *body* functioning as Head/Thing, the relational Process is realized by the copula verb *is*, and the Attribute is realized by two adjectives in parallel paratactic relation (*both white* and (*and round*.

Similar to the source poem, the first line in the Chin version *My body is powdery white and round* is also a relational clause having the transitivity pattern of Carrier ^ Process ^ Attribute, in which the Carrier is realized by the a nominal group consisting of the possessive adjective *My* functioning as Deictic and the noun *body* functioning as Head/Thing, the relational Process is realized by the copula verb *is*, and the Attribute is realized by three adjectives *powdery*, *white*, and *round*. What makes it differ from the source clause lies in the representation of the Attribute where we find one more quality whose correspondence is not found in the source clause is added — *powdery* in *powdery white and round*.

The biggest difference from the source line is perhaps the Balaban version. Here instead of representing the The Floating Cake and its two qualities in one relational clause as in the source poem, the Balaban version constructs the first line in the poem into two clauses ||¹ *My body is white*; ||² *my fate, softly rounded* |||. Clause 1 is a relational process having the pattern of Carrier ^ Process: relational ^ Attribute, in which the Carrier is realized by a nominal group consisting of the personal possessive adjective *My* functioning as Deictic and the noun *body* functioning as Head/Thing, the relational Process is realized by the copula verb *is*, and the Attribute is realized by the adjective *white*. The second clause is also a relational process which has the pattern of Carrier ^ Process: relational ^ Attribute, in which *my fate* whose correspondence is not found in the source poem is realized by a nominal group consisting of the personal possessive adjective *my* functioning as Deictic and the noun *fate* functioning as Head/Thing, the relational Process is absent, and the Attribute is realized by a participial phrase consisting of the adverb *softly* and the participial adjective *rounded*. Note that although both *round* and *softly rounded* can function as Attribute in a relational clause, they differ in their delicate experiential meaning: while *round*, which can correspond to *tròn* in the source clause, is an adjective expressing the inherent state/quality of a thing, *rounded* is a passive verb form representing the affected state of the Carrier. So judging from these differences in both transitivity patterning and lexical choice, the equivalence of the clause complex in the Balaban version *My body is white; my fate, softly rounded* to the clause of the source poem *Thân em vừa trắng lại vừa tròn* can be questioned.

The second line. Our analysis in Table 1 shows that the second line in the source text consists of two material clauses: ||² *Bảy nổi* || and ||³ *ba chìm với nước non* ||. The first clause (clause 2) has the transitivity pattern of Circumstance: extent ^ Process: material, in which the Circumstance is realized by the Numerative *Bảy* and the material Process is realized by the action verb *nổi*; and the second clause (clause 3) has the transitivity pattern of Circumstance: extent ^ Process: Material ^ Circumstance: accompaniment, in which the Circumstance, like clause 2, is realized by the Numerative *ba*, the material Process is realized by the action verb *chìm*, and the Circumstance by a prepositional phrase consisting of the preposition *với* and the compound noun *nước non*.²

Like the source text, the second line in the Balaban version also consists of two material clauses ||² *Rising* ||³ *and sinking like mountains in streams* ||. The first clause (clause 2) has the transitivity pattern of Process: material which is realized by the action verb *Rising*; and the second clause (clause 3) has the transitivity pattern of Process: material ^ Circumstance:

² It should be noted that *bảy nổi ba chìm* is a shortened variant of the expression *ba chìm bảy nổi chín lênh đênh*. Literally, this expression construes three states of affairs: *ba chìm* (three times submerge), *bảy nổi* (seven times emerge) and *chín lênh đênh* (nine times drift). Figuratively, however, they have been metaphorized to refer to “the plight of a drifting, hard, unlucky and now-up-and-now-down life” (Hoang *et al.*, 2002: 30). Seen from this point of view, *Bảy nổi ba chìm với nước non* can be treated as a material clause which has the transitivity pattern of Process: material (*Bảy nổi ba chìm*) ^ Circumstance: accompaniment (*với nước non*). However, the figurative meaning of *bảy nổi ba chìm* can still be perceived as consisting of two material processes as analysed in Table 1: *Bảy nổi* and *ba chìm với nước non*.

manner, in which the process is realized by the action verb *sinking* and the Circumstance by the a prepositional phrase consisting of the preposition *like*, the plural noun *mountains* and the prepositional phrase functioning as Qualifier consisting of the preposition *in* and the plural noun *streams*. At the more delicate level (group and lexical level), we can see discrepancies in this line in the Balaban version as compared to that of the source text. Here in clause 2, we only find the process *Rising* which corresponds to *nổi* in the source clause, while the element that corresponds to the Circumstance *Bảy* (seven times) in the source clause is not found. The same thing can be observed in clause 4. Here we only find the process *sinking* which corresponds to *chìm* in the source clause, while the Circumstance *ba* (three times) in the source clause is not found either. What makes clause 3 in the Balaban version differ more markedly from the source poem lies in both the function and the delicate meaning of *like mountains in streams*. The analysis in Table 1 shows that *like mountains in streams* functions as Circumstance of manner: comparison, while *với nước non* in the source poem functions as Circumstance of accompaniment. Seen from the point of view of our analysis, whether *like mountains in streams* is equivalent to *với nước non* in the source text is open to question.

In the Huynh version, the second line is also constructed in two material clauses $\| \|^2$ *In water I now swim* $\| \|^3$ *now sink* $\| \|^3$. What makes it differ from the source line is that instead of constructing the two clauses in the same pattern of Circumstance: extent (*Bảy*) ^ Process: material (*nổi*) and Circumstance: extent (*ba*) ^ Process: material (*chìm*) ^ Circumstance: manner (*với nước non*), the first clause (clause 2) of the Balaban version has the transitivity pattern of Circumstance:

location (*In water*) ^ Actor (*I*) ^ Circumstance: time (*now*) ^ Process: material (*swim*), and the second clause (clause 3), Circumstance: time (*now*) ^ Process: material (*sink*). At the more delicate level, except for the action verb *sink* which may correspond to *chìm* in the source line, all the remaining items *In water*, *I*, *now*, *swim*, and *now* do not have correspondences in the source line.

The second line in the Chin version is also constructed in two material clauses $\| \|^2$ *I sink* $\| \|^3$ *and bob like a mountain in a pond* $\| \|^3$. But unlike the source poem and the other two translated versions, the first clause (clause 2) has the transitivity pattern of Actor (*I*) ^ Process: material (*sink*), and the second clause (clause 3) has the pattern of Process: material (*bob*) ^ Circumstance of manner (*like a mountain in a pond*). A closer examination of the line reveals that except for the two action verbs *sink* and *bob*, which may correspond to *chìm* and *nổi* respectively in the source line, other items such as *I*, *like a mountain in a pond* do not seem to have correspondences in the source line, and in particular items that render the meaning of *Bảy* (seven times), *ba* (three times), *với nước non* (with water) in the source line are not found.

The third line. The third line in the source poem *Rắn nát mặc dầu tay kẻ nặn* is a relational clause which has the transitivity pattern of Attribute (*Rắn nát*) ^ (Process: relational) ^ Carrier (*tay kẻ nặn*), in which the Attribute is realized by an adjectival group of two adjectives in implicit paratactic relation *Rắn nát* (hard and/or soft), the relational Process is implicit in the clause, and the Carrier is realized by a nominal group consisting of the noun *tay* (hand) functioning as Head/Thing and the noun *kẻ nặn* (maker/shaper) functioning as Qualifier.

The third line in the Balaban version *Whatever way hands may shape me* is also a clause, but quite different from the source clause, it is a material process which has the transitivity pattern of Circumstance: manner ^ Actor ^ Process: material ^ Goal, in which the Circumstance of manner is realized by a nominal group consisting of the pronoun *whatever* functioning as Deictic and the noun *way* functioning as Head/Thing, the Actor is realized by the plural noun *hands*, the material Process is realized by a verbal group consisting of the modal auxiliary verb *may* and the main action verb *shape*, and the Goal is realized by the first personal pronoun used in the objective case *me*. At the lexical level, only two items whose correspondence to the source clause can be established: *hands* may correspond to *tay* (kẻ nặn), and *shape* to *nặn*. The remaining items *Whatever way*, *may*, and *me* have no correspondences in the source clause.

Similar to the source clause, the third line in the Huynh version *The hand that kneads me may be rough* is a relational clause. What makes it differ from the source clause, however, is that unlike the clause of the source text which has the pattern of Attribute ^ (Process: relational) ^ Carrier, it is represented in the order of Carrier (*The hand that kneads me*) ^ Process: relational (*maybe*) ^ Attribute (*rough*), in which the Carrier is realized by a nominal group consisting of the definite article *The* functioning as Deictic, the singular noun *hand* functioning as Head/Thing and the embedded relative clause *that kneads me* (elaborating the meaning of *hand*) functioning as Qualifier, the relational Process is realized by a verbal group consisting of the modal auxiliary verb *may* and the copula verb *be*, and the Attribute is realized by the adjective *rough*. A closer examination of the lexical item realizing the Attribute reveals that

the choice of *rough* has no correspondence either to *rắn* or *nát* in the source clause.

Similar to the source clause, the third line in the Chin version *The hand that kneads me is hard and rough* is also a relational clause. What makes it differ from the clause of the source poem is that, like the Huynh version, it has the pattern of Carrier (*The hand that kneads me*) ^ Process: relational (*is*) ^ Attribute (*hard and rough*), in which the Carrier is realized by a nominal group consisting of the definite article *The* functioning as Deictic, the singular noun *hand* functioning as Head/Thing and the embedded relative clause *that kneads me* (elaborating the meaning of *hand*) functioning as Qualifier, the relational Process is realized by a copula verb *is*, and the Attribute is realized by an adjectival group of two adjectives in paratactic relation *hard and rough*. A closer examination of the lexical items realizing the Attribute reveals that *hard* may correspond to *rắn* while *rough* does not correspond to *nát* in the source clause.

The fourth line. The fourth line in the source poem *Mà em vẫn giữ tấm lòng son* is a behavioural clause which has the transitivity pattern of Behaver (*em*) ^ Circumstance (*vẫn*) ^ Process: behavioural (*giữ*) ^ Range (*tấm lòng son*), in which the Behaver is realized by the noun *em*, the Circumstance by the adverb *vẫn*, the behavioural Process by the verb *giữ*, and the Range by a nominal group comprising the Head/Thing *tấm lòng* and the Epithet *son*.

The fourth line in the Balaban version *At center my heart is red and true* is also a clause, but unlike the source clause, it is a relational clause which has the pattern of Circumstance: location (*At center*) ^ Carrier (*my heart*) ^ Process: relational (*is*) ^ Attribute (*red and true*), in which the Circumstance of location is realized by a prepositional phrase consisting of the preposition *At* and the noun *center*,

the Carrier is realized by a nominal group consisting of the personal possessive adjective *my* functioning as Deictic and the noun *heart* functioning as Head/Thing, the relational Process is realized by the copula verb *is*, and the Attribute is realized by an adjectival group consisting of two Epithets in paratactic relation *red and true*. A closer examination reveals that because the content in this line is represented in a process different from that in the source line, only some lexical items whose correspondence to those in the source line can be established. Here we can find *heart* may correspond to *tâm lòng*, and *true* to *son*. Other items such as *At center*, *is*, and *red* do not have correspondences in the source clause.

Similar to the source poem, the fourth line in the Huynh version *I still shall keep my true-red heart* is a behavioural clause which has the transitivity pattern of Behavior (*I*) ^ Circumstance (*still*) ^ Process: behavioural (*keep*) ^ Range (*my true-red heart*), in which the Behavior is realized by the first personal pronoun *I*, the Circumstance is realized by the adverb *still*, the behavioural Process is realized by a verbal group consisting of the modal auxiliary verb *shall* and the main behavioural verb *keep*, and the Range is realized by a nominal group consisting of the noun *heart* functioning as Head/Thing, the compound adjective *true-red* functioning as Epithet, and the personal possessive adjective *my* functioning as Deictic. A closer observation reveals that several lexical items

whose correspondence to those in the source line can be established. Here we find *I* may correspond to *em*, *still* to *vẫn*, *keep* to *giữ*, and *heart* to *tâm lòng*. Other items such as *my* and *true-red* do not seem to have correspondences in the source line.

Unlike the source poem and the Huynh version, the fourth line in the Chin version *You can't destroy my true red heart* is a material clause which has the transitivity pattern of Actor (*You*) ^ Process: material (*can't destroy*) ^ Goal (*my true red heart*), in which the Actor is realized by the second personal pronoun *You*, the material Process is realized by a verbal group which consists of the modal auxiliary verb *can't* and the action verb *destroy*, and the Goal is realized by a nominal group consisting of the personal possessive adjective *my* functioning as Deictic, the two adjectives *true red* functioning as Epithets, and the noun *heart* functioning as Head/Thing. A closer examination reveals that because the content in this line is represented in a process different from that in the source line, except for the noun *heart* which may correspond to *tâm lòng*, the other items such as *you*, *can't*, *destroy*, *my*, and *true red* do not have correspondences in the source line.

Table 3 summarizes the main similarities and differences between “Bánh trôi nước” and the three versions of translation in terms of transitivity.

Table 3. Transitivity patterns of “Bánh trôi nước” and the three versions of translation

Process types	Bánh trôi nước	The Balaban version	The Huynh version	The Chin version
Number of clause	5	6	5	5
Material	2	3	2	3
Relational	2	3	2	2
Behavioural	1	0	1	0
Embedded	0	0	1	1

4.3.2. Clause complexing patterns of “Bánh trôi nước” and the three translated versions

As shown in our baseline analysis in Figure 5, Section 3.2.2, the whole source poem consists of two clause complexes. Complex I (lines 1 and 2) consists of three clauses (clauses 1, 2 and 3). The relationship between clauses 2 and 3 and clause 1 is that of hypotactic expansion: extension (clauses 2 and 3 extend the meaning of clause 1); and the relationship between clause 2 and clause 3 is that of paratactic expansion: extension (clause 3 extends the meaning of clause 2). The complexing pattern of complex I can be represented as $\alpha \wedge \beta(\beta_1 \wedge \beta_2)$ actualized in $\| \alpha \wedge \beta(\beta_1 \wedge \beta_2) \|$ actualized in $\| \alpha \wedge \beta(\beta_1 \wedge \beta_2) \|$. Complex II (lines 3 and 4) consists of two clauses (clauses 4 and 5). The relationship between them is that of paratactic expansion: enhancement (clause 4 enhances the meaning of clause 5). The complexing pattern of complex II can be represented as $x_1 \wedge x_2$ actualizing in $\| x_1 \wedge x_2 \|$.

The Balaban version is also constructed into two clause complexes. But unlike the source poem, complex I (lines 1 and 2) consists of 4 clauses which have different layers of complexing and thus having different logico-semantic relationships. Our analysis in Figure 5 shows that two clauses in line 1 form a paratactic clause complex of expansion: extension relationship which has the complexing pattern of $1 \wedge 2$ actualized in $\| 1 \wedge 2 \|$; and two remaining clauses in line 2 form another paratactic clause complex of expansion: extension relationship which has the complexing pattern of $1 \wedge 2$ actualized in $\| 1 \wedge 2 \|$. The paratactic clause complex

in line 1 and the paratactic clause complex in line 2 form a hypotactic clause complex of expansion: extension relationship, yielding the total complexing pattern of $\alpha(\alpha_1 \wedge \alpha_2) \wedge \beta(\beta_1 \wedge \beta_2)$ actualized in $\| \alpha(\alpha_1 \wedge \alpha_2) \wedge \beta(\beta_1 \wedge \beta_2) \|$. And complex II (lines 4 and 5), like the source poem, consists of 2 clauses (clauses 5 and 6) of expansion: enhancement relationship which has the complexing pattern of $x_1 \wedge x_2$ actualized in $\| x_1 \wedge x_2 \|$.

Similar to the source poem and the Balaban version, the Huynh version is also constructed into two clause complexes. Like the source poem, it begins with a clause, but unlike the source poem this clause does not enter into complexing relationship with the other two clauses in line 2. Instead, clauses 2 and 3 (line 2) in the Huynh version form a paratactic clause complex (complex I) of expansion: extension relationship which has the complexing pattern of $1 \wedge 2$ actualized in $\| 1 \wedge 2 \|$. And clause 4 (line 4) and clause 5 (line 5) form another paratactic clause complex (complex II) of expansion: enhancement relationship which has the complexing pattern of $x_1 \wedge x_2$ actualized in $\| x_1 \wedge x_2 \|$.

Like the source poem, the Balaban version, and the Huynh version, the Chin version is also constructed into two clause complexes. Similar to the source poem and the Huynh version, the Chin version begins with a clause. Unlike the source poem, but much like the Huynh version this clause in the Chin version does not enter into complexing relationship with the other two clauses in

line 2. Instead, clauses 2 and 3 (line 2) form a paratactic clause complex (complex I) of expansion: extension relationship which has the complexing pattern of $1 \wedge 2$ actualized in $|||^2 1 I \text{ sink } \wedge |||^3 +2 \text{ and bob like a mountain in a pond } |||$. And clause 4 (line 4) and clause 5 (line 5) form the second paratactic clause complex (complex II) of expansion: enhancement relationship which has the complexing pattern

of $x1 \wedge 2$ actualized in $|||^4 x1 \text{ The hand } [[\text{that kneads me}]] \text{ is hard and rough } \wedge |||^5 2 \text{ You can't destroy my true red heart } |||$.

The main similarities and differences between “Bánh trôi nước” and the three versions of translation in terms of clause complexing can be summarized in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Clause complexing patterns of the source poem and the three translated versions

“Bánh trôi nước”:	Complex I: $\alpha \wedge \beta(\beta1 \wedge \beta2) \wedge$ complex II: $x1 \wedge 2$
The Balaban version:	Complex I: $\alpha(\alpha1 \wedge \alpha2) \wedge \beta(\beta1 \wedge \beta2) \wedge$ complex II: $x1 \wedge 2$
The Huynh version:	Simplex $1 \wedge$ complex I: $1 \wedge 2 \wedge$ complex II: $x1 \wedge 2$
The Chin version:	Simplex $1 \wedge$ complex I: $1 \wedge 2 \wedge$ complex II: $x1 \wedge 2$

4.3.3. Mood patterns of “Bánh trôi nước” and the three translated versions

As with transitivity and clause complexing, in this section we will begin our mood discussion and comparison with the source poem. Our mood analysis in Table 1 shows that all the five clauses of “Bánh trôi nước” are declarative, of which two are Subjectless (clauses 2 and 3) and three have Subject (clauses 1, 4, and 5). Our analysis also indicates that all three Subjects in the poem have the feature of “human”: *Thân em* (clause 1), *tay kẻ nặn* (clause 4), and *em* (clause 5) and that except for the Subject in clause 4, the two others have four additional features of “female”, “non-possessive”, “junior/younger” and “intimate”: *Thân em* (clause 1) and *em* (clause 5). What seems to be a prominent feature of the source poem is that all its five clauses are non-modalized.

In contrast, of the six clauses in the Balaban version, five are declarative (clauses 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6), and one is modalized containing the modal auxiliary verb *may* expressing probability/possibility (clause

5). In terms of Subject, two clauses are Subjectless (clauses 3 and 4) and four have Subject (clauses 1, 2, 5, and 6). Our analysis in Table 1 shows that of the four Subjects in the Balaban version, one has the feature of “non-human”: *hands* (clause 5) and three have the features of “human” and “possessive”: *My body* (clause 1), *my fate* (clause 2), and *my heart* (clause 6). But what makes the human Subjects in the Balaban version differ from those in the source poem is that they do not have the features “female”, “junior/younger” and “intimate”.

Of the five clauses in the Huynh version, three are declarative (clauses 1, 2, and 3); and, different from the source poem and the Balaban version, two clauses are modalized, one containing the modal auxiliary verb *may* expressing probability/possibility (clause 4), and the other the modal auxiliary verb *shall* expressing determination (clause 5). Unlike the source poem, in the Huynh version four clauses have Subject of which three have the features of “human”: *My body* (clause 1), *I* (clause 2) and *I* (clause 5) and one has the feature of “non-human”: *The hand that kneads*

me (clause 4). What makes the Subjects in the Huynh version differ from those in the source poem is that like the Balaban version, they only have the feature of “human”, while the three other features “female”, “junior/younger” and “intimate” are not present.

The Chin version provides a somewhat different interpersonal picture as compared with the source poem. Of the five clauses in this translated version, four are declarative (clauses 1, 2, 3 and 4), and one is modalized containing the modal auxiliary in negative form *can't* expressing inability (clause 5). Like the Huynh version, of the five clauses, one is Subjectless and four have Subject. Of the four Subjects, three have the features of “human”: *My body* (clause 1), *I* (clause 2) and *You* (clause 5), and one has the feature of “non-human”: *The hand that kneads me* (clause 4). Unlike the source poem, but like the Balaban version and the Huynh version, the human Subjects in the Chin version only have the feature “human”, the three other features found in the source poem: “female”, “junior/younger” and “intimate” are not present. Furthermore, unlike the source

poem, the Subject in the Chin version varies from clause to clause. Except for clauses 2 and 3 which share the same Subject *I*, each of the three remaining clauses has a different Subject: *My body* (clause 1), *The hand* (clause 4), and *You* (clause 5). A comparison of these Subjects with those in the source poem reveals that the Subject *My body* [referring to The Floating Sweet Dumpling] in clause 1 may to some extent correspond to *Thân em* [referring to Bánh trôi nước] in clause 1 of the source poem; the Subject *The hand that kneads me* in clause 4 may to some extent correspond to *tay kẻ nặn* in clause 4 of the source poem. But the shared Subject *I* in clauses 2 and 3 has no correspondences to clauses 2 and 3 which are Subjectless in the source poem; and the Subject *You* [referring to the *The hand that kneads me*] in clause 5 has quite a different meaning from the Subject *em* [referring to Bánh trôi nước] in the corresponding clause of the source poem.

The main similarities and differences between “Bánh trôi nước” and the three versions of translation in terms of mood can be summarized in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Mood features of “Bánh trôi nước” and the three versions of translation

Mood category	Bánh trôi nước	The Balaban version	The Huynh version	The Chin version
Number of clause	5	6	5	5
Declarative	5	3	3	4
Subject	3	4	4	4
Modality	0	0	2	1

4.3.4. Thematic patterns of “Bánh trôi nước” and the three translated versions

Our theme analysis in Table 1 shows that of the five clauses of “Bánh trôi nước”, two have single Theme: *Thân em* (clause 1) and

Rắn nát (clause 4), one has multiple Theme: *Mà em* (clause 5), three have topical Theme: *Thân em* (clause 1), *Rắn nát* (clause 4), (*Mà em* (clause 5), none has interpersonal Theme, one has textual Theme *Mà* (clause 5), two have unmarked Theme: *Thân em* (clause 1) and

(*Mà em* (clause 5), one has marked Theme: *Rắn nát* (clause 4), and two are Themeless (clauses 2 and 3). A more detailed analysis of the thematic patterns of the source poem shows that in clause 1, the poetess Hồ Xuân Hương uses *Thân em* [referring back to *Bánh trôi nước* in the title] which is single, topical and unmarked Theme/Given as the point of departure of the message and the remaining segment *vừa trắng lại vừa tròn* as Rheme/New. Neither the Theme nor the Rheme in this clause is picked up in clauses 2 and 3. In these clauses there are no Themes, and both *Bảy nổi* and *ba chìm với nước non* function as Rheme/New. Clause 4 starts with a new Theme which is not connected with any of the Theme or Rhemes in the previous clauses. Here the order of the clause is reversed, and the Complement *Rắn nát* becomes single, topical but marked Theme/Given [Theme/Complement] and the remaining segment *mặc dầu tay kẻ nặn* is Rheme/New. The Theme in clause 1, however, is picked up as topical Theme in clause 5. Here, *Mà em* is multiple, topical and unmarked Theme/Given and *vẫn giữ tấm lòng son* is Rheme/New. The thematic pattern of the five clauses and their thematic progression pattern in “*Bánh trôi nước*” can be represented as follows:

• Theme 1 (single/topical/unmarked)	^ Rheme 1
• \emptyset *	^ Rheme 2
• \emptyset	^ Rheme 3
• Theme 2 (single/topical/marked)	^ Rheme 4
• Theme 1 (single/topical/unmarked)	^ Rheme 5

***Note:** The sign \emptyset indicates the clause has no Theme

The Balaban version provides a different picture of thematic structure. Of the six clauses analyzed in Table 1, four have single Theme: *My body* (clause 1), *my fate* (clause 2), *Whatever hand* (clause 5), and *At center*

(clause 6), none has multiple Theme, four have topical Theme: *My body* (clause 1), *my fate* (clause 2), *Whatever way* (clause 5), and *At center* (clause 6), none has interpersonal or textual Theme, two have unmarked Theme [Theme/Subject]: *My body* (clause 1) and *my fate* (clause 2), two have marked Theme: *Whatever way* [Adjunct/Theme] (clause 5) and *At center* [Adjunct/Theme] (clause 6), and two are Themeless (clauses 3 and 4). A closer observation of the thematic patterns of this translated version shows that in clause 1, the translator John Balaban uses *My body* [referring back to *The Floating Cake*] which is single, topical and unmarked Theme/Given as the point of departure of the message and the remaining segment *is white* as Rheme/New. Clause 2 begins with *my fate* which is also single, topical and unmarked Theme/Given and ends with *softly rounded* which is Rheme/New. Neither the Theme nor the Rheme in clauses 1 and 2 is picked up in clauses 3 and 4. In these clauses, like clauses 3 and 4 in the source poem, there are no Themes, and both *Rising* and *and sinking like mountains in streams* function as Rheme/New. Clause 5 starts with a new Theme which is not connected with any of the previous Theme or Rhemes. Here *Whatever way* which is single, topical but marked Theme/Given is used as the point of departure of the message and the remaining segment *hands may shape me* as Rheme/New. In a similar manner, clause 6 begins with *At center* which is single, topical but marked Theme/Given and ends with *my heart is red and true* which is Rheme/New. The thematic pattern of the six clauses and their thematic progression pattern in the Balaban version can be represented as follows:

• Theme 1 (single/topical/unmarked)	^ Rheme 1
• Theme 2 (single/topical/unmarked)	^ Rheme 2
• \emptyset	^ Rheme 3
• \emptyset	^ Rheme 4
• Theme 5 (single/topical/unmarked)	^ Rheme 5
• Theme 6 (single/topical/unmarked)	^ Rheme 6

In the Huynh version, our analysis in Table 1 shows that of five clauses, four have single Theme: *My body* (clause 1), *In water* (clause 2), *The hand that kneads me* (clause 4) and *I* (clause 5), none has multiple Theme, four have topical Theme: *My body* (clause 1), *In water* (clause 2), *The hand that kneads me* (clause 4) and *I* (clause 5), none has interpersonal or textual Theme, three have unmarked Theme: *My body* (clause 1), *The hand that kneads me* (clause 4), and *I* (clause 5), one has marked Theme [Adjunct/Theme]: *In water* (clause 2), and one is Themeless (clause 3). A more detailed analysis of this version shows that like the Balaban version, in clause 1 the translator Huỳnh Sanh Thông uses *My body* [referring back to The Cake that Drifts in Water] which is single, topical and unmarked Theme/Given as the point of departure of the message and the remaining segment *is both white and round* as Rheme/New. Clause 2 begins with *In water* which is also single, topical but marked Theme/Given and ends with *I now swim* which is Rheme/New. This is followed by clause 3 which only has *now sink* functioning as Rheme/New. Clause 4 starts with a new Theme which is not connected with any of the Theme or Rheme in the previous clauses. Here the translator places *The hand that kneads me* as single, topical and unmarked Theme/Given and *may be rough* as Rheme/New. In clause 5, the translator uses *I* which is single, topical and unmarked Theme/Given as the point of departure of the message and the remaining segment *still shall keep my true red heart* as Rheme/New. The thematic pattern of the five clauses and their thematic progression pattern in the Huynh version can be represented as follows:

• Theme 1 (single/topical/unmarked)	^ Rheme 1
• Theme 2 (single/topical/unmarked)	^ Rheme 2
• Ø	^ Rheme 3
• Theme 4 (single/topical/unmarked)	^ Rheme 4
• Theme 5 (single/topical/unmarked)	^ Rheme 5

It is shown in Table 1 that of the five clauses in the Chin version, four have single Theme: *My body* (clause 1), *I* (clause 2), *The hand that kneads me* (clause 4) and *You* (clause 5). None has multiple Theme, four have topical Theme: *My body* (clause 1), *I* (clause 2), *The hand that kneads me* (clause 4) and *You* (clause 5), none has interpersonal or textual Theme, four have unmarked Theme: *My body* (clause 1); *I* (clause 2), *The hand that kneads me* (clause 4), and *You* (clause 5), none has marked Theme, and one has no Theme. A closer examination shows that like the Balaban version and the Huynh version, in clause 1 the translator uses *My body* [referring back to Floating Sweet Dumpling] which is single, topical and unmarked Theme/Given as the point of departure of the message and the remaining segment *is powdery white and round* as Rheme/New. Clause 2 begins with *I* which is also single, topical and unmarked Theme/Given as the point of departure of the message and the remaining segment *sink* as Rheme/New. This is followed by clause 3 which has no Theme and the segment *and bob like a mountain in a pond* functions as Rheme/New. Clause 4 starts with a new Theme which is not connected with any of Theme or Rheme of the previous clauses. Here, like the Huynh version, the translator places *The hand that kneads me* as single, topical and unmarked Theme/Given and *is hard and rough* as Rheme/New. The metaphorised Theme in clause 4 is picked up as Theme in clause 5. Here *You* [referring to *The hand that kneads me*] which is a single, topical Theme/Given is used as the point of departure of the message and *can't destroy my true red heart* as Rheme/New. The thematic pattern of the five clauses and their thematic progression pattern in the Chin version can be represented as follows:

• Theme 1 (single/topical/unmarked)	^ Rheme 1
• Theme 2 (single/topical/unmarked)	^ Rheme 2
• Ø	^ Rheme 3
• Theme 4 (single/topical/unmarked)	^ Rheme 4
• Theme 4 (single/topical/unmarked)	^ Rheme 5

Details of Theme showing the similarities and differences between “Bánh trôi nước” and the three versions of translation can be represented in Table 6 below.

Table 6. Details of Theme in “Bánh trôi nước” and the three versions of translation

Types of theme	Bánh trôi nước	The Balaban version	The Huynh version	The Chin version
Number of clause	5	6	5	5
Single theme:	2	4	4	4
Multiple theme:	1	0	0	0
Topical theme:	3	4	4	4
Interpersonal theme:	0	0	0	0
Textual theme:	1	0	0	0
Unmarked theme:	2	2	3	4
Marked theme:	1	2	1	0
Themeless clause:	2	2	1	1
[single; topical; unmarked]:	2	2	3	4
[single; topical; marked]:	1	2	1	0

5. Conclusion

5.1. Summary

In this paper, we have attempted to make a comparison between three English versions of translation – “The Floating Cake” translated by John Balaban, “The Cake That Drifts In Water” translated by Huỳnh Sanh Thông, and “Floating Sweet Dumpling” translated by Marilyn Chin with a popular Vietnamese poem – “Bánh trôi nước” written by the famous Vietnamese poetess Hồ Xuân Hương. The two research questions we raised for exploration are: (1) “How are the source poem and the translated versions constructed in terms of ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings?” and (2) “To what extent are the translated versions similar to and different from the source poem and to what extent are the translated versions similar to and different from one another in terms of ideational, interpersonal and textual meanings?” To answer these questions, we

have used systemic functional linguistics as the theoretical framework; and based on the compositional feature of language, we have broken down the source poem and the translated versions into smaller meaningful parts: clause complexes, clause simplexes, groups/phrases, and words. Then we counted them, analyzing them in terms of transitivity, mood, and theme, and then comparing them, one by one. In comparing, we have tried to established points of similarities/equivalents and mismatches/differences between the translated texts and the source text and between the translated texts. It is clear from our comparison that there are both similarities and differences between the translated versions and the source poem and between the translated versions themselves in terms of logico-semantic complexing, transitivity, mood, and theme. To recapitulate, the similarities and differences between the source poem and the three translated versions can be summarized as follows:

Logically, the source poem is constructed into two clause complexes; the first complex has three clauses constructed in hypotactic relation and the second one has two clauses constructed in paratactic relation. The Balaban version is also constructed into two clause complexes; but instead of three as the source poem, the first complex has four clauses constructed in hypotactic relation and the second one has two clauses constructed in paratactic relation. The Huynh version, in contrast, is constructed into one independent clause and two clause complexes; the first complex has two clauses constructed in paratactic relation, and the second one has two clauses also constructed in paratactic relation. The Chin version, like the Huynh version, is constructed into one independent clause and two clause complexes; the first complex has two clauses constructed in paratactic relation, and the second one has two clauses also constructed in paratactic relation.

Experientially, the source poem is represented in five clauses of which two are relational, two are material, and one is behavioural. In contrast, the Balaban version is represented in six clauses of which three are relational and three are material. Like the source poem, the Huynh version is represented in five clauses of which two are relational, two are material, and one is behavioural. Unlike the source poem and the other two translated versions, the Chin version is represented in five clauses of which two are relational and three are material.

Interpersonally, all five clauses of the source poem are declarative of which two are Subjectless and three have Subjects that have the feature of “human”, and two of which have the features of “female”, “junior/younger”, and “intimate”. The Balaban version is constructed into three declarative clauses,

two non-finite clauses and one modalized clause. Of the four clauses that have Subject, three have Subjects which have the feature of “human” and one has Subject which has the feature of “non-human”. The Huynh version is organized around three declarative clauses and two modalized clauses. Of the four clauses that have Subject, three have the feature of “human” and one has the feature of “non-human”. The Chin version is organized around four declarative clauses and one modalized clause. Of the five clauses, four have Subject and one is Subjectless. Of the four Subjects, three have the feature of “human” and one has the feature of “non-human”. What makes the three translated versions differ from the source text is that the Subjects in these versions only have the feature of “human”; the other features “female”, “junior/younger”, and “intimate” which the Subjects of the source poem possess are not found in these texts.

Textually, the source poem has three clause themes of which Theme 1 and Theme 5 have (anaphoric) reference to the title: *Bánh trôi nước – Thân em – em*. The Balaban version has four clause themes of which only Theme 1 has reference to from the title: *The Floating Cake – My body*. There are two items that have reference to the title but they are placed in the Rheme: *me* (clause 5) and *my heart* (clause 6). The Huynh version has four clause themes of which two have reference to the title: *The Cake That Drifts in Water – My body* (clause 1) – *I* (clause 5). There are two other items that have reference to the title, but they are placed in the Rheme portion: *I* (clause 2) and *me* (clause 4). The Chin version has four clause themes of which two have reference to the title: *Floating Sweet Dumpling – My body* (clause 1) – *I* (clause 2). Like the Huynh version, there are two other items in the Chin version that have reference

to the title, but they are placed in the Rheme portion: *me* (clause 4) and *my true red heart* (clause 5).

As far as lexical choice is concerned, there are certain items in the translated versions which can be similar or equivalent to those in the source poem: the form *white* in the Balaban version, the Huynh version, and the Chin version can be equivalent to the form *trắng* in the source poem; the form *round* in the Balaban version, the Huynh version, and the Chin version can be equivalent to the form *tròn* in the source poem; the form *rising* in the Balaban version and *bob* in the Chin version to a certain extent can be equivalent to the form *nổi* in the source poem; the form *sinking* in the Balaban version and *sink* in the Huynh version and the Chin version to a large extent can be equivalent to the form *chìm* in the source poem, and the reference of *My body* to *The Floating Cake* in the Balaban version, *The Cake That Drifts In Water* in the Huynh version, and *Floating Sweet Dumpling* in the Chin version to a certain extent can be considered to be comparable to the reference of *Thân em* to *Bánh trôi nước* in the source poem. There are, however, grammatical and lexical choices in the three translated versions which are very different from those in the source poem. As shown in our analysis in Section 3.3.1, the choices of *my fate* and *Whatever way* in the Balaban version, *powdery, I, You,* and *You can't destroy* in the Chin version, and *The hand that kneads me* in the Huynh and the Chin versions do not have correspondences in the source poem. It seems that the more delicate level we explore, the more differences or mismatches we can find between the translated versions and the source poem and between the translated versions.

One important factor that contributes to making the three versions of translation

differ more markedly from the source poem is that there are some symbolic and cultural values attached to “Bánh trôi nước” having its origin in the Vietnamese culture (cf. Tran, 2012; Vuong, 2016) which do not seem to be laden in “The Floating Cake”, “The Cake That Drifts In Water”, and “Floating Sweet Dumpling”. In reading “Bánh trôi nước”, the reader is led into the realm of some metaphorical modes of meaning which, in this particular context, seem to be readily understood by the Vietnamese. For example, although the expression *Thân em* literally refers to the body of the *Bánh trôi nước*, it can be readily understood by the Vietnamese as a metaphor for the body of a woman; the expression *Bây nổi ba chìm với nước non* is realized non-metaphorically by two material clauses *Bây nổi* and *ba chìm với nước non*, it can be readily understood by the Vietnamese as a metaphorical expression indicating the vagabond now-up-and-now-down plight of the woman's life; and the expression *tâm lòng son* is realized non-metaphorically as a nominal group consisting of the noun *tâm lòng* (heart) functioning as Head/Thing and the adjective *son* (red) functioning as Epithet, it can be readily understood as a metaphorical expression indicating the faithfulness or loyalty of a woman. Seen from this point of view, it is doubtful whether *Rising and sinking like mountains in streams* in the Balaban version, *In water I now swim, now sink* in the Huynh version, and *I sink and bob like a mountain in a pond* in the Chin version are equivalent to *Bây nổi ba chìm với nước non* in the source poem. It is even more doubtful whether *my heart is red and true* in the Balaban version, *my true-red heart* in the Huynh version, and *my true red heart* in the Chin version are equivalent to *tâm lòng son* in the source poem.

5.2. Limitation of the study and suggestion for further research

As pointed out in Section 3.1, a text is an instance of language (Halliday, 1991; Halliday & Hasan, 1976, 1985) which is a complex of several levels of meaning (Firth, 1957, 1968; Halliday & Martin, 1993; Hasan, 2011). The implication of this statement is that the analysis for the meanings of a text should be done from as many levels as possible. In this paper, we have only been able to analyze and compare the three translated versions with the source poem mainly at clause level and have only mentioned in passing some of the metaphorical meanings that lie behind the source text which the target versions do not seem to possess. Further research, therefore, should be done to reveal the total meanings of the texts so that more similarities and differences between the source text and the translated versions, and between the translated texts themselves will be established.

It has been widely recognized (Hatim & Mason, 1990; Bell, 1991; Venuti, 2008; Steiner, 1998; Levy, 2011) that poetic language is the most difficult to translate; and in most cases it is “untranslatable” (Jakobson, 2004: 118). This is because this kind of language usually contains in itself idiomatic expressions so unique to the experience of a culture that they cannot be fully translated into another language. Our examination and comparison of the three English versions of translation and the Vietnamese original poem “Bánh trôi nước” have demonstrated the challenges of poetic translation. The translators’ dilemma in this particular context is that when translating they must capture their poems’ phonological patterns (rhythm, rhyme, alliteration, assonance, etc.), morphological and syntactic patterns (words on the page and grammatical structures), semantic patterns (experiential, logical, interpersonal, and

textual meanings), and poetics (imagery, metrics, etc.) as truthfully to the original as possible. Furthermore, they must go beyond those linguistic aspects to capture the cultural values that lie behind the source poem whose grammatical categories carry a high semantic import. These translation competences are “a tall order” (Vuong, 2016) which very few translators could possess. Our study has shown that different translators give different versions of the source poem. This raises the question of translatability in poetic translation, but unfortunately, we have not been able to discuss it in detail in our study, especially when the source poem sets high formal, semantic and cultural challenges to the translator. More research, therefore, should be conducted to explore the degrees of translatability from the source poem into the target poems in terms of these challenges.

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“BÁNH TRÔI NƯỚC” VÀ BA BẢN DỊCH TIẾNG ANH: SO SÁNH THEO LÝ THUYẾT CHỨC NĂNG HỆ THỐNG

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Tóm tắt: Bài viết này so sánh ba bản dịch tiếng Anh: “The Floating Cake” của John Balaban, “The Cake That Drifts In Water” của Huỳnh Sanh Thông và “Floating Sweet Dumpling” của Marilyn Chin với bài thơ gốc tiếng Việt “Bánh trôi nước” của nữ thi sĩ lừng danh Hồ Xuân Hương. Khung lý thuyết sử dụng để phân tích và so sánh các văn bản là ngôn ngữ học chức năng hệ thống. Kết quả nghiên cứu cho thấy có cả những điểm tương đồng và dị biệt giữa ba bản dịch với bài thơ gốc và giữa ba bản dịch với nhau trên ba bình diện nghĩa tư tưởng, nghĩa liên nhân và nghĩa ngôn bản. Kết quả nghiên cứu cũng chỉ ra rằng có nhiều điểm khác biệt ở cấp độ lựa chọn từ vựng (cấp độ lựa chọn từ và ngữ) hơn là ở cấp độ lựa chọn cấu trúc cú pháp (cấp độ lựa chọn các mẫu thức chuyên tác, thức và đề ngữ) giữa ba bản dịch và bài thơ gốc, và giữa ba bản dịch với nhau.

Từ khóa: ngôn ngữ chức năng hệ thống, ngôn cảnh, văn bản, siêu chức năng tư tưởng, siêu chức năng liên nhân, siêu chức năng ngôn bản, bài thơ gốc, các bản dịch