

THE NOTION OF CLAUSE IN VIETNAMESE: A SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Hoang Van Van^(*)

1. Introduction

This paper is concerned with the notion of the clause – arguably, one of the most important grammatical categories in the grammar of not only Vietnamese but any language. What is a clause and why is it considered important? In an attempt to answer this question, I propose first to discuss the centrality of the category ‘clause’ in general lexicogrammatical description. The arguments here will be supported by considering the concept in the grammar of English. The reason for adopting this strategy is that English is the language which has been the most extensively described in the systemic functional model. Having established, in general terms, the centrality of the category clause and having suggested the criteria relevant to its definition and recognition, I will then turn to the notion of clause in the grammar of Vietnamese. Two questions raised for exploration are: “Is clause needed as a descriptive category in Vietnamese grammar?” If so, “How is it to be recognized?” I shall argue that, like English, the Vietnamese clause can be defined and recognized along three dimensions: stratification, rank, and metafunction (cf. Matthiessen 1995). Details of this argument will be addressed throughout the paper.

2. The centrality of the clause in general description

In systemic functional linguistics, the clause has received a special status. This is because, it is a lexicogrammatical unit that provides, more than any other unit, a clear indication of the distinct line of structures associated with the different metafunctions (cf. Halliday 1994). Further, the location of the clause in the overall linguistic system is suggestive of its importance: clause lies at the intersection of three dimensions, *viz.*, stratification, rank, and metafunction (cf. Matthiessen 1995) as shown in Figure 1:

According to this figure the clause is located at the stratum of lexicogrammar. Being “the gateway from the semantics to the grammar” (Halliday 1985: 66), it is related upwards at once to the three semantic entities: it realizes what Halliday (1994) calls a representation/exchange/message at the stratum of semantics, each of which is related specifically to field, tenor, and mode at the stratum of context (cf. H. V. Van 2002). At the same time in the unmarked case, the clause is related downwards by realization to a tone group at the stratum of phonology (cf. Halliday 1994, Matthiessen 1995). In terms of rank, the clause is the highest-ranking unit from which units of the lower rank of group/phrase, word, and morpheme can be

^(*) Assoc.prof.Dr., School of Graduate Studies, VNU

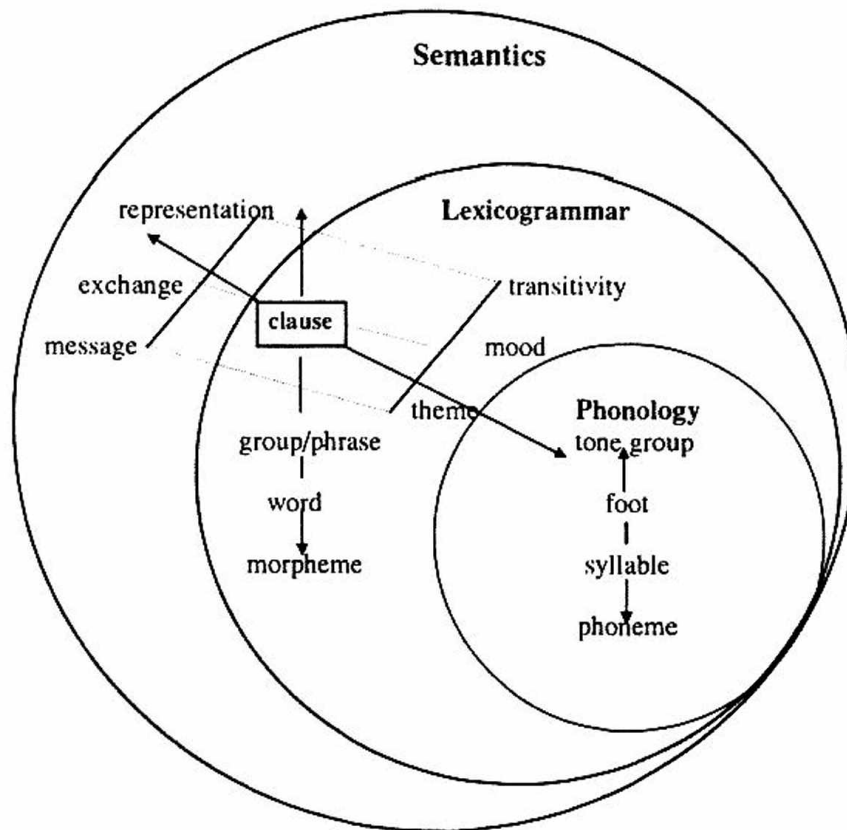


Figure 1. *The Location of the Clause in the Overall Linguistic System*
(After Matthiessen 1995: 123)

Convention: ↘ = stratification, ↑ = rank, ↗ = metafunctional resonance

decomposed. And in terms of metafunction, the clause is the meeting place or the locus where the three context-construing strands of meanings—ideational, interpersonal, and textual – are simultaneously realized as wording through the systems of transitivity, mood, and theme. Below is an English example taken from Halliday (1994: 109). It is provided to show the centrality of the clause in general linguistic description.

2.1. *The lion chased the tourist lazily through the bush*

This linguistic expression is a clause. This is because it has a particular overall shape (both semantic and lexicogrammatical). So far as rank is concerned, its status as the

highest unit of grammatical analysis can be seen by the fact that it is made up of five constituents: two nominal groups *The lion* and *the tourist*, one verbal group *chased*, one adverbial group *lazily*, and one prepositional phrase *through the bush*.

In terms of metafunctions, the clause is a functional unit, displaying a triple construction of meaning. From the point of view of the ideational metafunction, the clause construes a state of affairs, representing a configuration of doer *The lion* ^ doing *chased* ^ done to *the tourist* ^ manner *lazily* ^ location *through the bush*. This strand of meaning is realized lexicogrammatically in the clause by the structure **Actor^Process: material^Goal^Circumstance:manner^Circumst**

ance:location (for more detail on these experiential roles, see H. V. Van 2002, Chapters VI and IX). In addition, like any language unit, the clause has a potential of entering into logical relations with another clause by coordination and subordination (e.g., *The lion chased the tourist lazily through the bush, and that's why the tourist managed to escape* or *The lion chased the tourist lazily through the bush because it had not been very hungry*), construing logical relations between states of affairs, and thus construing larger elements of what is going on in the social context (see Hasan 1993, Hasan & Perrett 1994, see also H. V. Van 2002). From the point of view of the interpersonal metafunction, the clause construes such semantic categories as statement, question, command etc. For example, statement is construed by a declarative mood with a structural configuration of **Subject** *The lion*^**Finite**^**Predicator** *chased*^**Complement** *the tourist*^**Adjunct** *lazily*^**Adjunct** *through the bush*. And from the point of view of the textual metafunction, the clause functions as the organizer of the message: it

organizes the meanings of the message. Thus, here the doer *The lion* has a particular status, being presented as the point of departure or as **Theme**, and the 'residual element' (Halliday 1985c: 68) *chased the tourist lazily through the bush* as **Rheme**. It is partly through this type of textual organization that the clause is said to construe relevance to other parts of context as well as participate in the semiotic organization of social activity and social relations; i.e. the contextual parameters of field and tenor are organized by the working of mode (cf. Halliday & Hasan 1985, Hasan 1993). In addition to the Theme-Rheme organization, the clause displays one more type of organization which Halliday (1967, 1994) calls the 'Given-New organization of the information unit'; for example, the clause *The lion chased the tourist lazily through the bush* is realized by a tone group having a tonic nucleus with a falling tone on the word *bush*. (For a detailed discussion of the meaning of tone in English, see Halliday 1985, 1994). Figure 2 summarizes the main points discussed so far.

| | | | | | | | |
|------------------|------------|----------------------------|---|---------------|--------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| (i) | (ii) | (iii) | <i>The lion</i> | <i>chased</i> | <i>the tourist</i> | <i>lazily</i> | <i>through the bush</i> |
| Semantics | | Ideational: representation | state of affairs construing a configuration of two participants which are in doer-done to relationship + a doing + a manner + a location. | | | | |
| | | Interpersonal: exchange | speaker/writer is giving information in the form of a statement expressed in the selection of a declarative mood. | | | | |
| | | Textual: message | message presenting doer as point of departure and location as news. | | | | |
| Grammar | clause | Ideational | Actor | Process | Goal | Circum-stance | Circumstance |
| | | Interpersonal | Subject | Fin | Pred-cator | Complement | Adjunct |
| | | Textual | Mood | Residue | | | |
| | group | (pre-selection) | Theme | Rheme | | | |
| | | | Given | → | | | New |
| | | | nominal group | verbal group | nominal group | adver bial group | prepositional phrase |
| Phonology | tone group | | | | | | falling tone |

Figure 2. The Centrality of the Clause in Terms of Rank, Stratification & Metafunction

It can be said in summary that the clause is "perhaps the most fundamental category in the whole of linguistics" (Halliday 1985: 67). The clause is many-sided or multidimensional precisely in the sense that the conceptualization of this language unit takes account of not only its stratal and rank environment but also its internal systemic and structural organization along the dimension of metafunctions, particularly the metafunctional resonance across semantics and lexicogrammar (cf. Matthiessen 1995), through the mapping of various types of functions on the same syntagm. This, in turn, suggests that the criteria (both definition and recognition) for clause identification should be established on a number of dimensions rather than on any single one.

3. The Vietnamese clause from the systemic functional perspective: preliminary view

3.1. Introduction

The recognition of the clause as a central unit for grammatical description is crucial. Yet in the Vietnamese linguistic scholarship although there do exist translation equivalents of clause (cú) and sentence (câu), the notion of clause is hardly ever discussed as an independent notion: it is typically subsumed under the notion of simple sentence (e.g., T. V. Chinh & N. H. Lê 1963; H. T. Phiến 1980; D. Q. Ban 1987). So far as the criteria for the simple sentence or clause are concerned, they are based on different aspects of language: logico-semantic, structural, communicative, phonological/prosodic and orthographic, and intuitive. For convenience of reference, let me summarize below the criteria that various scholars offered of what counts as a clause in Vietnamese. From now on, unless

otherwise stated, I shall use the term 'clause' instead of the term 'simple sentence' in order to simplify the presentation.

From the point of view of logico-semantic, a clause is defined as expressing 'a proposition' (T. T. Kim *et. al.* 1940), 'a state of affairs' (T. V. Chinh & N. H. Lê 1963), or 'a relatively complete thought' (Bystrov *et al.* 1975; D. Q. Ban 1987).

From the point of view of structure, clauses are variously classified: independent clause, main clause, and subordinate clause (T. T. Kim *et. al.* 1940); independent clause and dependent clause (Thompson 1985); or two member-clause, one-member clause, and sub- or special clause (T. V. Chinh & N. H. Lê 1963, D. Q. Ban 1987).

From the communicative point of view, clauses can be divided into declarative: those that make statements; imperative: those that issue directives (orders, requests etc.); interrogative: those that ask questions; and exclamative: those that make exclamations (cf. UBKHXH 1983, D. Q. Ban 1987).

From the point of view of phonology/prosody and orthography, a clause can be recognized by a terminal intonation or a terminal pause (Thompson 1985, H. T. Phiến 1980) or by the presence of a colon, a semi-colon, or a coma at its end (Thompson 1985).

And from the point of view of intuition, a clause can be distinguished from a non-clausal unit by reference to the speaker's tacit knowledge of language (C. X. Hạo 1991: 71).

One of the main problems with the traditional and non-SF conceptualization of the clause in Vietnamese is that many of the so-called 'notional definitions'

(Greenbaum 1996) of clause are not explicated. As a result, there seems to be no relation between grammar and semantics. Further, as the criteria for the clause are derived from various approaches and one criterion seems to be offered in isolation from the other(s), they seem to lack systematicity. In the following subsections, I hope to present a view of the Vietnamese clause which might be more viable than the traditional approaches.

In Section 2, the centrality of the clause in the linguistic system and the criteria suggested for clause definition and identification from the SF perspective were presented by reference to English. So far as the notion of clause in Vietnamese is concerned, the view presented here is that the same general considerations apply; that is, like English, the Vietnamese clause has a central status in grammar and can be conceptualized along the dimensions of stratification, rank, and metafunction. To avoid repetition, I shall assume that in terms of rank and stratification, the Vietnamese clause closely resembles its English counterpart; that is, like English, the Vietnamese clause is the highest unit of grammatical analysis which is located on the lexicogrammatical stratum, facing upwards to semantics and downwards to phonology. As for metafunction, I shall assume that the definitions of the Vietnamese clause from the point of view of the ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions may be the same as that of the English unit clause. However, when it comes to the recognition/identification of the category, the position may differ from one language to another. The metafunctional criteria for the Vietnamese clause can be established

on the principle of what Halliday (1973, 1996: 26) has referred to as the 'trinocular vision' which can be stated as follows: since the stratum within which the clause is located is lexicogrammar, the criteria for it can be established (i) 'from above', i.e., from the stratum of semantics; (ii) from 'roundabout' or within; i.e., from the stratum of lexicogrammar itself; and (iii) 'from below', i.e., from the stratum of phonology. As Vietnamese is a tonal language, it is doubtful that the relation between clause and some phonological unit would reasonably be established. Within the scope of this study, it is not possible to present arguments in support of this claim, and as the focus of this study is on lexicogrammar, in the discussion that follows, I shall ignore phonological criteria and pay particular attention to the semantic and the lexicogrammatical ones.

3.2. *Semantic Criteria*

From the point of view of formal approaches, the question basic to the conceptualization of the clause is: what does the constituent structure of a clause look like? It is easy to answer that the Vietnamese clause is a linguistic unit which is made up of phrases which are made up of words which are made up of morphemes (cf. C.X. Hào 1991). As a constituency-based account, this approach is sound, but clearly this is not all that could be said about the nature of the clause, especially when its communicative aspect is taken into account. In the SF model, however, the question one asks is not: 'what does the clause look like?' but 'what does the clause do in discourse (text)?' and the appropriate answer would be that (a) it represents the speaker's experience of the external world and the internal world of his own consciousness,

(b) it expresses the speaker's own intrusion into the speech situation, the speech role that s/he has chosen to adopt in the situation, thus assigning role options to the addressee, and (c) it expresses a message in the total communicative event (cf. Halliday 1967, 1970, 1994). These functions constitute part of the definition criteria for the clause in Vietnamese. To appreciate their significance, let me consider the following extracts:

(2). a

| | | | | | | | |
|------|-----|-----|------|-----|----|----------|-------|
| Lâu | nay | ông | Làm | ăn | ở | những | đâu? |
| long | now | Mr | work | eat | In | pl.mrkr. | where |

Where have you been working up till now?

(2). b

| | | | | |
|--------|-----|----|-------|--------|
| - Kiếm | ăn | ở | ngoài | phố |
| search | eat | in | out | street |

In the city.

(3). a

| | | |
|-----|----------|----------|
| Cô | Tiếp tục | chờ đợi, |
| she | continue | Wait |

She kept waiting,

(3). b

| | | | | | |
|---------|---------|-----------|-------|----|-----------|
| bởi vì | dẫu sao | cuộc sống | vẫn | Là | vô giá. |
| because | anyhow | life | still | be | priceless |

because, anyhow, life was still precious.

In order to identify how many clauses there are in extract (2), an appropriate question to raise is: what are the speaker and addressee doing? The answer is, they are demanding and giving information. Thus, in extract (2) the syntagm *Lâu nay ông làm ăn ở những đâu?* (Where have you been working up till now?) is one clause whose speech function here is that of a question. On this ground *Lâu nay ông làm*

ăn ở những đâu? (Where have you been working up till now?) and *Kiểm ăn ở ngoài phố* (literally, earn a living in the city 'In the city') cannot be treated as just one clause; they would be viewed as two clauses, because each of these displays a distinct speech function, one is the demanding of information expressed in the form of a question (2a) and the other, the giving of information expressed in the form of a statement (2b). Similarly, if one wishes to identify how many clauses there are in extract (3) as seen from the point of view of the experiential metafunction, one may recognize that it consists of two clauses because each of these construes a state of affairs, one is characterized by a doing *tiếp tục chờ đợi* (kept waiting) (3a) and the other, by a being *là* (was) (3b). From the point of view of logical metafunction, extract (3) can also be recognized as consisting of two clauses. This is because the two states of affairs *Cô tiếp tục chờ đợi* (She kept waiting) and *bởi vì, dẫu sao cuộc sống vẫn là vô giá* (because, anyhow, life was still precious) are logically related to each other by means of expansion or, to be more specific, enhancement; i.e., in this relation *bởi vì, dẫu sao cuộc sống vẫn là vô giá* (because, anyhow, life was still precious) is said to enhance the meaning of *Cô tiếp tục chờ đợi* (She kept waiting) by reference to cause *bởi vì* (because). And if one wishes to identify the clause from the point of view of the textual metafunction, one may characterize it as expressing a message, construing, among other things, point of departure, and thus "breathing" relevance (Halliday 1994) to other parts of co-text (for more detail, see Halliday 1994, Hasan 1993, Hasan & Perrett 1994, Fries 1981, 1995). This semantic definition of the clause has its resonance in the thematic

structure which will be discussed in Section 3.3 below.

3.3. Lexicogrammatical Criteria

At the stratum of lexicogrammar, the clause can be recognized by the fact that it is the only unit which is capable of realizing choices from the systems of **TRANSITIVITY, EXPANSION & PROJECTION, MOOD, and THEME.**

In systemic functional grammar, the system of **TRANSITIVITY** is said to realize the experiential meanings which are associated with different goings-on such as doing, sensing, saying etc. A clause will typically have a function that expresses the going on. This is known as Process. The notion Process is a critical notion of the clause and it constitutes an important recognition criterion for the Vietnamese clause. It is significant that typically only one Process will enter directly into a clause. This Process may be either material, mental, verbal or relational, but two or more Processes may not operate in the clause, except indirectly via rank-shift as [[*họ xây năm ngoái*]] (they built last year) in ||*Ngôi nhà* [[*họ xây năm ngoái*]] *trông rất khang trang* || (The house they built last year looks magnificent). Thus,

(4)

| | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|-----|-------|------------------|-----|---------------------------|---------|-------|
| Lâu | nay | ông | làm | ăn | ở | những | đâu? |
| long | now | Mr | work | eat | in | pl.mkrk | where |
| Circ: temporal | | Actor | Pro: material | | Circumstance: location | | |

Where have you been working up until now?

is one clause because it contains a material process *làm ăn* (literally, work and eat (have been working)) and its experiential structure can be represented

as Circumstance: temporal^Actor^Process: material^Circumstance: location. In contrast,

(5)

| | | |
|-------|-------------------|------|
| Tôi | đẩy | cửa, |
| I | push | door |
| Actor | Process: material | goal |

I pushed the door,

and

(6)

| | | | | |
|------|---------------|------------------------|------|-------|
| cửa | chốt | từ | bên | trong |
| door | lock | from | side | in |
| Goal | Pro: material | Circumstance: location | | |

(but) it (the door) was locked inside.

are two clauses not one because each of these contains a material process *đẩy* (pushed) in (5) and *chốt* (was locked) in (6).

From the point of view of logical lexicogrammar, the clause can be recognized through the systems of **EXPANSION and PROJECTION.** These two systems are concerned with logico-semantic relations between clauses and are said to have "syntactic structures that are *iterative*" (Hasan & Perrett 1994: 194). Thus,

(7)

| | | | | | |
|-------------|-----|--------|-------|---------|-------|
| đương nhiên | nếu | chú | chẳng | chịu | giúp. |
| Of course | If | junior | not | willing | help |

Of course if you are not willing to help

is identified as a clause not only because it expresses a state of affairs but also because it is logically related to the next state of affairs in discourse by enhancement as in

(8)

| | | | | | | | |
|------|------|----|-------|---------|----|--------|-----------|
| thì | họ | ta | vẫn | phải | đi | mời | luật sư |
| then | clan | we | still | have to | go | invite | solicitor |

our clan will have to invite a solicitor.

And the relation between the two states of affairs may be recognized by the schema *nếu* (if) state of affairs A, *thì* (then) state of affairs B. (For a more detailed discussion of expansion and projection, see Halliday 1994, Chapter 7; Matthiessen 1995).

In terms of **MOOD**, one can recognize the clause by the fact that no one clause has more than one **MOOD**; that is, a clause is either indicative or imperative; and if it is indicative it can either be declarative or imperative; it will not at one and the same time be declarative and interrogative. Thus, the syntagm

(9) [indicative:declarative]

| | | |
|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Tôi | đẩy | cửa sổ, |
| I | push | window |
| Subject | Predicator | Complement |

I pushed the window,

is a clause because it is characterized by the features [indicative:declarative] which is realized by the configuration of structure Subject^Predicator^Complement. In contrast,

(10) [indicative:declarative]

| | | | |
|----------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Rồi | bố | ôm lấy | mẹ, |
| then | father | embrace | mother |
| Adjunct | Subject | Predicator | Complement |

Then my father embraced my mother,

and

(11) [indicative:declarative]

| | | | | | |
|----------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|------|--------|
| Bố | hít | mãi | vào | tóc | mẹ |
| father | sniff | forever | in | hair | mother |
| Subject | Predicator | Adjunct | Adjunct | | |

(and) he kissed her hair lingeringly.

are two clauses because there are two **MOOD** functions in this clause complex; both of them are declarative and their

interpersonal structures can be represented respectively as Adjunct^Subject^Predicator^Complement and Subject^Predicator^Adjunct^Adjunct.

In the same way, the clause can be recognized by looking at the system of **THEME**. In English the clause is organized as a message by having a status assigned to one part of it; one element of the clause is enunciated as Theme, this in combination with the remaining part of the clause known as Rheme, forms a message (cf. Halliday 1967, 1970, 1994, Fries 1981). Preliminary observation of Vietnamese has shown that the thematic organization of the clause is, by and large, similar to that of the English clause; that is, like English, the thematic structure of the Vietnamese clause is the Theme^Rheme configuration (cf. C. X. Hạo 1991, H. V. Vân 1994, N. T. Hùng 1994). However, the two languages differ in that while in English theme involves three systems: (a) choice of types of theme (i.e., whether a theme is single or multiple), (b) choice of marked and unmarked theme, and (c) choice of predicated and unpredicated theme (cf. Halliday 1994), in Vietnamese it is observed (H. V. Vân 1994) that only two systems exist: (a) choice of types of theme and (b) choice of marked and unmarked theme. If this observation is correct, it will follow that these systems of theme can act as recognition criteria for the Vietnamese clause. This means that for a syntagm to be recognized as a clause, it must contain either a single or a multiple theme; it must also contain either a marked or an unmarked theme; it can never at one and the same time have both marked and unmarked themes or both single and multiple themes. However, in identifying the clause from the point of view of the thematic structure, it should be

remembered that a Theme may be single and marked, single and unmarked, multiple and marked, and multiple and unmarked (see Halliday 1994, H. V. Vân 1994). Thus, the following extract which is taken from a famous poem by the late Vietnamese poet Tan Da can be identified as having three separate clauses because

each of these has its own thematic structure. Apart from that, clause (12) contains a single and marked theme *Từ vào thu tới nay* (Since the arrival of Autumn); and clauses (13) and (14) each contains a single and unmarked theme: *Gió thu* (Autumn winds), and *Trăng thu* (Autumn moon) respectively.

(12)

| | | | | | | | |
|------------------------|-------|--------|------|------|-------|--------|----------|
| Từ | vào | thu | tới | nay, | gió | thu | heo hắt, |
| From | enter | autumn | till | now | wind | Autumn | desolate |
| Theme (single, marked) | | | | | Rheme | | |

Since the arrival of Autumn, Autumn winds have been desolate,

(13)

| | | |
|--------------------------|--------|-------|
| Sương | thu | lạnh |
| Dew | autumn | cold |
| Theme (single, unmarked) | | Rheme |

the Autumn dew has been cold

(14)

| | | |
|--------------------------|--------|-------|
| Trăng | thu | bạch |
| moon | autumn | white |
| Theme (single, unmarked) | | Rheme |

Autumn moon has been white

The conceptualization of the clause from the point of view of rank, stratification, and metafunction helps not only to define what a clause is but also to

distinguish it from non-clausal units, particularly from rank-shifted clauses. Consider example (15) below.

(15)

| | | | | | | | |
|------------|--------------|------------|-------------|---------------|-----------------|------------|-----------|
| Bài tập | [[<i>mà</i> | <i>câu</i> | <i>đang</i> | <i>làm</i>]] | là | rất | khó |
| assignment | which | you | asp.ptcl | do | be | very | difficult |
| Carrier | | | | | Pro: relational | Attribute | |
| Subject | | | | | Predicator | Complement | |
| Theme | | | | | Rheme | | |

The assignment (which) you are doing is a very difficult one.

Note: asp.ptcl = aspectual particle

In the example the syntagm *câu đang làm* (you are doing) is not treated as a clause on at least two grounds. First, in terms of

rank, its status is downgraded or rank-shifted: it has been embedded in the nominal group *Bài tập mà câu đang làm*

(The assignment (which) you are doing) to function as Qualifier to Thing *Bài tập* (The assignment). Secondly, unlike a ranking clause of the same syntagm, it is 'not accessible to arguability in discourse' (Matthiessen 1995: 77; see also Halliday 1994; Halliday & Hasan 1976). In other words, unlike ranking clause, its **MOOD** function is invariable: in this context it can only be declarative, it can never be imperative or interrogative.

3.4. Major v. Minor Clause

In this section, I shall be concerned briefly with the distinction between what Halliday (1984: 15) refers to as 'major clause' and 'minor clause'. These choices are derived from the system which may be referred to as **CLAUSE TYPE**. Each has a number of features that distinguish one from the other.

According to Halliday (1994) and Matthiessen (1995), major clauses in English, whether independent (free) or dependent (bound), are those that may select for transitivity, mood, and thematic

structure. In contrast, minor clauses are those that cannot have this potentiality. They include calls; e.g., *David!*, greetings; e.g., *Hello Quan!*, or exclamations; e.g., *Well done!*. Assuming that the distinction between major and minor clause in English is also relevant for Vietnamese, it will follow that *Chào bác ạ!* (a greeting to an uncle or to a man/woman who is of the same age with one's uncle/aunt), *Trời!* (My God!), or *Quân ơi!* (Quan!) are three minor clauses. They are minor clauses in the sense that they have no transitivity, mood and thematic structure and a number of them, particularly those of the greeting type, often occur at the boundaries of conversations (cf. Matthiessen 1995); e.g., *Long đấy à!* (Hello Long!) ... *Thôi nhé* or *Tạm biệt nhé* (Bye bye!). In contrast, in discourse, particularly in interactional texts, major clauses often carry the conversation forward (cf. Matthiessen 1995: 78). For example,

(16) [NB]

| | | | | |
|--------|---------|-------|-----------|--------|
| Cô | giáo | dạy | chiều | à? |
| female | teacher | teach | afternoon | q.ptcl |

Will you have classes in the afternoon?

demanding of information

(17)

| | | | | |
|-------|--------|------|--------|---------|
| Không | em | nghỉ | hè | rồi. |
| no | junior | rest | summer | already |

No, I'm on summer holiday.

denying and giving

information

(18)

| | | | | |
|----------|--------|---------|----|------|
| Quê | cô | giáo | ở | đây? |
| homeland | female | teacher | in | here |

Your home village is here, isn't it?

demanding inferred information

to be confirmed by addressee

(19)

| | | | | | |
|--------|------|--------|----|-------|--------|
| Không, | quê | em | ở | dưới | Cẩm Sa |
| no | home | junior | in | under | Camsa |

No, my home village is in Camsa.

denying and giving

information

4. Conclusion

This paper has been concerned with the notion of clause in Vietnamese. Initially, I discussed the centrality of the clause in general description. Then, drawing on the insights of systemic functional theory and taking the English unit clause as the point of reference, I attempted to offer some basic criteria for the Vietnamese clause. It is evident from

the discussion that, like English and many languages of the world, the clause in Vietnamese is the most important grammatical category which can be conceptualized from the point of view of stratification, rank, and metafunctions. These dimensions, as I have demonstrated above, can act as valid criteria (both definition and recognition) for defining and recognizing the clause in Vietnamese.

REFERENCES

1. Ban, Diệp Quang. (1987). *Câu đơn tiếng Việt*. Hà Nội: NXBGD.
2. Chinh, Trương Văn & Nguyễn Hiến Lê (1963). *Khảo luận về ngữ pháp Việt Nam*. Huế: Đại học Huế.
3. Đức, Đinh Văn. (1986). *Ngữ pháp tiếng Việt: Từ loại*. Hà Nội: ĐHTH-CN.
4. Eggins, S. (1994). *An Introduction to Systemic Functional Linguistics*. London: Frances Pinter.
5. Fries, P.H. (1981). On the Status of Theme: Arguments from Discourse. *Forum Linguisticum* 6(I). Pp. 1 – 38.
6. Fries, P.H. (1995). Themes, Methods of Development, and Texts. (In) *On Subject and Theme: A Discourse Functional Perspective*. Hasan, R. & P.H. Fries (Eds.). Amsterdam: John Benjamins. Pp. 317-359.
7. Greenbaum, S. (1996). *The Oxford English Grammar*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
8. Halliday, M. A. K. (1967). Notes on Transitivity and Theme in English, Parts 1 & 2. *Journal of Linguistics*, No. 3.
9. Halliday, M. A. K. (1970). Language Structure and Language Function. (In) *New Horizons in Linguistics*. Lyons, J. (Ed.). Harmondsworth: Penguin. Pp. 140 – 165.
10. Halliday, M. A. K. (1985). *Spoken and Written Language*. Geelong, Victoria: Deakin University Press.
11. Halliday, M.A.K. (1994). *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. Second Edition. London: Edward Arnold.
12. Halliday, M. A. K. & R. Hasan (1985). *Language, Context, and Text: Aspects of Language in a Social-semiotic Perspective*. Victoria: Deakin University Press.
13. Hạo, Cao Xuân. (1991). *Tiếng Việt: Sơ thảo Ngữ pháp Chức năng, Quyển 1*. Hà Nội: KHXH.
14. Hasan, R. (1993). Context for Meaning. (In) *Georgetown University Round Table on Languages and Linguistics, 1992: Language, Communication and Social Meaning*. Alatis, J. E. (Ed.). Washington DC: Georgetown University Press. Pp. 79 – 103.

15. Hasan, R. & C. Cloran. (1990). A Sociolinguistic Study of Everyday Talk between Mothers and Children. (In) *Learning, Keeping and Using Language. Vol. 1: Selected Papers from the 8th World Congress of Applied Linguistics*. Halliday, M.A.K., J. Gibbon, & H. Nicholas (Eds.). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
16. Hasan, R. & G. Perrett. (1994). Learning to Function with the Other Tongue: A Systemic Functional Perspective on Second-Language Teaching. (In) *Perspectives on Pedagogical Grammar*. Terence Odlin (Ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 179 – 226.
17. Hasan, R., C. Cloran, & D.G. Butt. (Eds.) (1996). *Functional Descriptions: Theory in Practice*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
18. Hùng, Nguyễn Thượng. (1994). *Đôi chiếu Phần đề câu tiếng Anh với Phần đề của câu tiếng Việt*. Luận án Phó Tiến sĩ. Hà Nội: Trung tâm Khoa học Xã hội và Nhân văn.
19. Kim, Trần Trọng, Bùi Kỳ, & Phạm Duy Khiêm. (1940). *Việt-nam Văn-phạm*. (Tái bản lần thứ tám. Sài gòn: Tân Việt, 1960).
20. Matthiessen, C. (1995). *Lexicogrammatical Cartography: English Systems*. Tokyo: International Language Sciences Publishers.
21. Phiến, Hoàng Trọng. (1980). *Ngữ pháp tiếng Việt: Câu*. Hà Nội: ĐHTH-CN.
22. Solncev, V.M., J.K. Lekomcev, T.T. Mxitarjan, & I.I. Glebova. (1960). *Vjetnamskij Jazyk. Jazyki Zarubezhnogo Vostoka i Afriki*. Moskva.
23. Thompson, L.C. (1985). *A Vietnamese Reference Grammar*. Revised Edition. Mon - Khmer Studies XII - XIV. Journal of South-East Asia Philology. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
24. Tuệ, Hoàng., L. Cận, & C. Đ. Tú. (1962). *Giáo trình Việt ngữ, tập 1, 2*. Hà Nội: NXBGD.
25. UBKHXH. (1983). *Ngữ pháp tiếng Việt*. Hà Nội: KHXH.
26. Vân, Hoàng Văn. (1994). *A Functional Perspective on Translating ELT Texts from English into Vietnamese*. MA Dissertation. Macquarie University, Australia.
27. Vân, Hoàng Văn. (2002). *Ngữ pháp kinh nghiệm của cú tiếng Việt: Mô tả theo quan điểm chức năng hệ thống*. Hà Nội: KHXH.