

**AN ANALYSIS OF TEXTUAL METAFUNCTION OF
VIETNAMESE ONLINE NEWS REPORTS:
A CASE STUDY OF THE TET FESTIVAL**

SIRIPORN WOOCHAIYAPHUM

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS (LINGUISTICS)
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
MAHIDOL UNIVERSITY
2008**

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Thesis
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was submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies, Mahidol University

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

If life is a journey, the time it took to write this thesis may be but a short part of the journey of my life. But during that time, I have learned many more things than the conclusions and discussion mentioned in the last chapter. The thesis process has taught me patience and perseverance to fight the problems which I never thought I could do it before. This thesis could not have been completed without support, guidance and encouragement from the following individuals and institutions to which I owe so much gratitude and thanks.

I would like to dedicate my deep gratitude and thanks to Dr. Pattama Patpong my major advisor for her unfailing mental support, academic guidance and generous encouragement. I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sophana Srichampa – my co-advisor and my first Vietnamese language teacher for her willingness to guide and support me throughout my study. I would like to thank Dr. Naraset Pisitpanporn for his valuable comments and for correcting this thesis. And I would like to send special thanks to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Cholticha Bamroongraks – head of Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Liberal Arts, Thammasat University who spared her valuable time to be chairman of the thesis defense committee and for offerings extensive support, valuable suggestions and comments. My sincerest thanks go to Mr. Richard Hiam for his kind help in correcting and editing various drafts of this thesis.

I would also like to extend many thanks to “Faculty and Students Exchange Program between Thailand and Greater Mekong Sub-region Countries (GMS)” for providing financial support which allowed me to study Vietnamese in Hanoi, Vietnam. I wish to thank all Thai and Vietnamese teachers and friends for their kind assistance and support throughout my stay in Hanoi, Vietnam.

More thanks and appreciation than I can express are directed to my beloved family – grandmother, father, mother and sister for their love, understanding, great support, and encouragement. My thanks extend to all of my lovely best friends and my classmates for sharing my happiness and suffering during the time of study.

Finally, I will forever cherish the moments and great opportunities, both of happiness and suffering, during my time of study towards this Master’s degree of Arts (Linguistics) which has became a major part of my growing up and personal development.

Siriporn Woochaiyaphum

AN ANALYSIS OF TEXTUAL METAFUNCTION OF VIETNAMESE ONLINE NEWS REPORTS: A CASE STUDY OF THE TET FESTIVAL

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ABSTRACT

The objectives of this research were to analyse Theme and Rheme structure and to explore text development (thematic progression), and some significant features of Vietnamese online news reporting. The data were drawn from 14 backdated Tet festival online news reports taken from VietNamNet – www.vnn.vn, from 8 February 2005 to 11 February 2005. The data were analysed based on Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). The analysis focused on textual metafunction — theorized as the system of Theme and Rheme.

The results revealed that the Theme structure of Vietnamese online-news reporting was comprised of a sequence of textual, interpersonal, and topical Themes. In terms of Theme selection both unmarked and marked Themes were selected. In addition, option textual Themes could be found at positions before Rhemes. The unmarked Themes (82.67%) were found more frequently than the marked Themes (17.33%). Within the marked Theme selection, the most favoured marked Themes were temporal circumstantial Themes (10.55%). These results relate to the data sources which were based on the three important days of Tet festival celebrations. The profile of Theme selection was related to a news-writing structure which was concerned with specific details about who, what, when, where, why and how. There were three types of thematic progression patterns. The most frequent thematic progression was a constant thematic progression.

**KEY WORDS: DISCOURSE ANALYSIS / SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL LINGUISTICS /
TEXTUAL METAFUNCTION / VIETNAMESE LANGUAGE /
VIETNAMESE ONLINE NEWS REPORT / NEWS REPORT**

309 pp.

การวิเคราะห์ไวยากรณ์ระบบและหน้าที่ของการแสดงความหมายจากความสัมพันธ์ของข้อความ
ในข่าวอิเล็กทรอนิกส์ภาษาเวียดนาม: กรณีศึกษาข้อความ เรื่องเทศกาลเต็ด (AN ANALYSIS
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บทคัดย่อ

การศึกษารั้งนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาโครงสร้างแสดงข้อความหลัก, การพัฒนาหัวข้อสำคัญของข้อความ และลักษณะสำคัญของข่าวอิเล็กทรอนิกส์ภาษาเวียดนามเรื่องเทศกาลเต็ด โดยเก็บข้อมูลข่าวข้อหนังจากเว็บไซต์—www.vnn.vn ระหว่างวันที่ 8-11 กุมภาพันธ์ 2548 และใช้ทฤษฎีไวยากรณ์ระบบและหน้าที่ของการแสดงความหมายจากความสัมพันธ์ของข้อความในการวิเคราะห์

ผลการศึกษาพบว่าโครงสร้างแสดงข้อความหลักของข่าวอิเล็กทรอนิกส์ภาษาเวียดนามได้แก่ textual Theme, interpersonal Theme, และ topical Theme ประเภทของหัวข้อสำคัญ (Theme) ที่พบมากที่สุดคือ unmarked Theme และ marked Theme นอกจากนี้ขั้นพบทាំแห่งการปรากฏ textual Theme อยู่ก่อน Rheme รวมทั้งพบรากฎของ unmarked Theme (82.67%) มากกว่า marked Theme (17.33%) ประเภทของ marked Theme ที่พบมากที่สุดคือ marked Theme ประเภทเวลา (10.55%) ซึ่งสอดคล้องกับเนื้อหาของข้อมูลที่เกี่ยวกับช่วงเวลาสำคัญของการเฉลิมฉลองเทศกาลเต็ดจำนวน 3 วัน ผลการศึกษาดังกล่าวยังสอดคล้องกับโครงสร้างการเขียนข่าวที่ให้ความสำคัญกับการให้ข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับ ใคร, ทำอะไร, ที่ไหน, ทำไม และอย่างไร และพบรูปแบบของ การพัฒนาหัวข้อสำคัญของข้อความ (thematic progression) จำนวน 3 รูปแบบ รูปแบบที่พบมากที่สุดคือรูปแบบประเภท constant thematic progression

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In the globalization era, an age of information, there are many channels that audiences can turn to get news or information to suit their needs. Sophisticated technology can be useful to enable them to access the source of information at an increasing rapid rate. Apart from the conventional media (i.e. TV, newspapers and radio), the internet plays an important role in dissolving all boundaries, making information flow and bringing people together via wireless interactions.

With the increasingly rapid pace of internet accessibility, the news website is another media channel that is extensively browsed by hardcore news fans. It can constantly update and review news item and is instantly accessible.

In Vietnam, news websites are widely available to the new cyber generation. In addition, news websites are widely accessed by Vietnamese refugees, students and workers who live abroad in many countries around the world such as in Asia, Europe and Australia. In this way, they can keep in touch with domestic current affairs in Vietnam. Nowadays there are many news websites, both newspaper websites (e.g. Nhân Dân, Hà nội Mới, Tuổi Trẻ, Sài gòn Giải Phong) and online news websites (e.g. VietNamNet – <http://www.vnn.vn>) which have been developed to serve Vietnamese and even linguists with a vast array of daily news articles as well as news archives.

Apart from exposing the news and current affairs, Vietnamese news websites are a source for study of the Vietnamese language from news reports. They are comprehensive and helpful for studying the Vietnamese language.

Linguistically, ‘text’ is the form of data used for linguistic analysis. Text is also a rich meaning in two significant ways: text is an object that can answer the question about text meaning or text value; text is an instrument that can reveal details about the system of the spoken and written language. Text has a different status in

each case: either viewed as artefact, or else viewed as specimen (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 3).

This research aims to study Vietnamese discourse by focusing on news story text type. Data are drawn from Tet festival online news taken from <http://www.vnn.vn> (during 8-12 February, 2005).

This study is the first attempt to analyse news media discourse by using systemic functional linguistics (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) as the linguistic framework. It aims to answer research questions: what is Theme and Rheme system in the Vietnamese online news; what is the text organization of Vietnamese online news; how do reporters or writers build a discursive flow of information, as message.

This study is drawn from one main data source - news stories, which is different from the study done by Minh Duc Thai (1998). Thai presented a provisional sketch of a systemic-functional description of Vietnamese clause grammar by investigating a number of text types: biography, exposition, conversation, instruction and recount.

In addition, this thesis aims to extend the study of Vietnamese narrative discourse focusing on cohesive devices of Vietnamese folktales studied by Danthanavanich (2000). Danthanavanich analyzed cohesive devices used in Vietnamese folktales which are based on six folktales analyzed by Longacre's model. This current study thus differs from that of Danthanavanich's study in terms of text type and the linguistic framework used for data analysis. Moreover, studying Vietnamese by analysing various text type and using different framework will help us much better understand Vietnamese language features and Vietnamese cultures.

In addition, the results of this current research will contribute to the Vietnamese grammar system, particularly in terms of textual metafunction.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

- 1.2.1 To analyse Theme and Rheme structure of the Vietnamese online news report
- 1.2.2 To analyse an internal structure of Theme

1.2.3 To analyse text development (thematic progression) of the Vietnamese online news report and to analyse some significant features of Vietnamese online news report in terms of textual metafunction

1.3 Benefits of the Study

1.3.1 To understand Theme and Rheme structure of Vietnamese online news

1.3.2 To characterize thematic progression (text development) of Vietnamese online news reports

1.3.3 To understand some significant features of news reports

1.3.4 To understand the study of Vietnamese narrative discourse to news media discourse

1.4 Scopes of the study

1.4.1 Study fourteen pieces of the Tet festival Vietnamese online news taken from VietNamNet – <http://www.vnn.vn> (selected data from all news reports which are activities about Tet festival during 8 February 2005 – 11 February 2005)

1.4.2 Collect the data during 8 February 2005 – 11 February 2005 covering the three official days of the Tet festival (9-11 February 2005), the most important period in celebrations of the Tet festival in Vietnam

1.4.3 Analyse only text message, not including news captions

1.4.4 Analyse Vietnamese news reports in terms of textual metafunction – a resource for presenting flow of information

1.4.5 Data used in this study are not a representative of Vietnamese news reports, as this study is based on Tet festival news reports

1.5 Vietnamese Language

1.5.1 Language family

Vietnamese is the official language in Vietnam and is spoken by about 80 million people in Vietnam and about two million living overseas (<http://www.public.asu.edu/~ickpl/> - Arizona state university, colleague of liberal arts and science, 1 Apr. 2006). It belongs to the Viet-Muong subbranch of the Mon-Khmer family, which is classified as a part of the Austroasiatic Language family by Gerard Diffloth (1974 as cited in Ratanakul, 2000: 67-73).

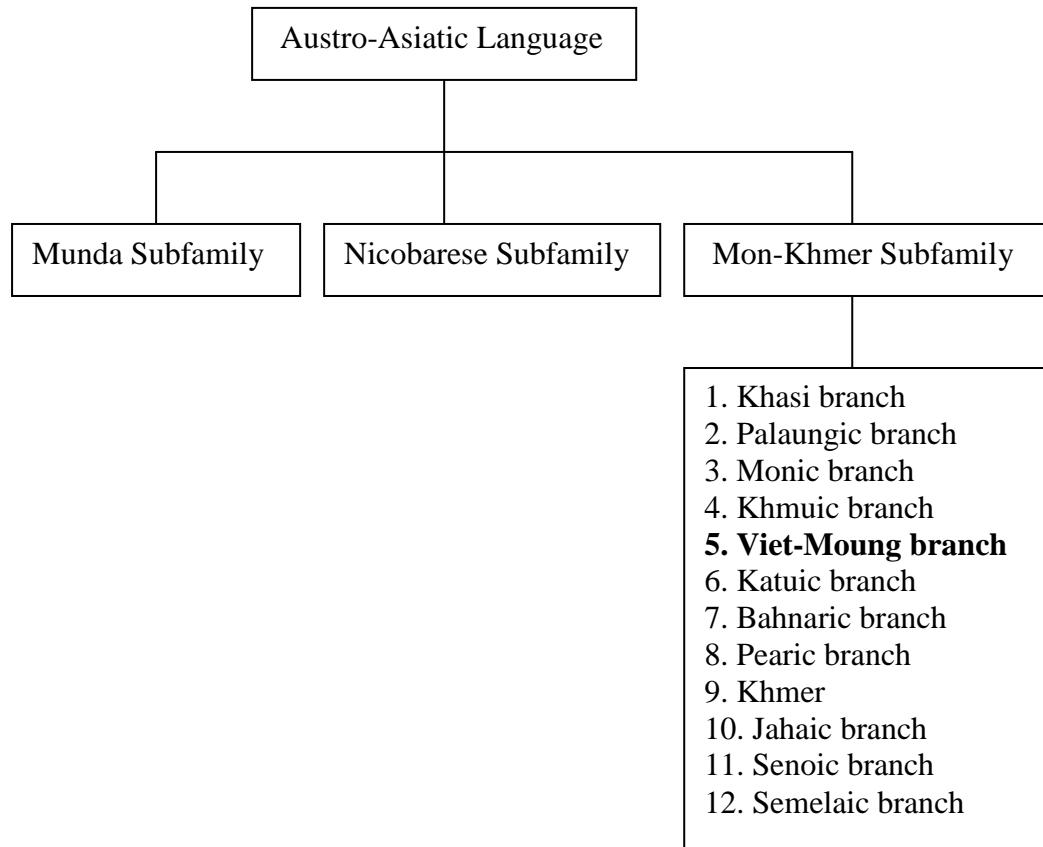


Figure 1 Austro-Asiatic language family

(adapted from Diffloth, 1974 as cited in Ratanakul, 2000)

1.5.2 Vietnamese Phonology

The Vietnamese phonology in this current research is based on the northern dialect adapted from Srichampa (1995). The following section will present three main components of syllable structure: consonants, vowels and tones.

Consonants

Vietnamese language has 22 consonant phonemes and 26 consonant orthographies as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Vietnamese consonant phonemes and consonant orthographies

Places of Articulation		Bilabial	Labio-dental	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Manners of Articulation							
Plosive	Voice	b (b)		d (đ)			
	Voiceless	p (p)		t (t)	c (ch),(tr)	k (c,k,g)	
	Unaspirated			th (th)			
	Voiceless Aspirated						
Fricatives	Voice		v (v)	z (d,gi)		ɣ (g,gh)	
	Voiceless		f (ph)	s (x)		x (kh)	h (kh)
Nasals		m (m)		n (n)	ɲ (nh)	ŋ (ng,ngh)	
Lateral				l (l)			
Trill				r (r)			
Semi-vowels		w (u,o)				j (i,y)	

Vowels

Vietnamese language has 11 single vowels and three diphthongs as shown in Table 2 and Table 3.

Monothong

Table 2 Vietnamese monothong vowels phonemes and vowels orthographies

Tongue Position Tongue Height	Front	Middle	Back
Vowel length		short long	
High	i: (i,y)	u: (u)	u: (u)
Mid	e: (ê)	ə: (o) ʌ: (â)	o: (ô)
Low	ɛ: (e)	a (a) a: (ă)	ɔ: (o)

Diphthongs

Table 3 Vietnamese diphthongs vowels phonemes and vowels orthographies

Tongue Position Tongue Height	Front	Middle	Back
Diphthongs	ie: (iê,yê)	uə (uə,ua)	uo (uô)

Tones

Vietnamese is a tonal language with six tones. These tones are marked as follows:

1. Level or ngang	/no tonal symbol/
2. High rising or sắc	/'/
3. Low (falling) or huyền	/`/
4. Dipping-rising or hỏi	/^/
5. High rising glottalized or ngã	/~/
6. Low glottalized or nặng	/_./

Level	a ă â e ê i o ô o u ư y ma [má] = ghost
High rising	á ă á é ê í ó ô ó ú ư y má [má] = cheek
Low (falling)	à ă à è ê ì ò ô ò ú ư y mà [mà] = but
Dipping-rising	ả ă ả è ê ì ô ô ò ú ư y mà [mả] = tomb
High rising glottalized	ã ă ã ë ê ì õ ô õ ú ư y mã [mã] = horse
Low glottalized	ạ ă ạ e ê i o ô o u ư y mạ [mạ] = rice seeding

1.5.3 The Vietnamese scripts

Vietnamese was originally written with a Sinoform (Chinese-like) script known as *Chữ-nôm* or *Nôm*. At first most Vietnamese literature was essentially Chinese in structure and vocabulary. Later literature was developed in a more Vietnamese style, but it was still full of Chinese loan words (<http://www.omniglot.com/writing/Vietnamese.htm>, 1 Apr. 2006).

Chữ-nôm was used until the 20th century. Courses in the *Chữ-nôm* scripts were available at Ho Chi Minh University until 1993, but since then knowledge and interest in the script has died out. During the 17th century, Roman Catholic missionaries introduced a Latin-based orthography for Vietnamese, *Quốc Ngữ* (national language), which has been used ever since. Until the early 20th century, *Quốc Ngữ* was used in parallel with *Chữ-nôm*. Today only *Quốc Ngữ* is used.

1.6 General background of Vietnam and Tet festival

As mentioned above, this study is based on the Tet festival, the most important festival of Vietnam and the following section will review some important information about Vietnam and the Tet festival as background information. The summary of general background of Vietnam and Tet festival is taken from the Vietnam national administration of tourism (2005).

1.6.1 General background of Vietnam

Geography

Vietnam is located in the centre of Southeast Asia and borders China to the North, Laos and Cambodia to the West, the East Sea and the Pacific Ocean to the East

and the South (see Figure2, page 11). Vietnam's territory stretches from north to south a total length of 1,650 kilometers. Besides that, it has thousands of offshore islands, the biggest of which are *Hoàng Sa* (Paracel) and *Trường Sa* (Spratley).

Climate

Vietnam lies in the East Asian monsoon zone, so its tropical climate is affected by two monsoons. The average temperature in the North is around 17°C in the winter and 29°C in summer. In the South, the climate undergoes less variation with an annual average temperature of about 27°C in Ho Chi Minh City.

Terrain

Three quarters of Vietnam's area is made up of mountains and hills. Vietnam has two major deltas, including the Red River Delta in the North and the Mekong River Delta in the South, and four mountainous zones with distinctive features.

People

The Vietnamese population is 82,069,000 (according to the 2004 census) with 54 ethnic groups. The largest group is the Viet or Kinh, accounting for 90% of the whole population. They generally concentrate in the deltas, while other minorities live in the highlands and mountainous areas.

Religions

The major religions in Vietnam include Buddhism, Christianity (Roman Catholic and Evangelical church), CaoDaism and HoaHaoism. There is no official religion but Buddhism is very popular. Most Vietnamese worship their ancestors.

Besides that, there are different religious practices in a Vietnamese person's life, including worshiping the village spirits of people who have delivered great merit to the country as well as the heroes. Each ethnic group has its own custom of worship, but they all wish for a happy and prosperous life and pay special attention to the worship of ancestors.

Festivals

Festivals and fetes, which are popular features of Vietnamese cultural activities, are organized by all ethnic groups and in all corners of the country. A festival, whether organized by a group living in the lowlands or highlands, is a chance for everyone to remember their roots and show their gratitude for those who are held in high regard, the heroes who have devoted their lives to the country, and a saint who represents nature's power or someone from the people's own imagination.

The festival is also a chance for people to exchange feelings and practices to express a noble desire to love their country and their home. It is a time for relaxation and to forget daily worries.

Most of the festivals and fetes are organized in spring or autumn – the best time of the year and when the harvests are over. The biggest festivals are Tet Holidays at the beginning of the Lunar New Year. Other festivals are organized in different localities and by the local people.

1.6.2 Tet festival – the Vietnamese traditional or lunar New Year

Tet or Tết Nguyên Đán means New Year Festival (Srichampa, 2000: 128-146). Tet festival, as Vietnam's traditional and lunar New Year's holiday, is the biggest and most sacred Vietnamese traditional festival and is celebrated throughout the country for three days during late January or early February (depending on the Lunar Calendar). In 2005 the three official days for organizing Tet festival was between 9-11, February 2005.

Tet is an occasion for people to show respect to their ancestors and origins, wishing for a new year full of good luck and happiness. When Tet comes, wherever they may be, Vietnamese people all try to return to their home towns for family gatherings, and to meet their relatives and neighbors.

The activities over the three main days of Tet are described below:

The day before the celebration of the New Year day is New Year's Eve and Vietnamese call the midnight time before the New Year as "Giao Thùa", the time nearly the midnight of the old year. Some people pray and there is the sound of firecrackers to say good bye to the old year and to greet the new year.

The first day of the new year is an important day when the husband and all members of the family join together to pay respects to their ancestors, and eat together, and a time when grandparents bless and give money in red envelopes to their grandchild and everyone promises to improve their lives.

The second day is the day for visiting the wife's family, friends, and going out to relax.

The third day is an occasion to greet other people such as teachers, bosses or family doctors.

The main traditional dishes are *bánh chưng* (a square cake made of sticky rice stuffed with beans paste and pork) which is served with *dưa hành* (pickled onion), *chè kho* (soft green-lentil cake) and *chè com* (a kind of dessert made with sugar and grilled spring rice).

During Tet, Vietnamese people usually display decorative flowers, traditional pictures, which represent elegant cultural activities of people in the early of spring.

Vietnamese people also have many interesting traditional customs such as dressing up in new clothes, enjoying spring trips, beginning New Year writing, welcoming the first guest after New Year Eve to their house and congratulating each other.



Figure 2 The Map of Vietnam (taken from <http://www.GraphicMaps.com>, 12 Apr. 2006)

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEWS

This chapter will focus on literature reviews. The literature review is organized as follows:

- 2.1 Literature reviews on Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)
 - 2.1.1 An overview of Systemic Functional Linguistics
 - 2.1.2 Relevant studies of textual metafunction
 - 2.1.3 Relevant studies of textual metafunction in news reports
- 2.2 Literature reviews on Vietnamese discourse
 - 2.2.1 A textual metafunction analysis in Vietnamese
 - 2.2.2 Other studies of Vietnamese discourse

An overview of Systemic Functional Linguistics will be revealed first. This is followed by an overview of textual metafunction, the relevant studies of textual metafunction in news reports, and the Vietnamese discourse studies.

2.1 Literature reviews on Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is a theory of language. It focuses on language function. SFL grew out of the work of JR Firth, a British linguist of the thirties, forties, and fifties, after which it was mainly developed by his student Michael Halliday (<http://www.wagsoft.com/Systemics/Definition/definition.html>, 21 Nov. 2007) Halliday developed the theory in the early sixties (Halliday, 1961 as cited in <http://www.wagsoft.com>, 21 Nov. 2007). In 1994, his ideas were gathered together in his book entitled “An introduction to functional grammar” (2nd edition, 1994). On the next ten years, in 2004, the third edition of “An introduction to functional grammar” was published, this edition was revised by Michael Halliday and Christian Matthiessen (3rd edition, 2004). In addition, SFL theory has been explored and taken further by Ruquiyah Hasan, Christian Matthiessen and James Robert Matin (Butt et al, 2000). Nowadays,

SFL is especially influential in areas of language development, educational linguistics, literacy, clinical linguistics, language typology, computational linguistics, stylistics and the study of verbal art, translations studies and multimodality (cf. Halliday, 1985) and it has spread to a number of institutions throughout Australia and around the world.

The next section will reveal some significant features of Systemic Functional Linguistics in general and the textual metafunction in particular.

2.1.1 An overview of Systemic Functional Linguistics

Systemic Functional Linguistics views language as a higher-order semiotic system (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; Matthiessen, 1995, 2002). Semiotic systems are resources for making meaning, but at the same time higher-order makes more than one kind of meaning: they are metafunctional in nature.

Systemic functional linguistics views language as multidimensional space. Language is characterized in two dimensions (i) Global dimensions (including three global dimensions of the hierarchy of stratification, the cline of instantiation, and the spectrum of metafunction), and (ii) Local dimensions (including the hierarchy of rank, axis, and delicacy). Figure 3 illustrates a multidimensional space for linguistic description.

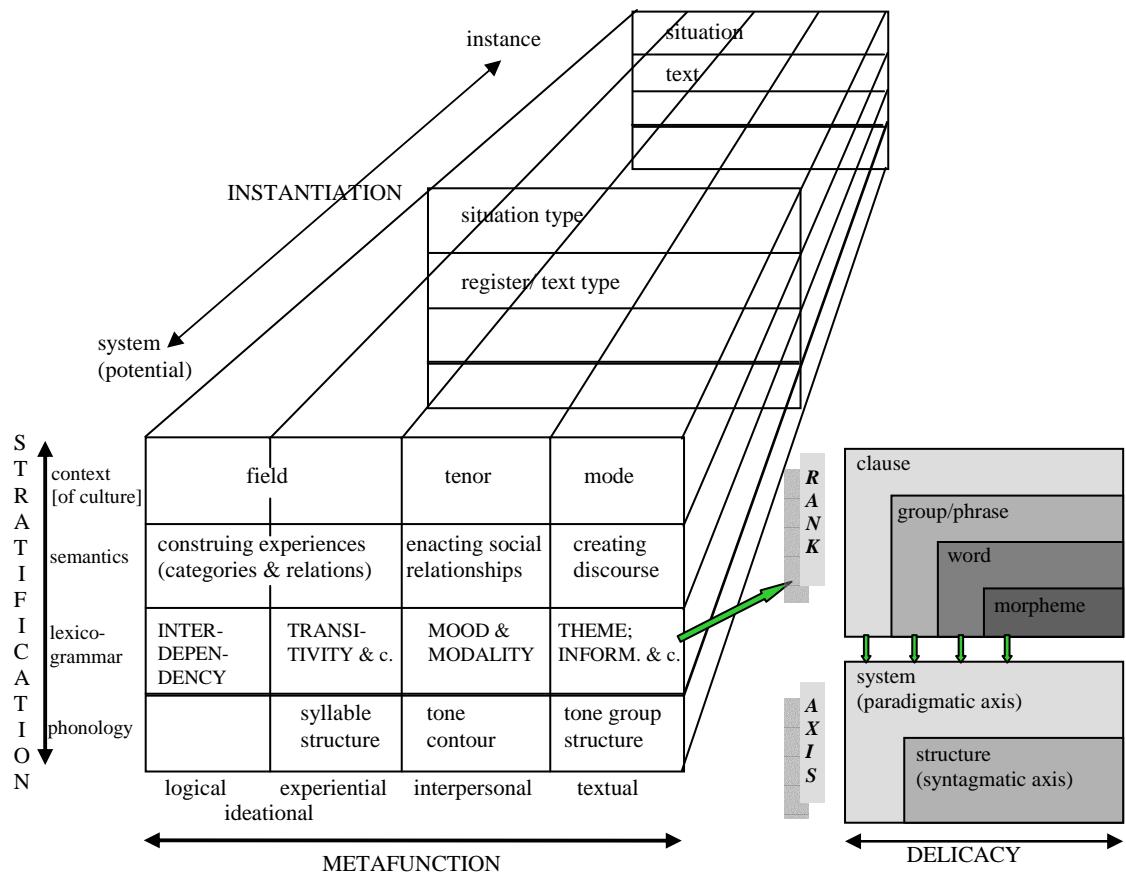


Figure 3 A multidimensional space for linguistic descriptions

(adapted from Wu, 2000, as cited in Patpong, 2006)

Global dimensions

All three global dimensions define “subsystems”, but they define different kinds of subsystems. This is elaborated by Matthiessen (1995: 174) as follows:

“The cline of instantiation allows us to show how the passage is related to the general system of the language, the hierarchy of stratification allows us to locate a subsystem such as lexicogrammar within the total system of language, and the spectrum of metafunction allows us to locate the tactic organization of complexion within the total range of meanings in the language.”

(Matthiessen, 1995: 174)

Stratification dimension

Stratification dimension views language as a complex semiotic system, having various levels or strata (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 24-25). This strata is split into two : (i) stratum of semantics, this is where step the interfacing part, experience and interpersonal relationships are transformed into meaning and (ii) stratum of lexicogrammar, this step is where the meaning is further transformed into wording. In addition, stratification dimension views language as a series of redundancies which link ecosocial environment to nonrandom disturbances in the air (soundwaves) (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 26). The relationship among the strata or the process of linking one level of organization with another is called realization. Halliday and Matthiessen represent the strata organization of language and show how the stratified linguistic system is embedded in context as shown in Table 4 (cf. Halliday, 1978; Halliday and Hasan, 1985; Martin, 1992 as cited in Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 26).

Table 4 From ecosocial environment to soundwaves: speaker perspective (based on Halliday, 1978; Halliday and Hasan, 1985; Martin, 1992 as cited in Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 26)

(from environment to) meaning:	interfacing, via receptors	semantics
(from meaning to) wording:	internal organization	lexicogrammar
(from wording to) composing:	internal organization	phonology
(from composing to) sounding	interfacing, via receptors	phonetics

Instantiation dimension

Halliday and Matthiessen (2004: 26-27) describe how the system of the language is instantiated in the form of the text, or system and text are related through instantiation. The cline of instantiation combines with two poles: potential and instance. The system pole of the cline of instantiation is associated with text type identifying, registers interpretation and type of context. In addition, these patterns of instantiation present quantitatively as adjustments in the systemic probabilities of language and a register can be represented

Metafunction dimension

According to Halliday and Matthiessen (1997: 12-13) metafunction refers to different modes of meaning construed by the grammar that relates to phenomena outside language.

Three metafunctions include:

1. The ideational metafunction is concerned with ‘ideation – grammatical resources for construing our experience of the world around us and inside us. One of its major grammatical systems is TRANSITIVITY.
2. The interpersonal metafunction is concerned with the interaction between the speaker and the addressee (s) – grammatical resources for enacting social roles in general, and speech roles in particular, in dialogic interaction, for establishing, changing, and maintaining interpersonal relations. One of its major grammatical systems is MOOD.
3. The textual metafunction (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 30) is one of three concepts in systemic functional linguistics that relate to two metafunctions: ideational and interpersonal.

The textual metafunction is concerned with the creation of text with the presentation of ideational and interpersonal meanings as information that can be shared by the speaker and the listener in text unfolding in context. One of the major textual systems is THEME, the resource for setting up a local context for a clause by selecting a local point of departure in the flow of information. In addition textual metafunction control textual statues and conjunctive development of text (Matthiessen & Halliday, 1997: 47).

Based on contributions made by textual metafunction, as one of main grammatical systems, this study applies textual metafunction as a framework to explore text organization and text development of Vietnamese online news. A summary of textual metafunction is presented below.

Textual Metafunction

Textual metafunction is the mode of meaning which relates to the construction of text, construing experience, enacting interpersonal relations depend on being able to build up sequences of discourse, organizing the discursive flow and creating cohesion and continuity as it moves along (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 30). Within textual metafunction, there are two main systems that have been widely studied in Systemic Functional terms — the system of THEME and the system of INFORMATION. The system of THEME is focused on thematic structure. In a complementary perspective, the system of INFORMATION is concerned with information structure. Theme falls within the Given, while the New falls within the Rheme. Theme + Rheme is speaker-oriented, whereas Given + New is listener-oriented (see Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 93). This current study is mainly focused on the system of THEME.

As mentioned above, one of grammatical systems of textual metafunction is Theme system. The textual mode of meaning is realized structurally as Theme ^ Rheme.

Theme System

Halliday (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 58) characterizes Theme as the point of departure of clause as message for what the speaker is going to say:

“Theme is a resource for organizing the interpersonal and ideational meanings of each clause in the form of message. The system of Theme sets up a local environment, providing a point of departure by reference to which the listener interprets the message. The local environment, serving as a point of departure, is the Theme; what is presented in this local environment is the Rheme.”

(Matthiessen & Halliday, 1997: 22)

Moreover, studying textual metafunction lets us know how the speakers or writers organize their message from the beginning to the end of the text.

There are three different elements that constitute Theme.

1. **Topical or Ideational Theme** is the Theme slots that are realized by a nominal group, verbal group, adverbial group or prepositional phrase.
2. **Interpersonal Theme** is the part of Theme that includes the speaker's feeling, comment or attitude. The interpersonal Theme is often realized by modal adjuncts.
3. **Textual Theme** is the Theme that connects the message. It is realized by conjunctions (e.g. if, although, unless, because), or conjunctives (therefore, nevertheless, in addition, finally).

Thematic progression

The three different Theme choices as mentioned above are the resources for exploring a texts organization or thematic progression. Thematic progression is the process to explain how text develops by picking up the topic from Theme to Theme, Rheme to Rheme, and Theme to Rheme. In addition, thematic progression is the way in which the Theme of the clause may pick up or repeat a meaning from a preceding Theme or Rheme (Paltridge, 2000: 140). There are many ways to categorise thematic progression patterns. Daneš (1974) and Fries (1981), divide two basic types of thematic progression: (i) Theme → Theme progression which begins by relating a new Theme to the previous one, (ii) Rheme → Theme which changes and relates a new Theme to the previous Rheme.

This study divides thematic progression based on Paltridge's category, which divides thematic progression into three patterns (Paltridge, 2000: 140-143):

- a) a Theme reiteration or constant Theme pattern
- b) a zig-zag or linear Theme pattern
- c) a multiple Theme or split Rheme pattern

The details of three thematic progression patterns found in this study will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Local dimensions

According to Matthiessen and Halliday (1997 as cited in <http://www.minerva.ling.mq.edu.au>, 27 Nov. 2007), language has local dimensions. The local dimensions include, , rank, axis and delicacy. Each dimension will be elaborated in turn.

(i) Rank is a series of units which are made up of more units of the rank. The highest rank scale is the clause complex, following with clause, phrase, group and other associated complexes (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 31 and Butt et al, 2000: 29).

(ii) Axis is a distinction between two modes of semiotic organization (Caffarel, Martin & Matthiessen, 2004: 27 as cited in Patpong, 2006). All strata of language have two modes of axial organization, the *paradigmatic* mode networks of systems, and the *syntagmatic* mode structural configurations of functions. These system-structure modes are distributed according to a ranked hierarchy of units (Matthiessen and Halliday, 1997 as cited in <http://www.minerva.ling.mq.edu.au>, 27 Nov. 2007).

In addition, axis and rank are interpreted as general intra-stratal principles of organization that are manifested in the different stratal environments of language in context.

(iii) Delicacy is the scale from general to specific. In a system network, delicacy corresponds to the ordering of systems from left to right by means of entry conditions. For example, the following systems of MOOD increase in delicacy from left to right (Matthiessen & Halliday 1997 as cited in <http://www.minerva.ling.mq.edu.au>, 27 Nov. 2007, see Figure 4)

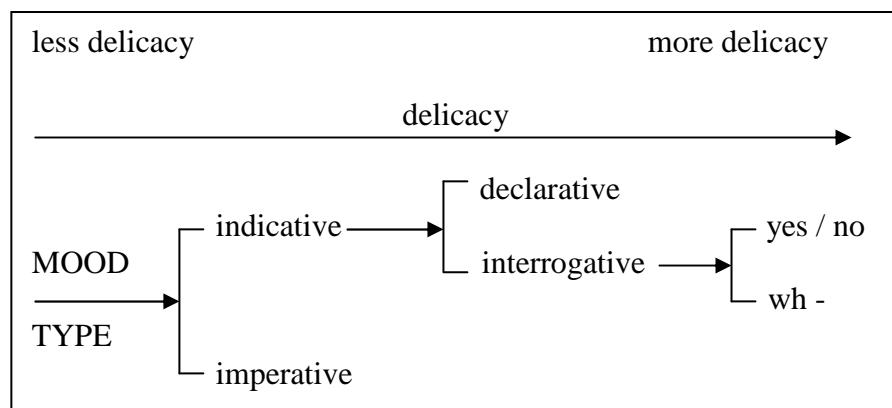


Figure 4 System of MOOD

2.1.2 Relevant studies of textual metafunction

Textual metafunction is one of the useful frameworks to analyse the internal text structure and text organization as mentioned above. Therefore, there are many studies which use textual metafunction as a linguistic framework. Examples of previous studies based on textual analysis will be revealed as follows.

Rose, (2001) discusses some variations in Theme across languages. He is concerned with how clauses are organized across diverse languages: Chinese, French Gaelic, German, Japanese, Pitjantjatjara, Tagalog and Vietnamese. This study compared some of these textual resources and the functions of Theme in discourse by using systemic functional linguistics (SFL) provided in language typology. This study found that topical Themes are typically participants role and languages vary in how to present other elements as unmarked Themes, including cliticisation, and passive voice.

In conclusion, this study suggests that languages classified according to purpose basic word order (such as SOV, VOS), by the basic order of topic and focus oversimplify the problems of language. The statistical analyses of clause types in texts can not reveal the subtle roles of textual organization of clauses in unfolding discourse; it is only possible by examining how grammatical structures perform in discourse as texts unfold.

This study shows the significant Theme selection found in many languages. That is topical themes seem to be the favorite Theme choice in many languages.

Besides the text typology analysis as mentioned above, Systemic Functional Linguistics: textual metafunction was used to analyse texts in various text types and various languages as in Whittaker (1995). He studied Theme processes and the realization of meanings in eight academic articles on economics and linguistics. The analysis found the similarity of text resources which related to number and realizations of textual and interpersonal Theme. He found that the number of textual Themes was more than twice that of interpersonal Themes and both types frequently have metaphorical realizations. Moreover, around 30 percents of ideational Themes were realized by circumstantial, involved relational processes.

In conclusion, this analysis developed two main concepts: to find data useful for reading courses and to make possible an awareness of the difference between

ideational and interpersonal information. The different types of unmarked ideational Themes indicated the classes of processes which were useful. The number and variety of circumstantial Themes and their varied realizations indicated a problem for students which instructors need to solve.

This study shows how Theme choices are important elements in texts especially indicating the communicative process in texts. It shows how we can improve texts by using Theme choices to make the reader understand the contents in texts.

Besides English analysis, there are many analyses in other languages which used textual metafunction as a linguistic framework for text analysis as in Afghan Persian or Dari (Rashidi, 1992), South-East Asian languages as in Thai (Patpong, 2002).

Rashidi (1992) analysed Theme of Afghan Persian or Dari narrative. This study collected text from oral narrative which were told informally to the researcher by a native speaker. This study found that the Theme realization of Dari narrative was most often the initial sentence element in the sentence and probably in the clause. From the data Theme always preceded Rheme but the researcher could not confirm that this would be found in a larger corpus. Besides subject of the clause, Theme could be a circumstantial element or another but it was not a participant element. Theme and Rheme seemed to be linked with discourse flow. But in this narrative, Rheme was the core of the storyline by setting up the narrative and introducing the major participants in the story was connected with linear development.

Rashidi's study shows how Theme choices relate to text development which is the same method used in this present research.

Patpong (2002) analysed Thematic structure in Thai entitled of "On Theme as a Textual Resource in Thai". This analysis provided an initial account of Theme as textual resources in Thai, including the system of Theme, mainly Theme choice, Theme selection and Theme type in Thai narrative discourse.

This analysis found that textual Themes in Thai were structural conjunctions and continuatives. Interpersonal Themes were vocative and wh interrogative. Topical Themes were unmarked and marked topical Theme which could be either non-ellipsed topical Theme or ellipsed topical Theme (zero morpheme). Theme selection

involved a selection between unmarked and marked Theme, the most selected Themes were unmarked topical Theme. There were two types of thematic organization: single and multiple Themes. Most of them were single Theme.

There are significant similar characteristics of Theme structure in Thai (Patpong, 2002) and Theme structure in Vietnamese which is found in this present study. That is ellipsed topical Themes can be expressed by zero morphemes. In addition, there is an optional textual Theme preceding Rheme.

2.1.3 Relevant studies of textual metafunction in news reports

This section will reveal two relevant studies of textual metafunction. The first study was done by Gomez (1994) “The relevance of Theme in the textual organization of BBC news reports”. Data were collected from the Lancaster Spoken English Corpus (SEC) of BBC news reports. The second study was done by Nwogu et al (1991) “Thematic progression in profession in professional and popular medical texts”.

This study directly relates to the present study because it used news reports as resources for text analysis. Besides Theme structure this study also explores thematic progression of news reports.

Nwogu et al, (1991) analysed “Thematic progression in profession in professional and popular medical texts” by comparing thematic progression of three genres of medical texts: the research article papers, the abstracts and the journalistic reports, based on the Daneš’s concept of thematic progression. According to Daneš (1974: 120-121 as cited in Nwogu et al, 1991), thematic progression was categorized into four patterns: the simple linear thematic progression, the thematic progression with a continuous (constant) Theme, thematic progression with derived Themes and the split Rheme pattern. This analysis found that the simple linear and the constant thematic progression patterns occurred frequently in all three genres. But there were some differences that the simple linear pattern occurred with greater frequency in the journalistic report more than in other two, and the constant pattern dominated the development of the discourse in the research article papers. This analysis also

revealed that the simple linear pattern tended to be used to organize and develop information in paragraphs involving explanation or argumentation in all three genres.

In conclusion, this analysis summarized that investigating the choices which Theme offered to the English's writer and the possibility of developing consistent patterns of thematic progression seemed to be a valuable way explain why many aspects functional constraints as purpose and contextual constraints as audience were far more powerful influences more than subject matter on the organization of information in discourse.

This study directly relates to the present study especially the method of Thematic progression pattern and the frequency of Thematic progression occurring in texts.

2.2 Literature reviews on Vietnamese discourse

This section will reveal studies which are related to Vietnamese discourse: study of Vietnamese based on Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and study of Vietnamese discourse based on tagmemics approach.

2.2.1 A textual metafunction analysis in Vietnamese

Minh Duc Thai (1998) studied a systemic functional interpretation of Vietnamese grammar by exploring various texts: biography, exposition, conversation, instruction and recount. The data were taken from books which were published from the 1960s to the 1990s including define current newspaper articles (There were not news reports, Woochaiyaphum emphasized) and textbooks written in Vietnamese in 1994 and 1995 by Vietnam's Department of Education and Training.

Thai explored Theme as a resource for organizing the Vietnamese clause as a message in the unfolding text and for assigning different textual statuses to different parts of the clause.

The clause as a message was organized into Theme and Rheme structure, which was related to a construction of a cohesive and coherent text. The two thematic structures within the clause in Vietnamese, the unmarked topical and marked topical, were both essential to the flow of information and method of development.

Thai described that in Vietnamese, the textual metafunction organized the clause as a quantum of information – a message (Minh Duc Thai, 1999: 471-485).

“The Theme in Vietnamese sets up the local environment of the clause, relating it to the development of the text; it provides the addressee with a “point of departure” for interpreting the message. The Rheme presents the remainder of the message – the newsworthiness in relation to the textual environment set up by the Theme.”

(Minh Duc Thai, 1999: 471)

He further described that in Vietnamese Theme was realized by an initial position and Rheme was realized by a non-initial position. He described the significant three types of Theme in Vietnamese as follows:

Ideational Theme

An unmarked ideational or topical Theme in Vietnamese may be realized by a nominal group or a nominal group with nominal head and clause as modifier.

A marked topical Theme may be realized by a prepositional phrase or a verbal group.

Interpersonal Theme

In Vietnamese, the interpersonal Theme is often realized by modal adjuncts. modal adjuncts are elements that are expressed by an adverbial group or prepositional phrase that represent as (i) a probability, for example, *có lẽ* “perhaps”, *dĩ nhiên* “of course” and *rõ ràng* “obviously”; (ii) an usuality and (iii) an admission, for example, *thật tình mà nói* “to tell the truth”

Textual Theme

In Vietnamese, the textual Theme can be continuatives, and/or structural and/or conjunctives. Continuatives are words typically used in spoken Vietnamese to signal a new move. Continuatives in Vietnamese may indicate the continuity of what the speaker was saying previously.

Conjunctive commonly found in Vietnamese are listed as follows:

<i>va</i> “and”	<i>the nen</i> “then”	<i>cho den khi</i> “until”	<i>tu khi</i> “since”
<i>hay/hoac</i> “or”	<i>trong khi</i> “while”	<i>vi rang</i> “because”	<i>rang</i> “that”
<i>nhung</i> “but”	<i>khi ma</i> “when”	<i>boi le</i> “because”	<i>du</i> “whether”
<i>cho nen</i> “so”	<i>trong khi</i> “before”	<i>neu</i> “if”	<i>tham chi du</i> “even if”
<i>vi vay</i> “so”	<i>sau khi</i> “after”	<i>tru phi</i> “unless”	<i>gia ti nhu</i> “in case”
<i>de ma</i> “in order to/in order that”		<i>gia su rang</i> “supposing that”	
<i>voi dieu kien la/mien sao</i> “provided that”		<i>cho rang</i> “assuming that”	
<i>mac dau la</i> “in spite of the fact that”			

Thai's study provides an overview of Vietnamese grammar based on Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). However Thai's study does not particularly focus on news reports. The present study thus is the first study which provides the Vietnamese grammar by focusing on Vietnamese online news reports resources based on SFL approach.

2.2.2 Other studies of Vietnamese discourse

Danthanavanich (2000) analyzed the cohesive devices in six Vietnamese folktales which were based on Longacre's tagmemic approach. This analysis revealed that the cohesion in Vietnamese folktales includes (i) the discourse structure, (ii) the themeline, (iii) the participant line, and (iv) the conjunctive elements.

She also studied the surface structure of the notional features. The cohesive devices of theme can be traced by thematic verbs and thematic indicators. Thematic verbs include action verbs, motion verbs, speech verbs, cognitive experience verbs, proper verbs and causative verbs. Thematic indicators are grouped as indicators of punctiliar events, indicators of sequential events and indicators of simultaneous events.

The conjunctive elements were documented. There are nine types of conjunctive elements used in Vietnamese folktales: additive, adversative, alternative, resultative, causal, purposive, conditional, analogous, and exemplificatory.

Danthanavanich's study (2000) focuses on cohesion and cohesive devices in Vietnamese discourse. But the present study focuses on textual metafunction and studies conjunctions as resource for presenting information in unfolding texts.

Burusphat (2002) studied the progression markers in six Vietnamese folktales drawn from the work "Cohesive devices in Vietnamese folktales" (Danthanavanich, 2000).

She described that the progression markers refer to grammatical devices that characterize any happenings that push the story forward.

*"These markers highlight the temporal sequence of succeeding events, which form the backbone, or story line of the Vietnamese folktales. They are *rồi* 'already', *xong* 'finish', *đoạn* 'end', 'terminate', *thì* 'then', *bên* 'then, consequence', and *đã* 'have experience'."*

(Burusphat, 2002)

She also described a structure of these progression markers and proceeds to their discourse functions both on the narrative timeline and out of the line. As the default timeframe of the narrative is past time or accomplished time, when these markers occur in the past time, they indicate temporal succession and a cause-effect relationship of foregrounded events.

In projected time as in quotation, the progression markers *rồi*, *xoan*, *đoạn*, *thì*, *bên*, and *đã* are compared with the progression markers *lèw*, *sét*, *còp*, *kó:*, *cuij*, *dâ:j* in Minh Duc Thai (1999) respectively to show that despite the morphological difference, at the level of discourse syntax, their discourse structures are quite common.

Burusphat studies the thematic progression of text through (i) conjunction devices and (ii) aspect markers such as *lèw*, *sét*, *còp*, *dâ:j*, *kó:*, *cuij* which are morphological level.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter will explain the research methodology used in this current study step by step. It starts with data selection, data preparation and data checking. These processes are followed by stages of data analysis.

3.1 Data selection

This study focused on the Tet festival online news. The data were based on backdated Tet festival online news retrieved from VietNamNet – www.vnn.vn – with the largest number of online readers in Vietnam (over 300 million hits every month) (<http://www.English.vietnamnet.vn/utils/aboutus.html>, 18 Feb. 2005).

The VietNamNet was also awarded “The Favourite Website in Vietnam, 2002” from an overwhelming numbers of votes by readers of the most prestigious IT magazine in Vietnam, PC World, and the Gold Cup for best electronic newspaper and website of the Vietnam Information Technology Association.

The data were collected from 8 February 2005 to 11 February 2005 to cover the three official days of the Tet festival. They are the most important days to celebrate the Tet festival in Vietnam. Fourteen news reports were collected for an analysis of textual metafunction.

The fourteen news reports were as follows:

Date 8 February, 2005

1. Dâu, rể Tây ăn Tết Ta

(The foreign daughter in law and foreign son in law celebrated non-western Tet festival)

2. Tết Việt online: Trước giao thừa

(Tet Viet online: Before the New Year's Eve)

3. Tết Việt online: Tối 30

(Tet Viet online: Night 30 – the last day of old year)

4. Ăn té ở Trường Sa

(Tet festival celebrating at *Truong Sa* – Spratley archipelago)

5. Tết về làng “siêu khó khăn” ở Gia Lai

(Tet came back to the super - poor village at Gia Lai)

Date 9 February, 2005

6. Đêm 30, nghe đồng hồ điểm giao thừa bên hồ Hoàn Kiếm

(Night 30th, listen to a clock sound on countdown beside the Hoan Kiem lake)

7. Rạo rực âm thanh đêm giao thừa

(Excitement from the sounds of the countdown to the New Year)

8. Tết Việt online: Mồng 1 của người xa xứ

(Tet Viet online: 1st day of Vietnamese people living away)

9. Bệnh viện không có Tết

(Hospital did not have Tet festival)

Date 10 February, 2005

10. Tết quê ở đồng bằng Bắc bộ

(Provincial Tet festival at the northern delta of Vietnam)

11. Tết...quê

(Provincial Tet festival)

12. Tết nơi cửa Phật

(Tet festival in a Buddhism temple)

13. Cảnh trộm ngày Tết với thiết bị an ninh không dây

(Guard thief in Tet days with security wireless equipments)

Date 11 February, 2005

14. Hàng ngàn người tham dự Lễ hội bánh té

(Thousands people joined *banh tet* - cylindrical glutinous rice cake festival)

3.2 Data preparation

All clauses of the fourteen news reports are glossed word by word. Words glossed were based on the Vietnamese-English dictionary, Institut of Linguistics, the National Center of Social Sciences and Humanities. (Từ điển Việt-Anh, Viện Ngôn Ngữ Học, Trung Tâm Khoa Học Xã Hội và Nhân Văn Quốc Gia, 2001). Each clause then translated into English. Then all news reports were given a free translation.

3.3 Data checking

3.3.1 All translated news reports were checked by - Mrs.Trịnh Diệu Thìn, a researcher in Department of Thai studies, Institute for Southeast Asian Studies and Mrs.Trần Thị Hồng Hạnh, a lecturer in the Department of Linguistics and Vietnamese studies, the College of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam National University, Hanoi. In addition Mrs.Trịnh Diệu Thìn and Mrs.Trần Thị Hồng Hạnh provided information about Vietnamese culture, especially the Tet festival.

The translation checking process was done by a Vietnamese researcher and a Vietnamese lecturer completed it in Hanoi, Vietnam between 1 October 2005 – 31 January 2006. This program was supported by a scholarship sponsored by “Faculty and Students Exchange Program between Thailand and Greater Mekong Sub-region Countries” between 29 September 2005 – 31 January 2006.

Moreover some news reports that have distinguishing grammatical features were checked again by a Vietnamese linguist – Mr. Nguyễn Ngọc Bình, a lecturer in the Department of Linguistics, the College of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam National University, Hanoi.

3.3.2 The translation was proofread by Vietnamese and English native speakers.

3.4 Stages of data analysis

When the transcription and translation were completed, the fourteen news reports were analyzed in terms of textual metafunction, resource for presenting flow of information.

Stages of textual analysis are listed below.

3.4.1 Identify the clause boundaries and number of clause simplexes and clause complexes by using symbols as follows:

Table 5 Systemic conventions

Symbols	Structural transcription
	clause complex, boundary markers
	clause (not rankshifted), boundary markers
[[]]	rankshifted (embedded) clause, boundary markers
[]	rankshifted group / phrase, boundary markers
<< >>	clause boundary for included clause (the clause is included in other clause)
< >	clause boundary for included group / phrase
(Ø: <i>he = anh</i>) (he)	presumed referent; zero pronoun, that is reinstated elliptical element
...	omission of preceding or following text

(Patpong, 2005)

Examples of translated text with systemic conventions are given below.

Text 10: “Provincial Tet festival at the northern delta of Vietnam.”

||| [1] *Tết* *quê* *ở* *đồng bằng* *Bắc bộ.* |||
 Tet festival provincial at plains, delta the northern part of
 Vietnam
 “Provincial Tet festival at the northern delta of Vietnam.”

||| [2] *Cây đa -* *bến nước -* *mái* *dình*
 Banyan little port CLASS. communal house

vốn là *những* *hình ảnh* *quen thuộc*
 used to be many image familiar

của *các* *làng* *quê* *vùng* *đồng bằng*
 belonging all village provincial area delta

Bắc Bộ. |||
the northern part of Vietnam

“A banyan tree, a landing and a pavilion were familiar images in all of the countryside villages of the northern delta of Vietnam.”

||| [3] *Những làng quê ấy*
many village provincial that
ăn té tết như thế nào? |||
eat Tet festival like how

“How those villages celebrated Tet festival ? ”

Text 10: “Provincial Tet festival at the northern delta of Vietnam.”

||| [17.1] *Bởi người thôn Dương Lôi tin*
Because people village Duong Loi believe
||| [17.2] *rằng nếu* (\emptyset : they = *người thôn*) *cứ làm ăn cẩn cù*
that if (people village) continue work diligent
chăm chỉ theo lời dạy
industrious follow spoken word teach
của thánh mẫu thành Hoàng
belonging God mother deity
||| [17.3] *thì chắc chắn gia đình mình,*
then certainly family oneself
thôn mình sẽ còn tiếp tục
village oneself will still continuous
được cải thiện
ASP.:Pfv.:ability improve
||| [17.4] *và* (\emptyset : it = *thôn*) *phát triển mạnh.* |||
and (village) develop strong

“Because the Duong Loi villagers believed that if they continued to work and were diligent and follow the teaching words of the village’s deity, their family and their village would surely be improved and developed.”

3.4.2 Analyse all clause translated in terms of Theme and Rheme structure

After identifying the clause boundaries, all data were analyzed and put in a table illustrating Theme and Rheme structure.

Text 1: “The foreign daughter in law and foreign son in law celebrated non-western Tet festival.”

No	Theme	Rheme
1	Dâu, rể Tây Daughter in law, son in law western	ăn Tết Ta eat Tet festival non-western

“The foreign daughter in law and foreign son in law celebrated non-western Tet festival.”

This example shows that “Dâu, rể Tây” is the point of departure, presenting as Theme. As for “ăn Tết Ta” is the presentation moves after the point of departure, presenting as Rheme.

3.4.3 Analyse an internal Theme structure

After the Theme and Rheme structure was analyzed. The internal Theme structure was further analyzed. In this study, the internal Theme structure was categorized into textual, interpersonal and topical Theme as follows.

Text 1: The foreign daughter in law and foreign son in law celebrated non-western Tet festival.”

No	Theme				Rheme	
	textual	interpersonal	topical			
			marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
1				Dâu, daughter in law, rê son in law Tây western	ăn Têt eat Tet festival Ta non-western	

“The foreign daughter in law and foreign son in law celebrated non-western Tet festival.”

The details of Theme types will be discussed in Chapter 4, Section 4.3.

3.4.4 Analyse the Thematic progression of news reports

(Chapter 5)

3.4.5 Conclude and discuss the results of the textual analysis (Chapter 6)

CHAPTER IV

THEME STRUCTURE

This chapter will discuss the result of the study of fourteen Vietnamese news reports based on textual analysis. This chapter will focus on Theme and Rheme structure and internal Theme structure of the fourteen Vietnamese Tet Festival online news.

The fourteen Vietnamese Tet Festival online news reports corpus include 827 clause complexes and 1,922 clause simplexes. The number of clause complexes and clause simplexes in each text are listed below.

Table 6 The number of clause complexes and clause simplexes in each text of the fourteen Vietnamese Tet Festival online news reports

Text and title	Number of clause complex	Number of clause simplex
1. Dâu, rể Tây ăn Tết Ta (The foreign daughter in law and foreign son in law celebrated non-western Tet festival)	62	179
2. Tết Việt online: Trước giao thừa (Tet Viet online: Before the New Year's Eve)	113	214
3. Tết Việt online: Trước giao thừa (Tet Viet online: Before the New Year's Eve)	110	297
4. Ăn tết ở Trường Sa (Tet festival celebrating at Truong Sa – Spratley archipelago)	61	150
5. Tết về làng “siêu khó khăn” ở Gia Lai (Tet came back to the super - poor village at Gia Lai)	62	152

Table 6 The number of clause complexes and clause simplexes in each text of the fourteen Vietnamese Tet Festival online news reports (Continued)

Text and title	Number of clause complex	Number of clause simplex
6. Đêm 30, nghe đồng hồ điểm giao thừa bên hồ Hoàn Kiếm (Night 30 th , listen to a clock sound on countdown beside the Hoan Kiem lake)	47	98
7. Rạo rực âm thanh đêm giao thừa (Excitement from the sounds of the countdown to the New Year)	101	214
8. Tết Việt online: Mồng 1 của người xa xứ (Tet Viet online: 1 st day of Vietnamese people living away)	63	151
9. Bệnh viện không có Tết (Hospital did not have Tet festival)	49	123
10. Tết quê ở đồng bằng Bắc bộ (Provincial Tet festival at the northern delta of Vietnam)	20	44
11. Tết...quê (Provincial Tet festival)	14	25
12. Tết nơi cửa Phật (Tet festival in a Buddhism temple)	57	130
13. Cảnh trộm ngày Tết với thiết bị an ninh không dây (Guard thief in Tet days with security wireless equipments)	56	155
14. Hàng ngàn người tham dự Lễ hội bánh tet (Thousands people joined <i>banh tet</i> - cylindrical glutinous rice cake festival)	12	20
Total	827	1,922

4.1 Introduction

This study aims to investigate what is textual meaning of the Vietnamese online news; what is text organization of Vietnamese online news; how reporters or writers construct a discursive flow of information as message.

To answer all questions mentioned above, this study employed the textual metafunction as a tool to analyze those news reports. Use of textual metafunction approach is a grammatical tool to signpost the way through clauses, clause complexes and paragraphs, from the beginning to the end of a text.

“Textual metafunction gives the clause status as a “wave” in the ongoing development of text; it presents the clause as a piece or wave of text as part of the unfolding of text in context.”

(Matthiessen, 1995: 513-514).

The textual metafunction is also concerned with what happens to the development of the clause once it has been “grounded” in the current discourse environment. More specifically, textual metafunction gives the speaker the resources to direct the listener’s attention to which part of the clause is ‘new information’ rather than to what is already ‘given’ (Matthiessen, 1995: 516). In terms of textual metafunction, based on the semantic relationship between the system of information and the system of Theme, ‘new information’ is expressed within Rheme and ‘given’ is expressed within Theme (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 93).

4.2 Theme and Rheme boundary

Theme and Rheme boundary is a sequential ordering and range of possible groups or phrases that use for setting Theme and Rheme structure (Patpong, 2002: 6). In this analysis, the sequential orders and possible Themes in Vietnamese are shown in Table 4.

Table 7 The sequential order and possible Themes in Vietnamese

Theme				Rheme
textual (optional)	interpersonal (optional)	topical/ ideational (obligatory)	textual (optional)	
conjunction group: <i>và</i> “and”; <i>nếu</i> “if”; <i>nhưng</i> “but”; <i>thì</i> “but”, “then” binding nominal group: <i>rằng</i> “that” relative nominal group: <i>mà</i> “which, that, whom” <i>bao giờ</i> “when, whenever”	modal adjunct: <i>chắc chắn, hẳn nhiên</i> “surely”; <i>tất nhiên</i> “certainly”; <i>có lẽ</i> “may be”	non-ellipsed ellipsed nominal group Ø unidentified subject [O]	conjunction group: <i>nếu</i> “if”; <i>thì</i> “but”, “then”; <i>khi</i> “when”; <i>hay</i> “or”	

Theme boundary covers textual, interpersonal and topical/ideational Theme. The textual Theme and interpersonal Theme are optional but topical/ideational Theme is obligatory. It means every clause need to have an element of topical/ideational Theme but textual Theme and interpersonal Theme may be optional elements in the clause. Theme boundary covers the point of departure elements of the clause, as for Rheme boundary, it covers the remainder of the clause (Halliday, 1994; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 64-65).

In Vietnamese clause complexes, the preceding clauses and following clauses can link together by a textual Theme, for example conjunction group as *và* “and”; *nếu* “if”; *nhưng* “but”; *thì* “but”, “then”, binding nominal group as *rằng* “that”, and relative nominal group expressed by relative pronoun as *mà* “which, that, whom”, *bao giờ* “when, whenever”. In addition, relative nominal group functions both as textual Theme and topical Theme.

In terms of textual Theme, it is interesting to note that Vietnamese grammar allows two locations of certain conjunctions (for example, *nếu* “if”; *thì* “but”, “then”; *khi* “when”). These conjunctions could be found at the beginning of the clause and they could be found at the position before Rheme. The two locations of conjunction is one of significant characters of Vietnamese conjunctions.

4.3 Theme and Rheme structure

All languages have a character of text organization, so it has some forms of text development and the flow of discourse but there are different ways in which these may be achieved. In many languages, the clause is organized as message by having distinct status assigned to one part of it. One part of the clause is enunciated as the Theme; this combines with the remainder so that the two parts together constitute a message (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 64). Halliday uses the terms Theme and Rheme as the two important parts that constitute a message.

“Theme is the element which serves as the point of departure of the message which locates and orients the clause within its context. The rest of the clause is called the Rheme.”

(Halliday, 1994; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 64)

In terms of exploring a language at the clause level, the Theme looks backwards, relating the current message to what has gone before. The Rheme points both backwards and forwards by picking up on information which is already available and adding to it and by presenting information which was not there before (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 66). So the interaction of Theme and Rheme governs how the information in a text develops.

The following example presents the Theme and Rheme structure in some Vietnamese online news texts:

(4:1) Text [4:3.1]

Tết	là một dịp đông vui nhộn nhịp
Tet festival	be one occasion enjoy jolly
Theme	Rheme

“Tet festival was the one enjoyable occasion.”

Here we find ‘*Tết*’ at the beginning, telling us that the clause is about ‘Tet festival’. ‘*Tết*’ is the Theme of the clause and in this case it relates the text to its context.

The reminder of the clause is the Rheme as shown below.

‘là một dịp đông vui nhộn nhịp’
be one occasion enjoy jolly

The following section deals with some findings of the internal Theme structure of the fourteen Vietnamese Tet festival online news.

4.3.1 Theme choices

In terms of internal Theme structure, there are three types of Themes found in the Vietnamese news reports: textual Theme, interpersonal Theme and ideational (topical) Theme. The following discussion will start with textual Theme. This is followed by interpersonal Theme and ideational (topical) Theme.

4.3.1.1 Textual Theme

Textual Theme relates the clause to its context (Gerot and Wignell, 1994: 105). Halliday and Matthiessen (2004: 81) describe that textual Theme can be a conjunction, continuative, and/or conjunctive adjunct.

4.3.1.1.1 Conjunction

4.3.1.1.1.1 Conjunction and its system

According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004: 81), conjunction is a word or group that either links or binds the clause in which it occurs structurally to another clause.

The textual context of a clause is its logico-semantic relation to the preceding text as specified by conjunction, the resource of conjunction are used to mark logico-semantic relations in a text (Matthiessen, 1995: 519).

Moreover conjunction is the textual resource that presents the clause's environment aspect. It can specify a conjunctive relation to preceding discourse as representation or as exchange; and this conjunctive relation may then itself be made part of the Theme of the clause (Matthiessen, 1995: 515).

4.3.1.1.1.2 Types of conjunction

There are two complementary perspectives of identifying conjunction types: conjunctive structure and conjunctive complexity. The conjunctive structure can be further subdivided into structural conjunction and non-structural conjunction, whereas the conjunctive complexity can be subdivided into simple conjunction and complex conjunction. The following section will start with the discussion of conjunctive structure. This is followed by the discussions of conjunctive complexity.

4.3.1.1.1.2.1 Conjunctive structure

In this complementary view, conjunctions are divided into structural and non-structural conjunctions.

4.3.1.1.1.2.1.1 Structural conjunction

Structural conjunction is realized by a linker, for example: and, or, but, so (Matthiessen, n.d.: 24). There are three types of structural conjunction: elaborating, extending and enhancing. The details of the three types of structural conjunction will discuss in section 4.3.1.1.1.2.2.1 on page 43 (simple conjunction) and section 4.3.1.1.1.2.2.2 (complex conjunction) on page 82.

4.3.1.1.1.2.1.2 Non-Structural conjunction

Non-Structural conjunction is realized by an adverbial group, prepositional group or binder which is expressed by *rằng* “that”. Of fourteen Vietnamese online news resources, only one example of binder “that” is found. That is, the word *rằng* meaning “that”. In Vietnamese, *rằng* functions as a clause binder which links clauses to clause into clause complexes. In addition, this

binder seems to occur with projecting clauses: (i) verbal clauses or quotative verbs such as *nói* “speak” or (ii) mental clauses such as *nghĩ* “think”, *biết* “know” etc. (Srichampa, 1998: 292) . Examples are given below.

- *rằng* “that” as a clause binder in a verbal process

(4:2.1) Text [5:16.1]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
			Có exist/have	người đã people ASP.: already đùa joke	

“There was someone who joked ...”

(4:2.2) Text [5:16.2]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
rằng that			Ø: it	phải liệt làng have to rank village Dip vào hàng Dip into rank “siêu đặc biệt” super especially khó khăn” trouble	

“... that it had to rank Dip village as an “especially troubled (village) ...”

(4:2.3) Text [5:16.3]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
thì then			Ø: it	mới ASP.: Pfv.: just đúng. right	
“... then it was just right.”					

(4:3.1) Text [3:45.1]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
			[O] = unidentified subject	Phải nói chắc have to say certainly một điều one thing	

(4:3.2) Text [3:45.2]

textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	Theme		Rheme	
		topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
rằng that			nỗi nhớ feeling miss đất liền, nhớ nhà, mainland, miss home yêu thương be deeply attached to những many người thân one's dearest and nearest của lính đảo belonging soldier island	là be không bờ bến. boundless	

“... that the feeling of missing the mainland, homesickness and the feeling of being deeply attached to someone's nearest and dearest for the island soldiers was boundless.”

4.3.1.1.2.2 Conjunctive complexity

In this complementary perspective, conjunctions are divided into simple structure and complex structure.

4.3.1.1.2.2.1 Simple structure

The simple structure of conjunction means there is only one conjunction that function as a textual Theme. This conjunction is called simple conjunction. The simple conjunction can be divided into three types: elaborating, extending and enhancing (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 540). Each type is divided into various subtypes as shown in Figure 5: The system network of conjunction (see systemic conventions in Appendix A).

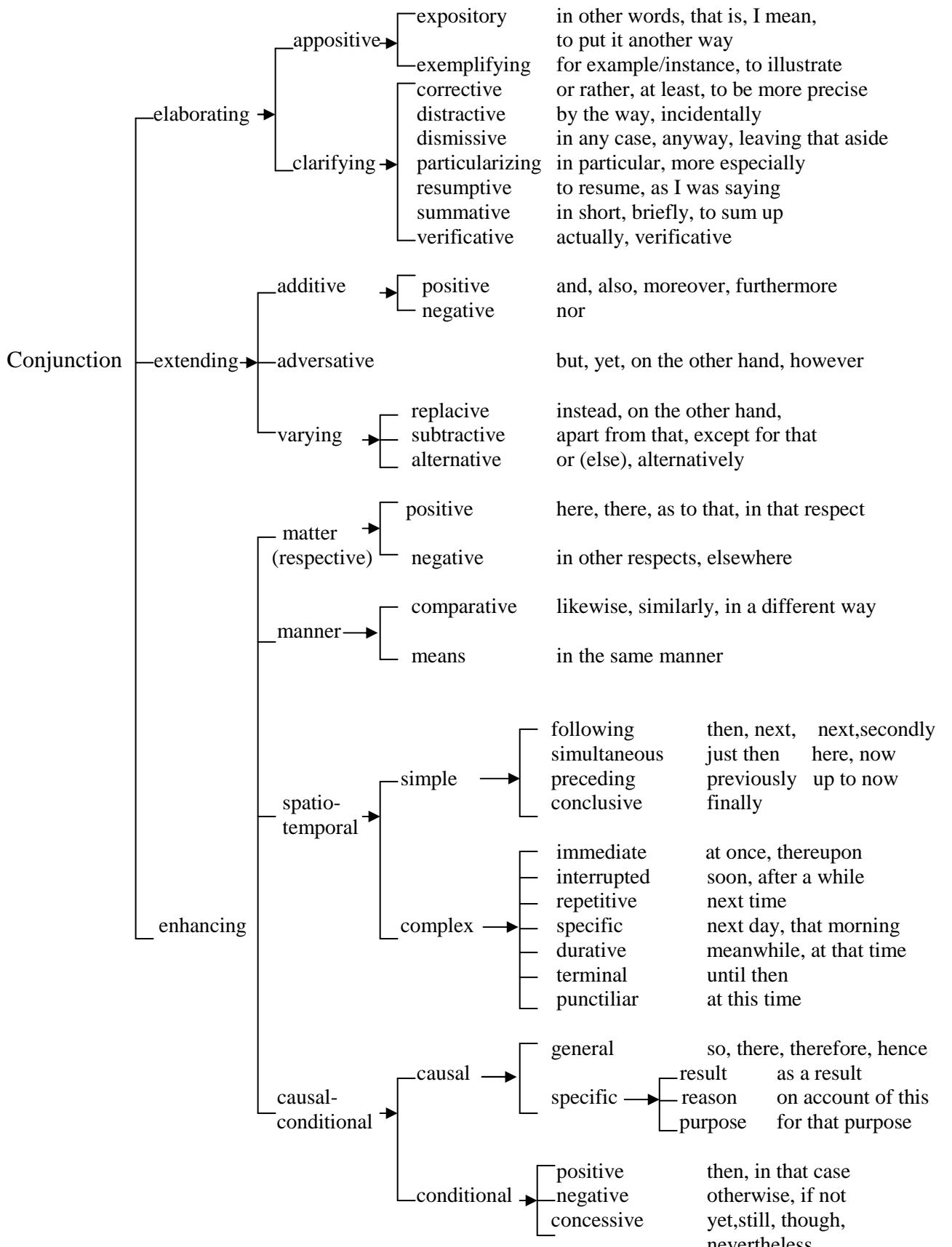


Figure 5 The System Network of Conjunction (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 541)

Explanation and Vietnamese examples of each type of simple conjunction are given below.

4.3.1.1.1.2.2.1.1 Elaborating

Halliday and Matthiessen (2004: 540-543) category two types of elaborating conjunction: (a) apposition and (b) clarification.

(a) Apposition is re-presented or restated either (i) by exposition or (ii) by example. Based on the fourteen Tet festival online news reports, only example of exemplifying subtype is found. Example is given below.

- ví dụ “for example” as an apposition conjunction: exemplifying subtype

(4:4.1) Text [3:15.2]

textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	Theme		Rheme	
		topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
			Ø: it = bánh chung, square glutinous rice cake	kèm theo attach follow	
			bánh tét, cylindrical glutinous rice cake	các CLASS.:plural	
			hạt dura seed water- melon	chiêu khuyêն mại recruit sale	
			đỏ, dura háu, red, water- melon	hấp dẫn. attractive	
			bao lì xì, lucky envelope		
			trà, cà phê tea coffee		

“...(square glutinous rice cake, cylindrical glutinous rice cakes, water-melon seeds, lucky envelopes, teas and coffees) were followed with an attractive sales display ...”

(4:4.2) Text [3:16.1]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
Ví dụ, for example			khách customer	mua hàng trị giá trên buy goods price over 50 đô la Canada CAD) 50 dollar Canada	

“For example, the customer bought some goods for over 50 Canadian dollars ...”

(4:4.3) Text [3:16.2]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
			Ø: they = khách customer	được ASP.:Pfv.: ability tặng thêm 1 receive one chai bottle nước mắm; fish sauce	

“... the customer would receive one bottle of fish sauce.”

(b) Clarification is not simply restated but reinstated and summarized. There are seven subtypes of clarification as shown in Figure 3: The system network of conjunction. This study found two subtypes: (i) particularizing subtype expressed by a Vietnamese word tiêu biếu meaning “particularly” (as in example 4:5.1-4:5.5) and đặc biệt meaning “especially” (as in example 4:6.1 - 4:6.5); (ii) verificative subtype expressed by a Vietnamese adverb thực tế meaning “actually” (as in example 4:7.1 - 4:7.2). Examples

of tiêu biếu meaning “particularly” and đặc biệt meaning “especially” show that these conjunctions can link clauses into clause complexes.

- tiêu biếu “particularly” as a clarification conjunction: particularizing subtype
(4:5.1) Text [2:77.1]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
			[O] = unidentified subject	Đáng chú ý should pay attention là năm nay hiện diện be year this appear những giống many breed cá cảnh lạ, ornamental fish strange	

“It should be noted that this year there were many breeds of strange ornamental fish ...”

- (4:5.2) Text [2:77.2]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
			[O] = unidentified subject	khiến du khách make tourist trầm trồ, be full of admiration	

“... made tourists full of admiration ...”

(4:5.3) Text [2:77.3]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
nhưng but			giá... price	“cắt cổ.” “cut neck”	

“... but the price was too expensive ...”

(4:5.4) Text [2:78]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
Tiêu biểu particularly			là be	loại cá kind fish La Hán La Hán giá lên tới... price up to 17.000 USD/1 17.000 USD/1 con. CLASS.	

“Particularly, La Han fish, priced up to 17,000 USD per fish.”

(4:5.5) Text [2:79.1]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
		Đây this		là giống cá be breed fish rất kén nước: very select water	

“This fish breed needed special the water very much.”

- đặc biệt “especially” as a clarification conjunction: particularizing subtype

(4:6.1) Text [5:9.1]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
		Năm nay year this		nắng hạn, sunshine drought	

“This year was in drought ...”

(4:6.2) Text [5:9.2]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
		la M'nông la M'nong	bị mất mùa. be have a crop failure		

“la M'nong (village) had a crop failure ...”

(4:6.3) Text [5:10.1]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
Đặc biệt especially			là be	ba làng three village Doch I, Doch II Doch I, Doch II và Dip and Dip	

“... especially three villages: Doch I, Doch II, and Dip ...”

(4:6.4) Text [5:10.2]

textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	Theme		Rheme
		topical Theme	marked Theme	
			Ø: it = Doch I, Doch I Doch II Doch II và Dip and Dip	gần như mất trắng. seem to be lose totally

“... (Doch I, Doch II and Dip villages) seemed to lose totally.”

- thực tế “actually” as a clarification conjunction: verificative subtype

(4:7.1) Text [10:12.1]

textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	Theme		Rheme
		topical Theme	marked Theme	
			Ông Nguyễn Nhu Toán, Mr. Nguyen Nhu Toan, trưởng thôn headman village Dương Lôi, Duong Loi xã Tân Hồng, village Tan Hong, huyện Từ Sơn, district Tu Son, tỉnh Bắc Ninh province Bac Ninh	cho biết: inform

“Mr. Nguyen Nhu Toan, the headman of Duong Loi village, Tan Hong village, Tu Son district, Bac Ninh province informed ...”

(4:7.2) Text [10:12.2]

textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	Theme		Rheme
		topical Theme	marked Theme	
Thực tế actually			là be	các nghề CLASS.:all careers tạo thu nhập create income khá be better cho người dân give people đã ASP.: Pfv.: already xuất hiện take shape ngày một nhiều day by day many trong thôn in village như nghề mộc such as woodwork nghề xây dựng... career construction

“... actually, all careers such as woodwork and construction created much better incomes for villagers day by day.”

4.3.1.1.2.2.1.2 Extending

According to Halliday and Matthiessen

(2004: 543-544), extending is either: (a) addition and (b) variation.

(a) Addition can be positive *and*, negative *nor* or adversative *but*. In Vietnamese Tet festival online news, addition conjunction can be positive và meaning “and” (as in example 4:8.1-4:8.3), adversative nhung meaning “but” (as in example 4:9.1-4:9.2); song meaning “but” (as in example 4:10.1-4:10.2), ngoài ra and ngoài meaning “besides” (as in example 4:11.1-4:11.2). Examples of addition conjunctions are given below.

- và “and” as an addition conjunction: positive subtype

(4:8.1) Text [2:3.1]

textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	Theme		Rheme
		topical Theme	marked Theme	
		Những gia đình many family người people Việt Vietnamese ở Sydney at Sydney	đang ASP.: Impf.: be in process of cố chen chén try jostle trong chợ hoa in market flower Việt Nam Vietnam	

“Vietnamese families in Sydney were trying to jostle in the Vietnamese flower market ...”

(4:8.2) Text [2:3.2]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
để for				tìm một cành find one branch hoa vạn thọ... flower marigold	

“... to find one stem of the marigold flower ...”

(4:8.3) Text [2:4]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
và and			<p>không khí the atmosphere</p> <p>Tết Tet festival</p>	<p>đang ASP.: Impf.: be in process of</p> <p>tràn ngập spready</p> <p>trên đại lộ ở on highway at</p> <p>TP.HCM. Ho Chi Minh city</p>	

“... and the Tet atmosphere was spreading on the highway in Ho Chi Minh city.”

- nhưng “but” as an addition conjunction: adversative subtype

(4:9.1) Text [2:18.1]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
			Hoa tết flower Tet festival	cũng ê hè, also abundant	

“There was also an abundance of Tet flowers ...”

(4:9.2) Text [2:18.2]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
nhưng but		ở đây at here		hoa ngày tết flower day Tet chỉ có hoa only have flower vạn thọ. marigold	

“... but, here, there were only marigold for Tet day flowers.”

- song “but” as an addition conjunction: adversative subtype

(4:10.1) Text [12:46.2]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
		Đường phố street		thưa thớt thinly populated	

“The street was nearly empty ...” (“There were few people in the street ...”)

(4:10.2) Text [12:46.3]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
song but			các CLASS.:all chùa chiền temple	lại rất again much đông đúc. crowded	

“... but the temple was very crowded again.”

- ngoài “besides” as an addition conjunction: adversative subtype

(4:11.1) Text [4:22.3]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
Ngoài Besides			thịt heo pork	đảm bảo đủ assure enough thịt cho nhân meat for seed bánh chưng, square glutinous rice cake	

“Besides pork assured enough meat for *banh chung* (square glutinous rice cake) filling ...”

(4:11.2) Text [4:22.4]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
		còn có also	exist/have	thêm chó, gà. add dog, chicken	

“... there was also dog meat and chicken.”

(b) Variation conjunction can be replaceive *instead*, subtractive *except* and alternative *or*. In this study, there are two subtypes found: subtractive subtype, that is trừ meaning “except” (as in example 4:12.1-4:12.3) and alternative subtype, that is hoặc and hay meaning “or” (as in example 4:13.1-4:13.2). Examples of variation conjunctions are given below.

- trừ “except” as a variation conjunction: subtractive subtype

(4:12.1) Text [2:60.1]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
Trừ except		những many lúc chát time chat hoặc or		điện thoại về cho telephone back for gia đình family ở Việt Nam, at Vietnam	
				“Except for chat times or phoning back to the family in Vietnam ...”	

(4:12.2) Text [2:60.2]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
		chúng tôi we		nấu nướng, ăn uống, cook eat and drink nói chuyện talk xung quanh surrounding area ám chè teapot	
				“... we cooked, ate, drank and talked around the teapot ...”	

(4:12.3) Text [2:60.3]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
và and			Ø: chúng tôi we	choi tú lơ khơ. play one kind of card game	

“... and (we) played *tu lo kho* (a kind of card game).”

- hay “or” as a variation conjunction: alternative subtype

(4:13.1) Text [11:7.1]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
		Cả với even with	người people	lần đầu tiên time first đến với Hội An arrive Hoi An	

“Even with people who had arrived in Hoi An for the first time ...”

(4:13.2) Text [11:7.2]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
hay or		“người quen” people familiar	lâu ngày long day	gặp lại meet again	

“... or acquaintances met again.”

4.3.1.1.2.2.1.3 Enhancing

There are four types of enhancing conjunction (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004: 544-548): (a) spatio-temporal, (b) manner, (c) causal-conditional and (d) matter (see subtypes of enhancing in Figure 5, on page 44). Examples of enhancing conjunctions are given below.

(a) Spatio-temporal refers about place and time. This study found two subtypes of spatio-temporal: concluding subtype expressed by a Vietnamese word cuối cùng meaning “finally” (as in example 4:14.1-4:14.6); simultaneous subtype expressed by a Vietnamese word khi meaning “when” (as in example 4:15.1-4:15.2); sau; sau đó; sau khi meaning “after” (as in example 4:16.1-4:16.4). Examples of spatio-temporal conjunctions are given below.

- cuối cùng “finally” as a spatio-temporal conjunction: concluding subtype (4:14.1) Text [4:55.1]

textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	Theme		Rheme
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme	
		Đại úy, captain máy 1, machine 1, Nguyễn Quang Nguyen Quang Văn Tâm Van Tam cùng together with các chiến sĩ, all soldier	vòng to go for a round ra, out	

“Nguyen Quang Van Tam, captain of machine one together with all the soldiers went for a round ...”

(4:14.2) Text [4:55.2]

textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	Theme		Rheme
		topical Theme	marked Theme	
			Ø: they = đại úy captain cùng together with các chiến sĩ all soldiers	vòng to go for a round vào gần into nearly nửa ngày half hay

“... (captain together with soldiers) went for a round for nearly half a day,...”

(4:14.3) Text [4:55.3]

textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	Theme		Rheme
		topical Theme	marked Theme	
		Ø: they = đại úy captain cùng together with các chiến sĩ all soldiers		vẫn ASP.: Impf.: still không thé NEG: not can đưa bring được ASP.:Pfv.:ability xuồng canoe cập draw up along side đảo. island

“... (captain together with soldiers) still could not navigate the canoe alongside the island.”

(4:14.4) Text [4:56.1]

textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	Theme		Rheme
		topical Theme	marked Theme	
Cuối cùng, Finally			anh em brothers	đành phải quăng dây, have to throw line

“Finally, brothers had to throw the line ...”

(4:14.5) Text [4:56.2]

textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	Theme		Rheme
		topical Theme	marked Theme	
			Ø: they = anh em brothers	bọc hàng bundle goods vào nilon, into nilon

“... (brothers) bundled goods with nylon ...”

(4:14.6) Text [4:56.3]

textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	Theme		Rheme
		topical Theme	marked Theme	
			Ø: they = anh em brothers	thả lower down xuống biển, get down sea

“... (brothers) lowered (goods) down to the sea.”

- khi “when” as a spatio-temporal conjunction: simultaneous subtype

(4:15.1) Text [8:39.1]

textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	Theme		Rheme
		topical Theme	marked Theme	
Khi when			Việt Nam Vietnam	đã là ASP.: Pfv.: already be chiều afternoon 1 Tết 1 Tet festival

“When it was the afternoon of the 1st day of Tet festival in Vietnam ...”

(4:15.2) Text [8:39.2]

textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	Theme		Rheme
		topical Theme	marked Theme	
thì then			Cali California	mới đến ASP.: Pfv.: just arrive giao thùa. the time between the old year and the new year

“... then California had just reached *giao thùa* (the countdown time to the New Year).”

- sau “after” as a spatio-temporal conjunction: simultaneous subtype

(4:16.1) Text [2:50.1]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
			Chúng tôi we	cùng ăn bữa cơm together eat meal rice tết niên từ end of the year from khoảng 7 giờ rưỡi about 7.30pm. đến 10 giờ, arrive 10pm.	

“We ate the end of the year meal between about 7.30pm.-10pm ...”

(4:16.2) Text [2:50.2]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
		Ø: chúng tôi we		vừa ăn vừa nói chuyện while eat while talk Tết ở Việt Nam. Tet festival at Vietnam	

“... we talked about Tet festival in Vietnam while eating.”

(4:16.3) Text [2:51.1]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
Sau after		10 giờ, 10 pm		tất cả tập trung all concentrate vào việc gọi điện into work call telephone về Việt Nam back Vietnam	

“After 10pm., all people focused on phoning back to Vietnam ...”

(4:16.4) Text [2:51.2]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
dé for				chúc Tết greet Tet festival gia đình mình. family themselves	

“... to welcome Tet with their family.”

(b) Manner conjunctions create cohesion: (i) by comparison; (ii) by reference to means. Comparison may be (a) positive expressed by ‘is like’, or (b) negative expressed by ‘is unlike’. Manner of means expressed by ‘in the same manner’ or ‘otherwise’. In this study, there is no instance of manner conjunction.

(c) Causal-conditional relates to the result, reason or purpose. It can be either: (i) causal subtype or (ii) conditional subtype. Examples of causal-conditional conjunctions are given below.

(i) causal subtype expressed by a Vietnamese word *nên* meaning “so” (as in example 4:17.1-4:17.2), *do*; *nhờ*; *bởi* *vì*; *vì*; meaning “because” (as in example 4:18.1-4:18.2 and example 4:19.1-4:219.1), *dể* meaning “for” (as

in example 4:20.1-4:20.2), do vậy meaning “as a result” (as in example 4:21.1-4:21.2).

- nên “so” as a causal-conditional conjunction: causal subtype

(4:17.1) Text [2:52.1]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
			Hàn Quốc South Korea	có mũi giờ have time-belt	
				sớm hơn early more	
				Việt Nam Vietnam	
				hai tiếng two hour	

“South Korea was 2 hours ahead of Vietnam ...”

(4:17.2) Text [2:52.2]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
nên so		giờ đó time that		là khoảng sau be about after	
				8 giờ tối 8 hour evening	
				của belonging to	
				Việt Nam. Vietnam	

“... so that time was about after 8pm. in the evening in Vietnam.”

- do “because” as a causal-conditional conjunction: causal subtype

(4:18.1) Text [3:6.1]

textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	Theme		Rheme
		topical Theme	marked Theme	
Do because			chênh lệch of different múi giờ time zone	cách be away nhau each other 12 tiếng 12 hour

“Because the time zone was different by 12 hours ...”

(4:18.2) Text [3:6.2]

textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	Theme		Rheme
		topical Theme	marked Theme	
		tối evening giao thùa the time between the old year and the new year ở Việt Nam at Vietnam		sẽ là will be sáng morning 30 tại Canada. 30 at Canada

“... the *giao thùa* (the countdown time to the New Year) evening at Vietnam will be the morning, on the 30th day in Canada.”

- vì “because” as a causal-conditional conjunction: causal subtype

(4:19.1) Text [2:16.1]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
Vì because			chỉ có only have	hai ngày để two day for mua sắm, shopping	

“Because there were only two days for shopping ...”

(4:19.2) Text [2:16.2]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
		người Việt people Vietnam	đổ dồn flock into		
		khắp nơi every place	về đây back here		
			đông như crowded like		
			trẩy hội to go on a pilgrimage		

“...Vietnamese people from everywhere flocked here, crowded like on a pilgrimage ...”

- đê “for” as a causal-conditional conjunction: causal subtype

(4:20.1) Text [8:41.1]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
		Nhiều người many people	còn xin also beg nghi phép be on leave		

“... many people also begged for a day’s leave”

(4:20.2) Text [8:41.2]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
đê for				được ASP.:Pfv.:ability thật sự real “đón Tết” welcome Tet festival	

“... for a real welcome to Tet festival.”

- do vậy “as a result” as a causal-conditional conjunction: causal subtype

(4:21.1) Text [2:29.1]

textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	Theme		Rheme
		topical Theme	marked Theme	
Thέ like that			du học sinh student abroad	ngày Tết day Tet festival
nên so			Việt Nam Vietnam	cũng also
			ở Hàn at South Korea	được ASP.:Pfv.:ability
				nghi, rest

“It’s like that so Vietnamese students abroad in South Korea also got a day off for Tet day ...”

(4:21.2) Text [2:29.2]

textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	Theme		Rheme
		topical Theme	marked Theme	
và and			càng có more have	điều kiện để condition for
do vậy, as a result				nhó nhà hon. miss home more

“... and as a result the Tet holiday, (Vietnamese students abroad) were very homesick.”

(ii) conditional subtype is divided in two subtypes: positive presented by a Vietnamese word nếu meaning “if” (as in example 4:22.1-4:22.2) ; concessive expressed by a Vietnamese word mặc dù; dù; tuy meaning “although” (as in example 4:23.1-4:23.2), tuy nhiên; tuy vậy meaning “however” (as in example 4:24.1-4:24.3), vậy mà meaning “nevertheless” (as in example 4:25.1-4:25.3), ngay cả; thậm chí meaning “even” (as in example 4:26.1-4:26.2). Examples of

causal-conditional conjunctions are given below. Examples of tuy nhiên meaning “however” and vậy mà meaning “nevertheless” show that these conjunctions can link clauses into clause complexes.

- nếu “if” as a causal-conditional conjunction: conditional subtype

(4:22.1) Text [2:99.1]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
Nếu if			Ø: it	như like năm ngoái last year	

“If it is like last year ...”

(4:22.2) Text [2:99.2]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
		mỗi gốc each root		được ASP.:Pfv.:ability	
		mai apricot		bán với giá sell with price	
				hơn 3 triệu more 3 million	
				đồng dong (Vietnamese currency unit)	

“... each apricot tree was sold for more than 3 millions dong.”

- Tuy “although” as a causal-conditional conjunction: conditional subtype

(4:23.1) Text [8:14.1]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
Tuy although			không NEG: not có exist/have	hoa đào peach blossom	

“Although there were no peach blossoms ...”

(4:23.2) Text [8:14.2]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
nhưng but			vẫn ASP.: Impf.: still có exist/have	bánh chưng, square glutinous rice cake nồi canh pot soup măng bamboo shoot	

“... but there were still *banh chung* (square glutinous rice cake), bamboo shoot soup.”

- tuy nhiên “however” as a causal-conditional conjunction:
conditional subtype

(4:24.1) Text [9:48.1]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
		Tại viện at hospital		không NEG: not còn ASP.: Impf.: still bệnh nhân nào patient any nhiễm H5N1 contract H5N1	

“At hospital, there were no patients with H5N1 ...”

(4:24.2) Text [9:48.2]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
		Ø: they = bác sĩ doctor		phải điều trị. have to treat	

“... (doctor) had to treat.”

(4:24.3) Text [9:49.1]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
Tuy nhiên, however			các y all nurse bác sĩ doctor	vẫn ASP.: Impf.: still phải have to trực 24/24 be on duty 24hours để cấp cứu for emergency người bệnh kịp thời patient in time	

“However all nurses and all doctors still had to be on duty 24 hours to treat emergency patients in time ...”

- vậy mà “nevertheless” as a causal-conditional conjunction:
conditional subtype

(4:25.1) Text [4:59.1]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
		Năm nào every year		cũng vài also some lần ra đảo, time go out island	

“Every year, two or three ships went to the island ...”

(4:25.2) Text [4:59.2]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
		trong đó in that		là những chuyến be some trips đi chở go carry hàng tết. goods Tet festival	

“... in those days, some trips were made with goods for Tet festival.”

(4:25.3) Text [4:60.1]

Theme				Rheme	
Textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
Vậy mà nevertheless		tình cảm feeling của belonging họ they		vẫn ASP.: Impf.: still nguyên vẹn complete như những like many ngày đầu: beginning day	

“Nevertheless, they still felt like in the early days.”

- thậm chí “even” as a causal-conditional conjunction: conditional subtype

(4:26.1) Text [8:15.1]

textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	Theme		Rheme
		topical Theme	marked Theme	
Thậm chí even		còn ASP.: Impf.: still	có exist/have	cả con lợn sữa all sucking-pig quay roast

“There was even roasted sucking-pig ...”

(4:26.2) Text [8:15.2]

textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	Theme		Rheme
		topical Theme	marked Theme	
		∅: it = con lợn sữa sucking-pig quay roasted		được ASP.:Pfv.:Ability đặt từ order from nhà hàng shop trên Warszawa. on Warszawa

“... (roasted sucking-pig) was ordered from the shop in Warszawa.”

(d) Matter relates to the ‘matter’ that has gone before or as noted earlier. There are two types of matter: (i) positive and (ii) negative. Expressions of matter can be spatial metaphors, involving words like point, ground, field; and these may become conjunctive when they are coupled with reference items.

There is no example of matter conjunction found in this study

Besides the conjunction types of the fourteen Vietnamese news reports illustrated above, this study found Vietnamese words mà and thì that have various meanings and grammatical functions. According to Vietnamese-English dictionary, Institut of Linguistics, the National Center of Social Sciences and Humanities (Từ điển Việt-Anh, Viện Ngôn Ngữ Học, Trung Tâm Khoa Học Xã Hội và Nhân Văn Quốc Gia, 2001: 451-452), mà has two grammatical categories. It can function as a relative pronoun meaning “which”, “that”, “whom” (a relative element will discuss in details in Section 4.3.1.1.3) and a conjunction. In terms of conjunction, mà can be an extending conjunction meaning: but; and; yet; nevertheless (as in example 4:27.1-4:27.3) and it can be an enhancing conjunction meaning: if; then; as a result (as in example 4:28.1-4:28.4). Examples of mà are given below.

- mà “but” as an extending conjunction

(4:27.1) Text [12:26.1]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
		Năm nay, year this		nhà chùa buddhism temple gói wrap gần 1000 chiếc, nearly 1000 CLASS.	

“This year, the Buddhist temple wrapped nearly 1000 (Vietnamese cakes) ...”

(4:27.2) Text [12:26.2]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
			Ø: it	không phải NEG: not be certain để ăn for eat	

“... it was not for eating ...”

(4:27.3) Text [12:26.3]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
mà but				phát lộc distribute joss gift	
để for				cho give	
				khách thập phuong guest everywhere	
				[[đến lê [[come worship	
				chùa.]] temple]]	

“...but for distributing joss gifts to guests from all over who came to worship at the temple.”

- mà as an enhancing conjunction (then)

(4:28.1) Text [4:60.1]

textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	Theme		Rheme
		topical Theme	marked Theme	
Vậy mà Nevertheless			tình cảm feeling của belonging họ they	vẫn ASP.: Impf.: still nguyên vẹn complete như những like some ngày đầu: beginning day

“Nevertheless, they still felt like in the early days ...”

(4:28.2) Text [4:60.2]

textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	Theme		Rheme
		topical Theme	marked Theme	
			lính soldier đảo island	dõi follow closely theo tàu follow ship nhớ đất liền miss mainland đau đái, feel anxious

“... the island soldiers watched the ship, missing and worrying about the mainland ...”

(4:28.3) Text [4:60.3]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
		thủy thủ sailor	nhìn đảo see island		
		trên tàu on ship	xa dần far progressively		

“... the sailors on the ship saw the faraway island ...”

(4:28.4) Text [4:60.4]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
mà then			lòng mind	rung rung. have tears welling up	

“... they felt tears welling up.”

According to Vietnamese-English dictionary, Institutue of Linguistics, the National Center of Social Sciences and Humanities (Từ điển Việt-Anh, Viện Ngôn Ngữ Học, Trung Tâm Khoa Học Xã Hội và Nhân Văn Quốc Gia, 2001: 694), thì also has more than one meaning. In terms of grammatical function thì can be an extending conjunction meaning “but” (as in example 4:29.1-4:29.2) and an enhancing conjunction meaning “then” (as in example 4:30.1-4:30.4). In addition, thì can be an adverb meaning “certainly” and “for sure”. In terms of lexical word thì means “prime of youth” and “full season”. Examples of thì in terms of conjunction are given below.

- thì “but” as an extending conjunction

(4:29.1) Text [9:6.1]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
		Chiều Afternoon 30 Tết the 30 th day of Tet festival		trong khi mọi nhà while every family đang be in the process of chuẩn bị đón prepare welcome Tết Tet festival	

“Afternoon, of the 30th day of Tet festival, while every family was preparing to welcome Tet festival ...”

(4:29.2) Text [9:6.2]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
thì but		gia đình family anh elder brother		phải đưa con have to bring child từ Ninh Bình from Ninh Binh vào BV enter hospital Nhi Trung ương Nhi Trung ương - the central hospital for children cấp cứu. emergency	

“...but his family had to bring a child from Ninh Binh to Nhi Trung ương - the central hospital for children in an emergency.”

- thì “then” as an enhancing conjunction

(4:30.1) Text [9:29.1]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
		Ngày nào every day		cũng như ngày nào, also like every day	

“Every day was like every other day ...”

(4:30.2) Text [9:29.2]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
		bệnh nhân patient	đến come		

“... the patients came ...”

(4:30.3) Text [9:29.3]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
thì then		bác sĩ doctor	phải phục vụ, have to service		

“... then the doctors had to attend ...”

(4:30.4) Text [9:29.4]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
			Ø: they = bác sĩ doctor	không NEG: not được ASP.:Pfv.:Ability tù chối refuse	

“... (the doctors) could not refuse.”

In addition, it is interesting to note that Vietnamese conjunction system can be expressed both within clause complexes (linking clause simplexes to clause complexes) and between clause complexes. Examples of conjunction linking simplex clauses into clause complexes are as in example of và meaning “and” (presented in example 4:8.1-4:8.3, on page 52-53) and example of nhung meaning “but” (presented in example 4:9.1-4:9.2, on page 54). Examples of conjunction linking between clause complexes are as in example of tiêu biếu “particularly” (presented in example 4:5.1-4:5.5, on page 47-48) and đặc biệt “especially” (presented in example 4:6.1-4:6.4, on page 49-50).

4.3.1.1.2.2.2 Complex structure

The complex structure of conjunction means there are more than one conjunctions functioning as a textual Theme. Examples of a combination of extending conjunction và meaning “and” and enhancing conjunction vì meaning “because” are illustrated in example 4:31.1-4:31.2. Examples of a combination of extending conjunction hoặc meaning “or” and enhancing conjunction vì meaning “because” are presented in example 4:32.1-4:32.5.

- extending conjunction và “and” + enhancing conjunction vì “because”

(4:31.1) Text [3:77.1]

textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	Theme		Rheme	
		topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
		Người Huế people Hue	có thói quen have habit đi lễ chùa go worship pagoda vào sáng into morning mồng 1 used in front of 1 dates of a lunar month's first ten days		

“Hue people used to go to worship at the temple in the first (1st) day ...”

(4:31.2) Text [3:77.2]

textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	Theme		textual Theme	Rheme		
		topical Theme					
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme				
và and vì because		sự kiêng ky taboo	nên so		người ta rất people very hiếm đến nhà rare come house nhau vào each other enter ngày đầu năm day the beginning of the year nay. this		

“... and because of taboos people very rarely came to each other's houses on the first day of the year.”

- extending conjunction hoặc “or” + enhancing conjunction vì “because”

(4:32.1) Text [7:29.1]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
		Đa phần Most	khách customer	đi tàu đêm nay go train night this	

“Most customers went by train on this night ...”

(4:32.2) Text [7:29.2]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
		∅: they = khách customers		chỉ là only be người nước ngoài foreigner	

“... the only (customers) were foreigners ...”

(4:32.3) Text [7:29.3]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
		∅: they = người nước ngoài foreigners		đi du lịch vào go tour into Nam, Southern	

“... foreigners went on tour to the South ...”

(4:32.4) Text [7:29.4]

textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	Theme		Rheme
		topical Theme	marked Theme	
hoặc or			những many người people	nhỡ nhàng miss những chuyến tàu many trip train trước, before

“... or many people missed the train before ...”

(4:32.5) Text [7:29.5]

textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	Theme		Rheme
		topical Theme	marked Theme	
hoặc or		lý do reason		phải về have to come back
vì because		công tác business		muộn. late

“... or for business reasons (some people) had to come back late.”

4.3.1.1.3 The system network of Vietnamese conjunction

All conjunctions found in this study are set up in the system network of Vietnamese conjunction as shown in Figure 6 (see systemic conventions in Appendix A).

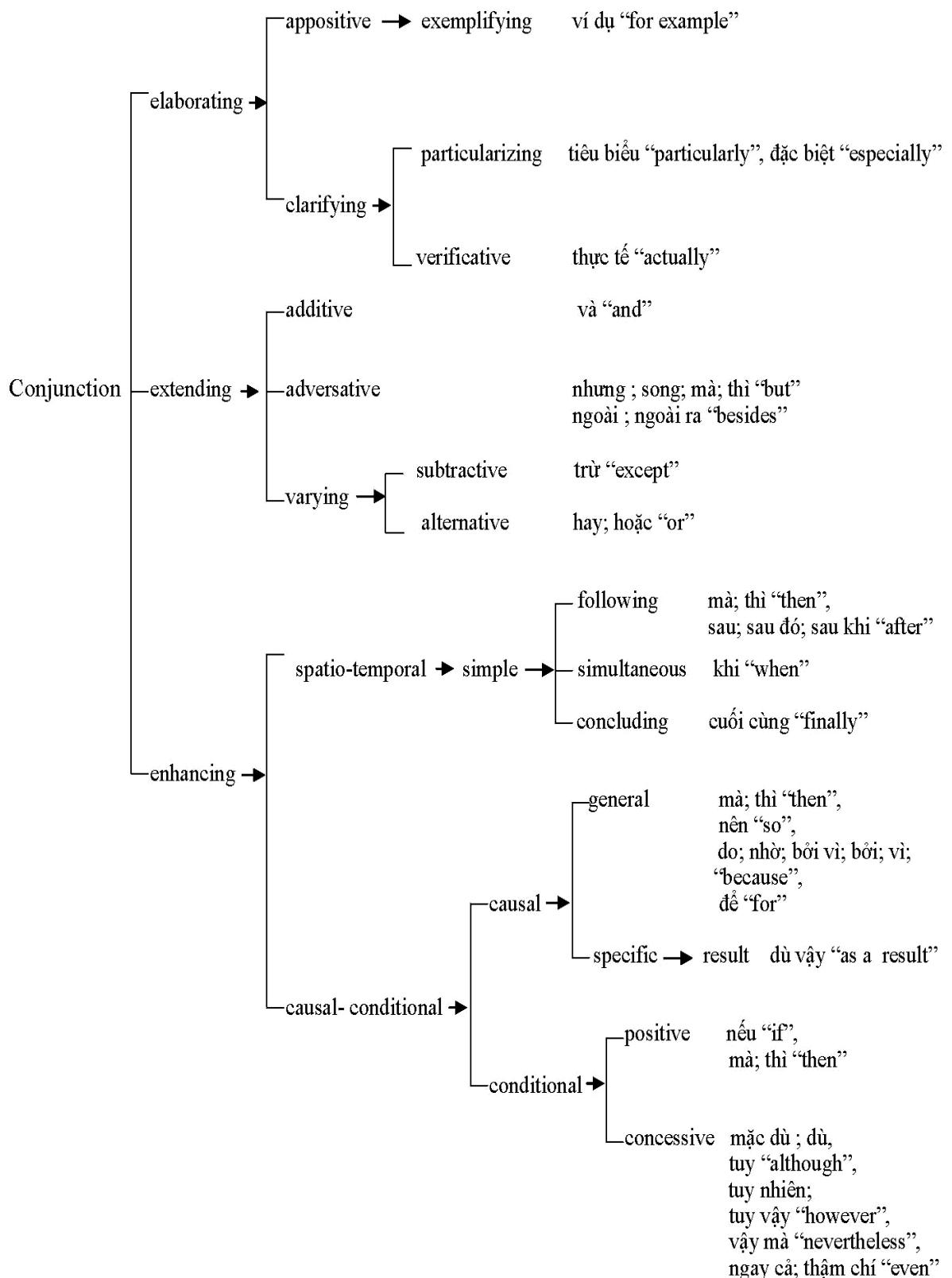


Figure 6 The System Network of Vietnamese Conjunction

4.3.1.1.2 Relative element

Halliday & Matthissen (2004: 429) describe that relative element relates the nominal antecedent in an embedded clause. English relative elements are either definite such as which, who, that, where etc., or indefinite which expressed by wh-element or wh relatives as shown in Table 7 (Halliday & Matthissen, 2004: 86). In addition, relative element functions both as textual Theme and as topical Theme (Matthissen, n.d.: 24)

Table 8 Examples of English relatives (Halliday & Matthissen, 2004: 86)

Type	Examples
definite	which, who, that, whose, when, where, (why, how)
indefinite	whatever, whichever, whoever, whosoever, whenever, wherever, however

This study found definite relative which is expressed by mà meaning “which, that, whom” as in example 4:33.1-4:33.6 and indefinite relative which is expressed by the question word bao giờ meaning “whenever” as in example 4:34.1-4:34.2.

- mà “which, that, whom” as a relative element

(4:33.1) Text [3:2.1]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
			Tết Tet festival	nhớ quê miss hometown ở Canada, Boston at Canada, Boston (Mỹ), ở Tâybanha... (USA) at Spain	

“Tet festival, (they) missed their hometown in Canada, Boston (USA) and Spain.”

(4:33.2) Text [3:2.2]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
		Tết Tet festival		đậm đặc concentrated không khí atmosphere truyền thống tradition ở Hué, Hà Tây, at Hue, Ha Tay	

“Tet festival, (they) concentrated the atmosphere of traditional (Tet) at Hue and Ha tay.”

(4:33.3) Text [3:2.3]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
		Tết Tet festival		dành cho reserve for người nghèo people poor ở Gia Lai. at Gia Lai	

“Tet festival was reserved for the poor people at Gia Lai.”

(4:33.4) Text [3:2.4]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
		Tết Tet festival		sôi động ở effervescent at Hà Nội, TP HCM Ha Noi, Ho Chi - Minh city	

“Exciting Tet festival at Ha Noi and Ho Chi Minh city.”

(4:33.5) Text [3:2.5]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
		đó that		là những gì be some what	

“That was something ...”

(4:33.6) Text [3:2.6]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
[[mà → [[which			→ mà which	chúng tôi we đem đến bring come cho bạn đọc for reader trong chiều, in afternoon, tối nay. evening this]]	

“... which we brought to the readers this afternoon and evening.”

- bao giờ “whenever” as a relative element

(4:34.1) Text [1:40.1]

textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	Theme		Rheme
		topical Theme	marked Theme	
		Cả even with		như nhũng like many
		nhũng many		đốm màu rực rỡ spot color splendid
		mẹt flat basket		trên xe on vehicle
		hoa flower		người bán rong seller roam
				khắp phố, every street

“May flat flower baskets were like splendid color spots on the seller’s vehicles in every street ...”

(4:34.2) Text [1:40.2]

textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	Theme		Rheme
		topical Theme	marked Theme	
[[bao giờ → [[whenever			→ bao giờ whenever	cũng khiến chị also make she ngạc nhiên, be surprised xao xuyến get flurried lạ thường. extraordinary]]

“.... whenever it also made she was surprised, flurried and extraordinary.”

4.3.1.2 Interpersonal Theme

According to Matthiessen (1995: 538), interpersonal Theme includes finites, adjuncts, vocatives, or wh-elements. They are categorized as follows:

Finite embodies the arguability value of the clause as exchange.

Adjunct is giving or demanding as assessment of an attitude towards or a comment on the exchange itself or the information being exchange.

Vocative is identifying the address in the exchange.

Wh-element of a wh-interrogative clause is an interpersonal function that conflates with an ideational function, a participant or a circumstance. It is both interpersonal and topical (ideational) Theme.

In Vietnamese, finite is not found. According to Minh Duc Thai (1998: 91, MS 1999: 478), interpersonal Themes in Vietnamese is realized by a modal adjunct and vocative. Modal adjuncts are elements which are expressed by an adverbial group or prepositional phrase that represents as (i) a probability, for example, *có lẽ* “perhaps”, *dĩ nhiên* “of course” and *rõ ràng* “obviously”; (ii) an usuality and (iii) an admission, for example, *thật tình mà nói* “to tell the truth”

The interpersonal Themes found in Vietnamese Tet festival online news are only modal adjunct. Examples are given below.

- chắc chắn “surely” as modal adjunct

(4:35) Text [10:17.4]

textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	Theme		Rheme
		topical Theme	marked Theme	
thì then	chắc chắn surely		gia đình mình, family oneself thôn mình village oneself	sẽ ASP.: Pfv.: will còn ASP.: Impf.: still tiếp tục continue được ASP.:Pfv.:ability cải thiện improve
				“... then our families and villages will definitely still continue to develop.”

- chắc “may be” as modal adjunct

(4:36) Text [7:68.3]

textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	Theme		Rheme
		topical Theme	marked Theme	
	chắc may be		là be	nhiều ngư dân không many fishermen don't kip vào bờ catch enter bank
				“Fishermen perhaps might not go back to the shore.”

- tất nhiên “necessarily” as modal adjunct

(4:37) Text [2:42.4]

textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	Theme		Rheme
		topical Theme	marked Theme	
và and	tất nhiên necessarily			là một con be one CLASS. gà trống thiến cock castrated đê cúng for worship Tất Niên. The last day of the old year, New Year's Eve

“... and it was necessary to have a castrated cock to pay respects on *Tat Nien* (New Year's Eve).”

- hẳn nhiên “surely” as modal adjunct

(4:38) Text [4:11]

textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	Theme		Rheme
		topical Theme	marked Theme	
	Hắn nhiên surely		cái CLASS. té Tet festival này this	xõm tụ nhất. enjoyable most

“Surely, this Tet festival was the most enjoyable.”

- dường nhu “it seem to be” as modal adjunct

(4:39) Text [2:70]

textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	Theme		Rheme
		topical Theme	marked Theme	
	Dường nhu it seem to be		người nước ngoài foreigners	lâu dần long progressively cũng thám also sunk

“It seemed foreigners were deeply impressed over time.”

- có lẽ “maybe” as modal adjunct

(4:40) Text [3:58.1]

textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	Theme		Rheme
		topical Theme	marked Theme	
	Có lẽ, maybe		∅: I = tôi I	bận rộn busy

“Maybe (I) was busy.”

4.3.1.3 Topical (ideational) Theme

Topical (ideational) Theme is the element of a participant, a circumstance or the process of the clause (Matthissen, 1995: 541). According to Halliday and Matthissen (2004: 73-74), there are two types of topical (ideational) Theme: unmarked and marked Theme. Unmarked topical (ideational) Theme is the subject of the clause; it is realized by a nominal group, personal pronoun or nominalization. Marked Theme is something other than subject, it is typically realized by either an adverbial group or prepositional phrase. It functions as an adjunct in the clause. In some cases the marked Theme is complement of the clause. That is it does not function as subject of the clause. Typically the complement marked Theme is realized by a nominal group.

According to Minh Duc Thai (1998: 60), unmarked topical (ideational) Theme in Vietnamese may be a nominal group or a nominal group with nominal head and

clause as modifier. A marked topical Theme may be a prepositional phrase or a verbal group.

The topical (ideational) Themes found in Vietnamese Tet festival online news are illustrated as follows:

- Tết “Tet festival” as unmarked topical Theme

(4:41) Text [7:12]

Theme		Rheme
topical Theme		
marked Theme	unmarked Theme	
	Tết Tet festival	đến rồi. arrive ASP.: Pfv.: already

“Tet festival had already arrived.”

- mỗi mùa xuân “each spring” as marked Theme: temporal marked Theme

(4:42) Text [1:2.5]

Theme		Rheme
topical Theme		
marked Theme	unmarked Theme	
mỗi each mùa season		lại again thêm more mến love yêu country
xuân spring		đất country

“Each spring (they) loved country more.”

The topical (ideational) Theme will be discussed in details in the next section

4.3.2.

4.3.2 Theme selection: unmarked topical (ideational) Theme / marked Theme

The topical (ideational) Theme can be a participant, a circumstance or the process. (Matthiessen, 1995: 541). There are two types of topical (ideational) Theme: unmarked Theme and marked Theme. The unmarked Theme will be discussed first and then is followed by the marked Theme.

4.3.2.1 Unmarked topical (ideational) Themes

The unmarked topical (ideational) Theme is the subject of the clause; it is realized by a nominal group which can express by a noun, personal pronoun or proper noun. In terms of subject of Theme in Vietnamese online news, there are three types of unmarked Theme (i) unmarked ‘non-ellipsed’ topical Theme, (ii) unmarked ‘ellipsed’ topical Theme and (iii) unidentified subject Theme. Each type will be discussed in turn.

4.3.2.1.1 Unmarked ‘non-ellipsed’ topical Theme

The unmarked ‘non-ellipsed’ topical Theme is the subject of clause. It is realized by a nominal group simplex (as in example 4:43) and a nominal group complex (as in example 4:44 and example 4:45).

- unmarked ‘non-ellipsed’ topical Theme realized by a nominal group simplex (4:43)Text [14:1]

Theme		Rheme
topical Theme		
marked Theme	unmarked Theme	
	Hàng ngàn thousands	tham dự Lễ hội bánh join festival cake
	người people	tết cylindrical glutinous rice cake

“Thousands of people joined *Tet* (cylindrical glutinous rice cake) festival.”

- unmarked ‘non-ellipsed’ topical Theme realized by a nominal group complex

(4:44) Text [1:1]

Theme		Rheme
topical Theme		
marked Theme	unmarked Theme	
	Dâu, daughter in law, rẻ son in law	ăn Tết Ta eat Tet festival non-western
	Tây western	

“Western daughters in law and western sons in law celebrated Tet festival.”

- unmarked ‘non-ellipsed’ topical Theme realized by a nominal group complex

(4:45) Text [11:9.1]

Theme		Rheme
topical Theme		
marked Theme	unmarked Theme	
	Con trâu, đàn vịt, A buffalo, a covey of duck gia đình gà, family chicken tơ nhện mỏng cobweb thin giăng giăng, to weave chiếc thuyền CLASS. boat mộc hay wood or cây cầu CLASS. bridge tre... bamboo những nét CLASS. character “quê mùa” “countryside”	luôn để lại cảm xúc always leave feeling thân thương khó tả intimate difficult describe với mỗi người Việt. for each people Vietnam

“A buffalo, family of ducks, a family of chickens, a thin cobweb, a wooden boat and a bamboo bridge... these countryside features always produced warm feelings for Vietnamese people that are difficult to describe.”

4.3.2.1.2 Unmarked ‘ellipsed’ topical Theme

Vietnamese is a “zero language” like Thai (see Patpong, 2002).

That is two clauses are linked with or without a linking word. The subject of the following clause may be ellipsed or understood from the preceding clause. The ellipsed subject of the second clause is interpreted as the unmarked ‘ellipsed’ topical Theme. In this analysis, a symbol ‘Ø’ is used to identify the unmarked ‘ellipsed’ topical Theme.

Examples 4:46.1-4:46.3 show that *người Việt* meaning “Vietnamese people” in example 4:46.2 and example 4:46.3 are ellipsed and they are unmarked ellipsed topical Themes. These ellipsed topical Themes can be tracked back or interpreted from the preceding clause as shown in the following example.

- unmarked ‘ellipsed’ topical Theme (Ø)

(4:46.1) Text [3:25.1]

Theme				Rheme
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme		
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme	
			Người Việt people Vietnam	ở hai thành phố live two city này this

“Vietnamese people lived in these two cities ...”

(4:46.2) Text [3:25.2]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
			Ø: they = người Việt people Vietnam	cũng đi chùa also go temple vào đêm into night giao thùa the time between the old year and new year	

“... (they) also went to the temple on *giao thua* (the countdown time to the New Year) night ...”

(4:46.3) Text [3:25.3]

Theme				Rheme	
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme			
		marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
			Ø: they = người Việt people Vietnam	thăm bà con, visit brothers, bạn bè friends vào ngày enter day mồng 1 Tết. the 1 st Tet festival	

“... (they) visited brothers and friends on the 1st day of the Tet festival.”

4.3.2.1.3 Unidentified subject Theme

In some cases, clauses do not have any subject functioning as Theme neither unmarked ‘non-ellipsed’ topical Theme nor unmarked ‘ellipsed’ topical Theme; the subjects of the clauses are interpreted as an unidentified subject Theme. In this study, a symbol ‘[O]’ used to identify the unidentified subject Theme.

Based on the fourteen Tet festival online news, the unidentified subject Theme tends to be found in the clauses that describe scene (as in example 4:47.1-4:47.2 and example 4:48.1-4:48.2).

- unidentified subject Theme: scene description

(4:47.1) Text [8:51.1]

Theme		Rheme
topical Theme		
marked Theme	unmarked Theme	
	[O] = unidentified subject	Càng gần đến the more nearly arrive thời khắc thiêng liêng, time holy

“The blessing time had nearly arrived.”

(4:47.2) Text [8:51.2]

Theme		Rheme
topical Theme		
marked Theme	unmarked Theme	
	tiếng sound pháo firecrackers	nổ explode giòn exploding in salvoes

“The firecrackers exploded in salvoes.”

- unidentified subject Theme: scene description

(4:48.1) [Text 12:50.1]

Theme		Rheme
topical Theme		
marked Theme	unmarked Theme	
	[O] = unidentified subject	Đã thành ASP.: Pfv.: already become truyền thống, into tradition

“It became tradition ...”

(4:48.2) Text [Text 12:50.2]

Theme		Rheme
topical Theme		
marked Theme	unmarked Theme	
đầu năm beginning of the year		người Việt lên chùa people Vietnam go up temple

“... Vietnamese people went to the temple at the beginning of the year.”

4.3.2.2 Marked topical Themes

The marked Theme is a participant, circumstance or process or it is a special specification of thematic (subject) matter or Theme Matter (Matthiessen, 1995: 547).

There are two types of marked topical Theme: marked topical Theme as Theme Matter and marked topical Theme as transitivity role.

4.3.2.2.1 Marked topical as Theme Matter

According to Matthiessen (1995: 549), the feature of marked Theme leads to the system Theme Matter. The choice in Theme Matter system is concerned with the status of the Theme in the other metafunctional layers of the clause. If a Theme Matter is selected, the Theme is not structurally integrated through

conflation with other elements of the clause, although it may be related cohesively through reference or lexical cohesion.

In written English, the Theme Matter is marked by a preposition such as *as for*, *as to* (Matthiessen, 1995: 553).

In written Vietnamese based on Tet festival online news resources, the Theme Matter is marked by a preposition *đối với*; *với*; “as for” (as in example 4:49.1-4:49.2). Example is given below:

- *đối với* “as for” as marked Theme: Theme Matter

(4:49.1) Text [12:3.1]

Theme		Rheme	
textual Theme	topical Theme		
	marked Theme	unmarked Theme	
	Tết Tet festival	là be một one dịp change đông vui enjoy nhộn nhịp enjoy	

“Tet festival was the one chance to enjoy ...”

(4:49.2) Text [12:3.2]

Theme		Rheme	
textual Theme	topical Theme		
	marked Theme	unmarked Theme	
nhưng but	đối với as for vị his excellency tu hành, a priest		Tết có Tet has nhiều many điều thing đặc biệt. special

“... but for priests, Tet festival meant many special things.”

4.3.2.2.2 Marked topical Themes as transitivity role

Matthissen (1995: 549) describes that the marked topical Themes as transitivity role is conflated with a participant or circumstance role in the clause. There are three types of marked topical Themes as transitivity role: process Theme, participant Theme or non-subject complement Theme, and circumstance Theme.

4.3.2.2.2.1 Circumstantial Theme

According to Matthiessen (1995: 550), marked circumstance Themes are typically locations in time or space, relating to a temporal or spatial method of development. There are eight types of marked circumstance Themes: (i) location as Theme (ii) extent as Theme (iii) cause as Theme (iv) accompaniment as Theme (v) role as Theme (vi) angle as Theme and (vii) manner as Theme (viii) matter as Theme. Examples are given below.

4.3.2.2.2.1.1 Location as Theme

Location as Theme can be either: a place - direction, source, passage or destination (as in example 4:50) and time (as in example 4:51 and example 4:52).

- location as Theme: place

(4:50) Text [1:21.1]

Theme		Rheme
topical Theme		
marked Theme	unmarked Theme	
Ở quê hương anh at hometown he		dân cũng ăn Tết people also eat Tet festival theo lịch âm follow calendar lunar

“At his hometown, people also celebrated Tet festival following lunar calendar.”

- location as Theme: time

(4:51) Text [9:2]

Theme		Rheme
topical Theme		
marked Theme	unmarked Theme	
Đêm 30 night 30 th		mọi người thành thoi đi chơi everyone leisurely to tour
Tết Tet festival		giao thừa, the time between old year and new year

“On the night of the 30th day of Tet festival, everybody wandered around leisurely in the hours leading up to countdown to New Year.”

(4:52) Text [8:26.1]

Theme		Rheme
topical Theme		
marked Theme	unmarked Theme	
Thỉnh thoảng sometimes		bon trẻ con được CLASS. children ASP.:Pfv.:ability người lớn elder nhắc lên nhòm vào lift up watch into nồi bánh, pot cake

“Sometimes, the children were lifted up by the elders to look into the cake pot.”

4.3.2.2.1.2 Extent as Theme

Extent as Theme is duration in time, space or distance (Matthissen, 1995: 339). This study found only duration in time that functions as Theme extent. Example is given below.

- extent as Theme: time

(4:53) Text [3:50.1]

Theme		Rheme
topical Theme		
marked Theme	unmarked Theme	
5 năm 5 year rồi ASP.: Pfv.: already		tôi không được I NEG: not ASP.:Pfv.:ability ăn Tết eat Tet festival ở nhà at home

“For five years already, I had not celebrated Tet festival at home.”

4.3.2.2.2.1.3 Cause as Theme

Cause as Theme includes reason (as in example 4:54

and example 4:55), condition (as in example 4:56), purpose, concession or behalf (Matthissen, 1995: 340). Examples are given below.

- cause as Theme: reason

(4:54) Text [12:27.1]

Theme		Rheme
topical Theme		
marked Theme	unmarked Theme	
Chính vì vậy, Because of this reason		các sư thầy, các bà all priest all old women các cô khi gói all woman when wrap đều phải tâm niệm gói each have to self-remind wrap sao cho đều tay, to make equal all

“For this reason, the priest, the old and young women had to remind themselves to wrap the cakes equally.”

- cause as Theme: reason

(4:55) Text [7:29.4]

Theme		Rheme	
textual Theme	topical Theme		
	marked Theme	unmarked Theme	
hoặc or	vì because lý do reason công tác business		phải về muộn. have to go back late

“...or for business reasons (they) had to go back late.”

- cause as Theme: condition

(4:56) Text [13:3.5]

Theme		Rheme	
topical Theme			
marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
lỡ khi In case of		có trộm, exist/have thief hoả hoạn... "viếng thăm" fire visit	

“In case of theft or fire.”

4.3.2.2.2.1.4 Angle as Theme

Angle as Theme construes the projecting part of the sequence as the verbal process represented as a circumstance (Matthissen, 1995: 336). In English the angle Theme is expressed by “according to”. In Vietnamese online news reports, this angle Theme is also found as in example 4:57 and example 4:58.

- angle as Theme

(4:57) Text [10:6.1]

Theme		Rheme
topical Theme		
marked Theme	unmarked Theme	
Theo According to phong tục custom		các vị bô lão all CLASS. elder đức cao vọng trọng virtue high important được cử ra ASP.:Pfv.:ability begin out

“According to the custom, all the virtuous and important elders began (the ceremony).”

(4:58) Text [10:14]

Theme			Rheme			
topical Theme						
marked Theme	unmarked Theme	textual Theme				
Theo According to thông kê statistics của belonging UBND (Ủy ban nhân dân) People's committee xã village		thì then	cả all	thôn small	Dương Lôi Dương Lôi	
			có exist/have	trên about	700 700	
			hộ civil	gia đình family		
			với with	hơn to be more	3.000 3,000	khẩu mouth

“According to the statistic of UBND (people’s committee) of the village, Duong Loi village had about 700 families and more than 3.000 people.”

4.3.2.2.1.5 Manner as Theme

Manner as Theme specifies the manner of the performance of the process. Manner as Theme can reference to either: quality that is often expressed adverbially, comparison that specifies the manner of the performance of the process, and means that is also specifies something that enables the performance of the process, includes instrument and material (Matthissen, 1995: 341). There is an instance of manner as Theme found (as shown in 4:59). In this instance the manner of performance of the process is specified by manner of means.

- manner as Theme: means

(4:59) Text [4:4]

Theme		Rheme
topical Theme		
marked Theme	unmarked Theme	
Bằng with		những người lính many soldier
tâm tình deeply impression feeling		mang mùa xuân về. bring season spring back
và đôi and pair		
bàn tay, hand		

“With deeply impression feeling and a pair of hands, many soldiers brought the spring season (Tet festival) back.”

4.3.2.2.1.6 Matter as Theme

Matter as Theme relates to the process of communication that specifies subject matter or topic (Matthissen, 1995: 337). It is marked by prepositions such as *as for*, *as to*, that is the same example as mentioned in section 4.3.2.2.1 Marked topical as Theme Matter, on page 102.

Of 1,922 simplex clauses of Vietnamese online news, the majority of Theme selection is unmarked topical Theme 82.67% and marked topical Theme is selected only 17.33%, as shown in Figure 7.

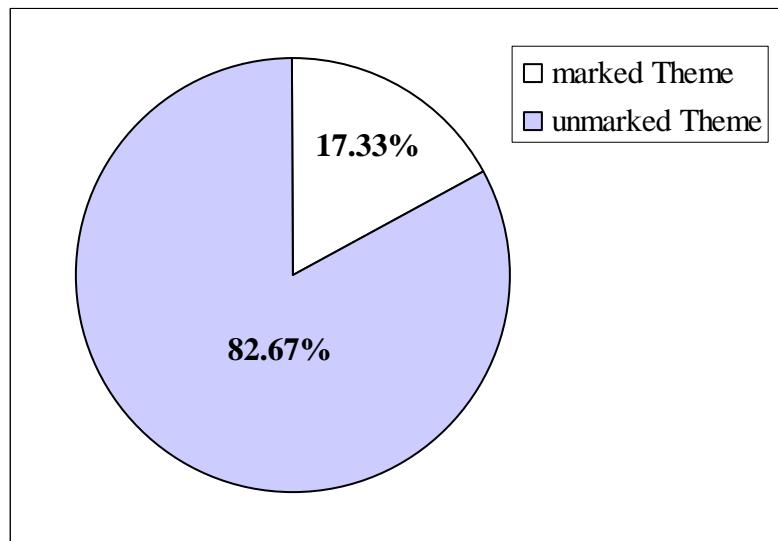


Figure 7 Relative frequencies of Theme selection:
unmarked Theme and marked Theme of Tet festival online news reports

The most favored unmarked topical Theme is subject as Theme or unmarked “non-ellipsed” topical Theme 45.31%, followed by unmarked “ellipsed” topical Theme 33.66% and unidentified subject Theme is selected only 3.74%.

The most favored marked Theme is circumstance Theme 16.23%, followed by marked Theme as Theme matter 1.09%. The relative frequencies of thematic types of Tet festival online news are shown in Figure 7.

The results as mentioned above show that Theme selection of Vietnamese news reports relates to news reporting. That is, news reports often narrate the fact in five important topics, including who, what, when, where, why and how. The relationship between Theme selection and five important topics of news reports writing are elaborated as follow.

Who (the person or the people who were reported in the news reports or the subject of the clause) is often expressed by unmarked Themes.

What (situation or something happened) is often expressed by unmarked Themes (including existential Theme).

When (happening time of the situation in news reports) is expressed by temporal marked Themes.

Where (the place of happening situation) is expressed by spatial marked Themes.

Why and How tend to be expressed by marked circumstantial Themes of cause, angle and manner.

Based on the main topics of the news reporting, it shows that unmarked Theme has the most possibility to occur in Theme selection which relate to the nature of news reports.

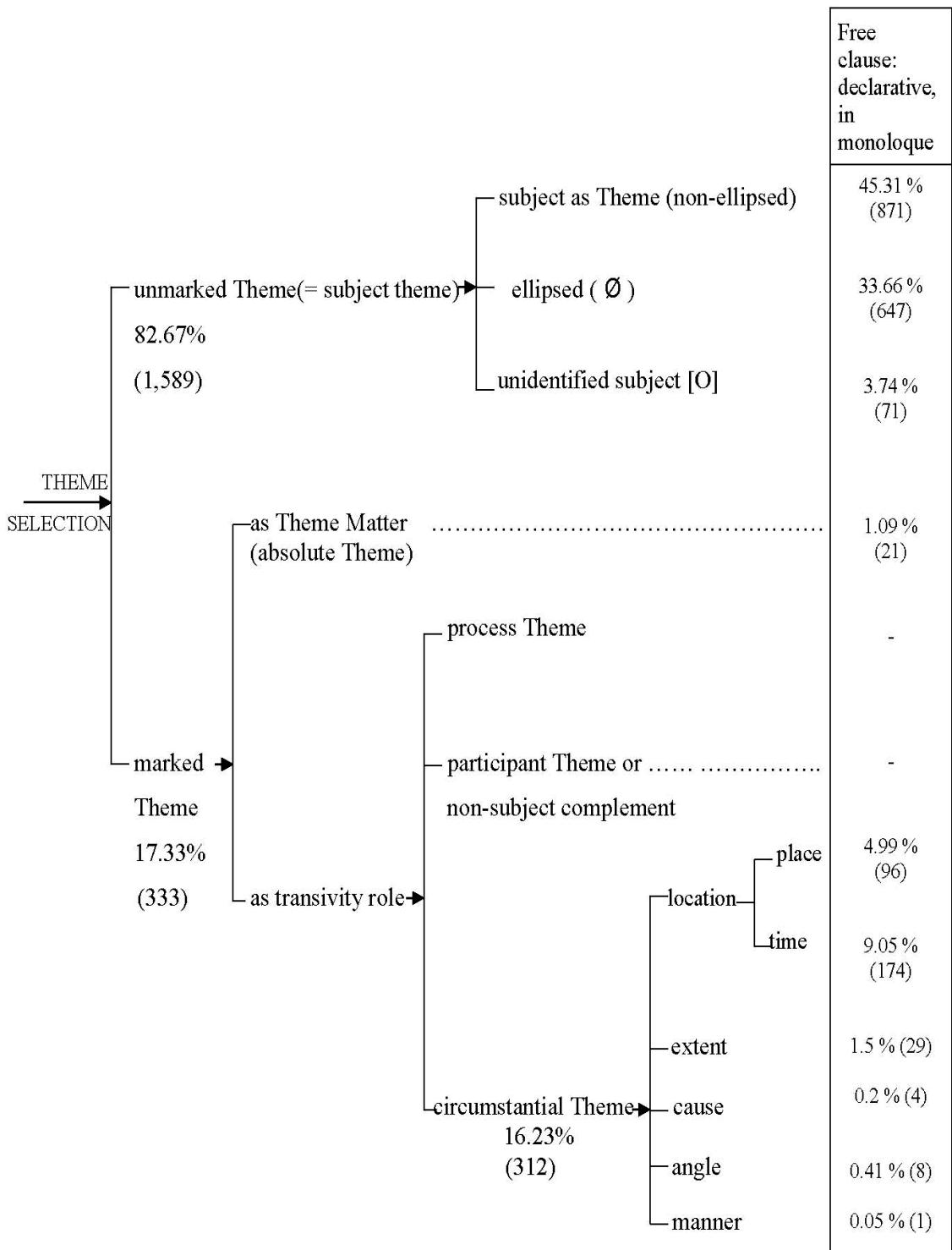


Figure 8 Relative frequencies of thematic types of Tet festival online news reports

Based on the relative frequencies of thematic types of circumstantial Theme, the most favored marked Theme is circumstance of location 14.04% which is divided into two subtypes: place 4.99%; time 9.05%. The circumstance of temporal extent is next in terms of frequency 1.5%; while other circumstance Themes cause; angle and manner are selected less than 1%. The relative frequencies of thematic types of circumstantial Theme are shown in Figure 9.

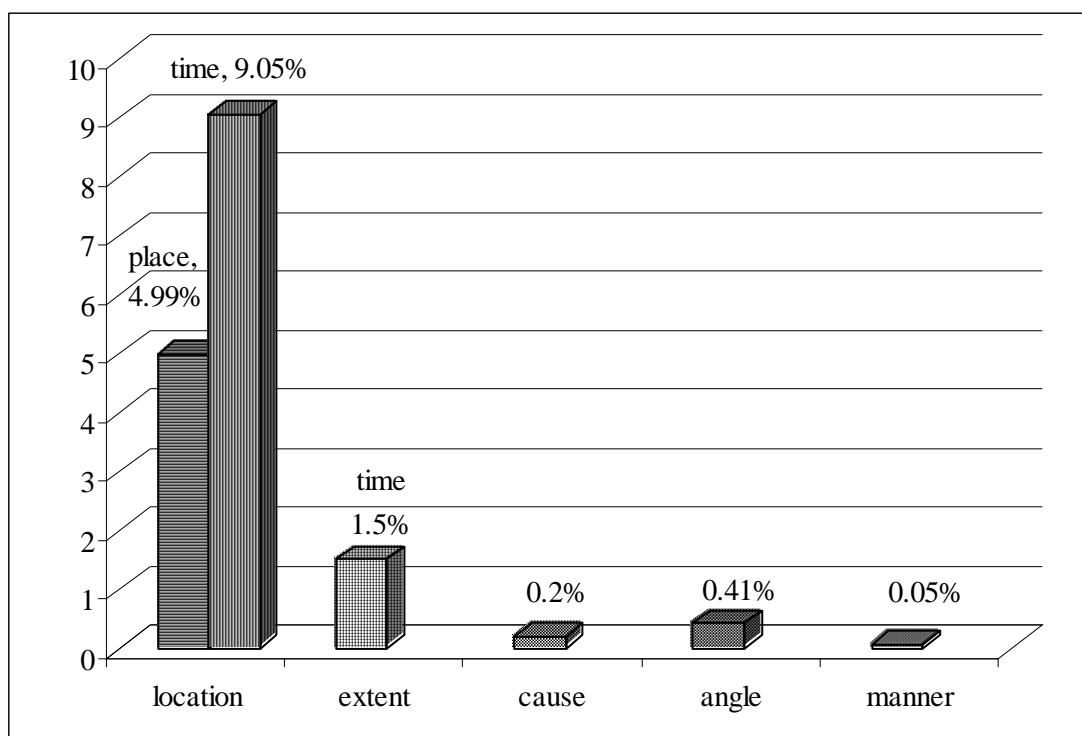


Figure 9 Relative frequencies of circumstantial Theme of Tet festival online news reports

These results show that the circumstantial Theme selection relates to the topic and the content of the text. Because all data analysed undertaken in this study are based on the three important days of Tet festival celebration (see 1.6.2 Summary of Tet festival, on page 9) and the contents are also focused on the different significant activities of Tet celebration of each important period of the day, for example the *giao thùa* “the countdown time to the New Year” and *mồng 1 Tết* “the New Year’s day”. Moreover these contents also focus on the activities of Tet celebration in several places both in Vietnam country and others countries.

So the most significant description which the writers or the reporters aim to narrate or to report Tet festival news reports is the chronological description, developed through time (including temporal extent) and space.

4.3.3 Theme Range: single / multiple Theme

Theme range is a thematic sequence of a clause simplex. The Theme of Vietnamese online news reports can be either a single Theme or a multiple Theme.

4.3.3.1 Single Theme

Single Theme means that in a clause structure there is only one topical (ideational) Theme in a clause simplex. Single Theme can be either (i) unmarked Theme which includes (a) non-ellipsed Theme or subject as Theme, (b) ellipsed Theme and (c) unidentified subject Theme or (ii) marked Theme which includes (a) participant Theme or non-subject complement Theme, (b) circumstantial Theme. Examples are given below.

- unmarked Theme: non-ellipsed Theme or subject as Theme

(4:60) Text [8:3.1]

Theme	Rheme
topical Theme	
unmarked Theme	
Người Việt ở các nước này people Vietnam at all country this	đón Tết welcome Tet fesival

“Vietnamese people in these countries welcomed Tet festival.”

- unmarked Theme: ellipsed Theme

(4:61) Text [8:3.2]

Theme	Rheme
topical Theme	
unmarked Theme	
Ø: it = Tết Tet festival	cũng có bánh chưng xanh, also have square glutinous rice cake mai, apricot blossom đào và cả... VietNamNet. peach blossom and both VietnamNet

“Tet also had *banh chung* (square glutinous rice cake), apricot blossoms, peach blossoms and Vietnamnet.”

- unmarked Theme: unidentified subject Theme

(4:62) Text [13:2.1]

Theme	Rheme
topical Theme	
unmarked Theme	
[O] = unidentified subject	Chỉ về với những miền quê only come back many area village

“It had only come back to the villages...”

- marked Theme: participant Theme or non-subject complement Theme

(4:63) Text [2:3.1]

Theme	Rheme
topical Theme	
unmarked Theme	
Mỗi chiếc each CLASS. bánh chưng square glutinous rice cake	được bán với ASP.:Pfv.:ability sell with giá 11.000 đồng price 11,000 Vietnam currency unit

“Each *banh chung* (square glutinous rice cake) was sold for 11,000 dong (Vietnam currency unit).”

- marked Theme: circumstantial Theme

(4:64) Text [1:25.4]

Theme	Rheme
topical Theme	
marked Theme	
Mỗi dip Tết each occasion Tet festival	đến, arrive

“Each annual Tet festival arrived.”

4.3.3.2 Multiple Theme

Multiple Theme means in a clause structure there are more than one element of Theme set up in a clause simplex. That is, besides the obligatory topical (ideational) Theme, there is an optional textual Theme or an optional interpersonal Theme preceding or an optional textual following topical (ideational) Theme. This study found four types of multiple Theme: (i) textual Theme and topical Theme; (ii) interpersonal Theme and topical Theme; (iii) textual Theme, interpersonal Theme and topical Theme (iv) topical Theme and textual Theme. Examples are given below.

- (i) textual Theme and topical Theme (textual + topical)

(4:65) Text [3:27.4]

Theme	Rheme		
textual	topical Theme		
Theme	unmarked Theme		
khi when	Tết Tet festival	đang be in the process of	đến. arrive

“When Tet festival arrived ...”

- (ii) interpersonal Theme and topical Theme (interpersonal + topical)

(4:66) Text 4:11

Theme		Rheme
interpersonal Theme	topical Theme	
	unmarked Theme	
Hắn nhiên surely	cái tết CLASS. Tet festival này this	xõm tụ nhất. enjoy most

“Surely, this Tet festival was the most enjoyable.”

- (iii) textual Theme, interpersonal Theme and topical Theme

(textual + interpersonal + topical)

(4:67) Text 10:19.4

Theme			Rheme
textual Theme	interpersonal Theme	topical Theme	
		unmarked Theme	
thì then	chắc chắn surely	gia đình mình, family oneself thôn mình village oneself	sẽ còn will ASP.: Impf.: still tiếp tục to continue

“... then our families and villages will still surely continue ...”

- (iv) topical Theme and textual Theme (topical + textual Theme)

(4:68) Text 2:44.1

Theme		Rheme
topical Theme	textual Theme	
unmarked Theme		
Con trai CLASS. man	thì then	lo lau chùi, dọn dẹp, provide wipe clean, to tidy up trang trí nhà cửa, decorate house

“Then the man provided a broom, to tidy up and decorate a house ...”

The results of this study as mentioned in Section 4.3.2 Theme Selection and Section 4.3.4 Theme Range show that the textual resources in Tet festival online news consists of Theme selection and Theme range. These two textual resources can occur simultaneously. Theme selection can be either an unmarked Theme or a marked Theme. As for Theme range, it can be either a single Theme or a multiple Theme. There is only topical (ideational) Theme constituting a single Theme. There are four types of multiple Theme: (i) textual Theme and topical Theme; (ii) interpersonal Theme and topical Theme; (iii) textual Theme, interpersonal Theme and topical Theme (iv) topical Theme and textual Theme. A system network of Theme selection and Theme range is presented in Figure 8.

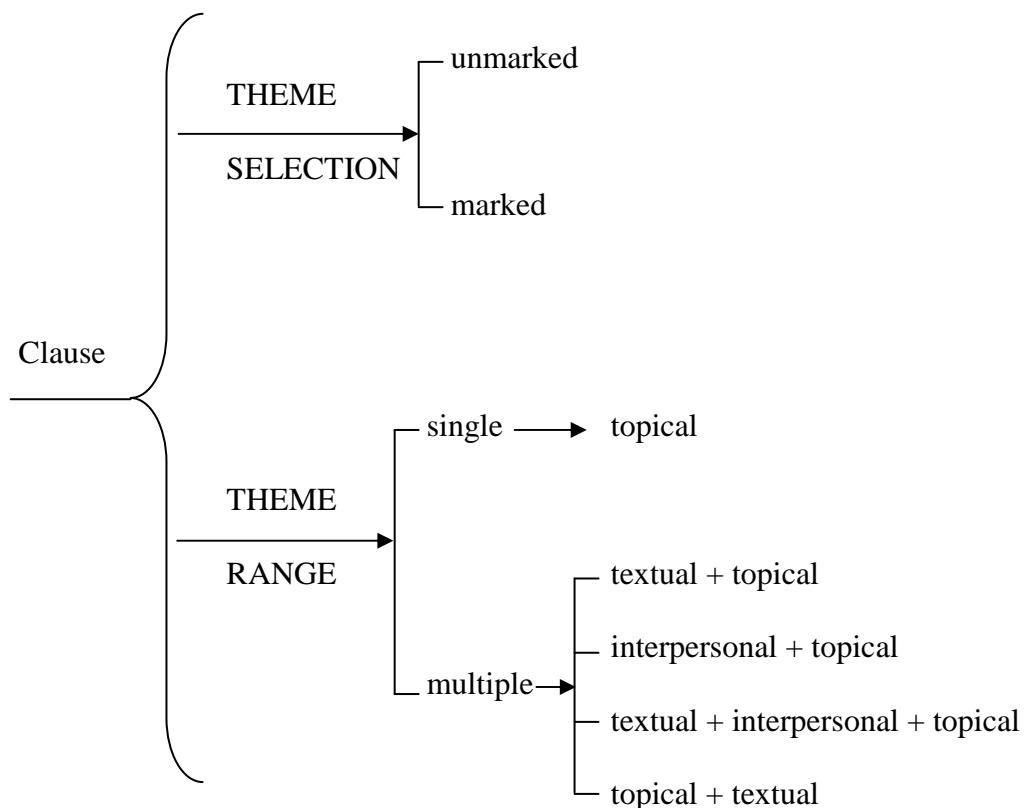


Figure 10 The simultaneous systems of textual resources in Tet festival online news reports

4.3.4 Theme in existential clause

Theme in existential clause is one significant of Theme in clauses. Theme in existential clause functions as representing that something exists or happens (Halliday & Matthissen, 2004: 256). According to Minh Duc Thai (1998: 68), Theme in existential clauses in Vietnamese begins with *có* meaning “exist/have” and it sets up in unmarked topical (ideational) Theme. Besides *có* meaning “exist/have” (as in example 4:69, 4:70, 4:71, and 4:72), this study also found existential clauses expressed by *sót* meaning “remain” (as in example 4:73) Examples of Theme in existential clauses found in this study are given below.

- *có* “exist/have” as Theme in existential clause

(4:69) Text 5: [51.1]

Theme			Rheme
textual Theme	topical Theme		
	marked Theme	unmarked Theme	
		<i>có</i> exist/have	<i>ba</i> <i>dứa</i> <i>con,</i> three CLASS. child

“... there were three children.”

(4:70) Text 3: [74.3]

Theme			Rheme
textual Theme	topical Theme		
	marked Theme	unmarked Theme	
		<i>có</i> exist/have	<i>bắn</i> <i>pháo hoa</i> shoot firework

“There were fireworks going off.”

(4:71) Text 2: [16.1]

Theme			Rheme	
textual Theme	topical Theme			
	marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
Vì because		chỉ only có exist/have	hai ngày đê mua sắm two day for shopping	

“Because there were only two days for shopping.”

(4:72) Text 8: [59.2]

Theme			Rheme	
textual Theme	topical Theme			
	marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
Tuy Although		không có NEG: not exist/have	hoa đào flower peach blossom	

“Although, there were no peach blossom.”

- sót “exist/remain” as Theme in existential clause

(4:73) Text 7: [68.2]

Theme			Rheme	
textual Theme	topical Theme			
	marked Theme	unmarked Theme		
		còn ASP.: Impf.: still sót exist/remain lại again	ánh đèn của các light lamp belonging all ghe thuyền đánh bắt junk boat catch catch cá xa bờ, fish far coast	

“Lamp light from all the junks and fishing boats far of coast could still be seen.”

In addition, Themes in existential clauses found in Tet festival news have some significant functions. They express scene (as in example 4:74), action (as in example 4:75), situation (as in example 4:76), condition (as in example 4:77, 4:78), characteristic of something (as in example 4:79) in news reports. Other examples of Themes in existential clauses are given below.

- Theme in existential clause: scene expression

(4:74) Text 5: [48.2]

Theme		Rheme	
textual Theme	topical Theme		
	marked Theme	unmarked Theme	
		có exist/have	hai sào ruộng nước. two CLASS. rice-field

“There were two rice-fields.”

- Theme in existential clause: action expression

(4:75) Text 5: [48.2]

Theme		Rheme	
textual Theme	topical Theme		
	marked Theme	unmarked Theme	
		có exist/have	người đã đùa people ASP.: Impf.: already joke

“People joked about ...”

- Theme in existential clause: situation expression

(4:76) Text 2: [56.2]

Theme		Rheme	
textual Theme	topical Theme		
	marked Theme	unmarked Theme	
vì because		có exist/have	quá nhiều người truy cập too much people connect vào trang đó. into webpage that

“... because there were too many people connected to that webpage.”

- Theme in existential clause: condition expression

(4:77) Text 5: [15.3]

Theme		Rheme	
textual Theme	topical Theme		
	marked Theme	unmarked Theme	
	có exist/have		con em roi vào hoàn cảnh bất hạnh offspring get into circumstance poor ở các làng thuộc xã la M'nông. at all village belong district la M'nong.

“... there were descendants who were in a bad condition in the of la M'nong district.

(4:78) Text 8: [18.1]

Theme		Rheme	
textual Theme	topical Theme		
	marked Theme	unmarked Theme	
	Có exist/have		một điều rất hay one thing very enjoy

“There was a very nice enjoyable.”

- Theme in existential clause: characteristic expression

(4:79) Text 12: [23.3]

Theme		Rheme	
textual Theme	topical Theme		
	marked Theme	unmarked Theme	
nhưng but		vẫn ASP.: Impf.: still	một nét duyên riêng one feature charm private
		có exist/have	đậm đà hương vị. charming taste

“... but it still had a unique and delightful taste.”

The results of the study presented here focus on the significant features of Theme and Rheme structure and internal Theme structure of the fourteen Tet festival online news reports. Some significant characteristics are summarized as follows:

- Theme choices

The fourteen Tet festival online news reports, Theme choices comprises with Textual Theme, Interpersonal Theme and Topical (ideational Theme).

Textual Theme

Textual Themes found in this study are conjunctions and relative elements. There is no instance of continuative found. The majority of Textual Themes found in this study are conjunctions which can divide in two types based on their structure: conjunctive structure and conjunctive complexity. In terms of textual Theme, there are two interesting points of Vietnamese conjunctions:

- (i) Vietnamese grammar allows two locations of certain conjunctions (for example, *nếu* “if”; *thì* “but”, “then”; *khi* “when”). These conjunctions could be found at the beginning of the clause and they could be found at the position before Rheme. The two locations of conjunction is one of significant characters of Vietnamese conjunctions and
- (ii) This study found Vietnamese words *mà* and *thì* that have various meanings and grammatical functions. *Mà* can be both conjunction and relative element. (In terms of conjunction *mà* can be an extending conjunction meanings: but; and; yet; nevertheless and it can be an enhancing conjunction meanings: if; then; as a result). *Thì* also has more than one meaning. In terms of grammatical function *thì* can be an extending conjunction meaning “but” and an enhancing conjunction meaning “then”. In addition, *thì* can be an adverb meaning “certainly” and “for sure”. In terms of lexical word *thì* means “prime of youth” and “full season”.

(iii) Vietnamese conjunction system can be expressed both within clause complexes (linking clause simplexes to clause complexes) and between clause complexes. Examples of conjunction linking simplex clauses into clause complexes are as in example of và meaning “and” (presented in example 4:8.1-4:8.3, on page 52-53) and example of nhung meaning “but” (presented in example 4:9.1-4:9.2, on page 54). Examples of conjunction linking between clause complexes are as in example of tiêu biếu “particularly” (presented in example 4:5.1-4:5.5, on page 47-48) and đặc biệt “especially” (presented in example 4:6.1-4:6.4, on page 49-50).

Besides conjunctions, this study found the relative element both definite relative which is expressed by mà meaning “which, that, whom” and indefinite relative which is expressed by the question word bao giờ meaning “whenever”.

Interpersonal Theme

The interpersonal Themes found in Vietnamese Tet festival online news are only modal adjunct such as chắc chắn “surely”, tất nhiên “necessarily”, hẳn nhiên “surely”, dường như “it seem to be” and có lẽ “maybe”. But there are no examples of continuative and wh-element found in this study.

Topical (ideational) Theme

The topical (ideational) Themes found in this study are unmarked Themes which is realized by a nominal group and marked Theme which is realized by either an adverbial group or prepositional phrase.

- Theme selection

The majority of Theme selection found in this study is unmarked Theme, followed by marked Theme. This result shows that Theme selection relates to the topics of text and news reports writing style which focuses on who, what, when, where, why and how.

- Theme Range: single / multiple Theme

Theme range found in this study can be either a single Theme or a multiple Theme. There are four types of multiple Theme: (i) textual Theme and topical Theme; (ii) interpersonal Theme and topical Theme; (iii) textual Theme, interpersonal Theme and topical Theme (iv) topical Theme and textual Theme.

- Theme in existential clause

This study found two Vietnamese words are placed at the beginning of clauses. The two words express existence of an entity. In terms of transitivity perspective, they are realized by existential clauses. Those two words are có meaning “exist/have” and sót meaning “remain”. Existential clauses found in Tet festival news have some significant functions. They express scene, action, situation, condition, characteristic of something in news reports.

The next chapter will describe thematic progression of fourteen Vietnamese news reports.

CHAPTER V

THEMATIC PROGRESSION AND SOME SIGNIFICANT FEATURES OF VIETNAMESE ONLINE NEWS REPORTS

5.1 Thematic progression

Thematic progression or method of development of text is the illustration which shows how the information flows in text (Matthissen, 1995:572-573). Thematic progression is also the way in which the Theme of the clause may pick up or repeat a meaning from a preceding Theme or Rheme (Paltridge, 2000: 140).

According to Danes (1974) and Fries (1981), they divide two basic types of thematic progression: (i) Theme -> Theme progression which begins by relating a new Theme to the previous one, (ii) Rheme -> Theme which changes and relates a new Theme to the previous Rheme.

Based on Paltridge's classification of thematic progression (2000: 140-143), this study divides thematic progression into three patterns (for further information of thematic progression and examples see Appendix B).

a) Theme reiteration or constant Theme pattern

In this thematic progression pattern, a Theme is picked up and repeated at the beginning of each clause as illustrated in Figure 11

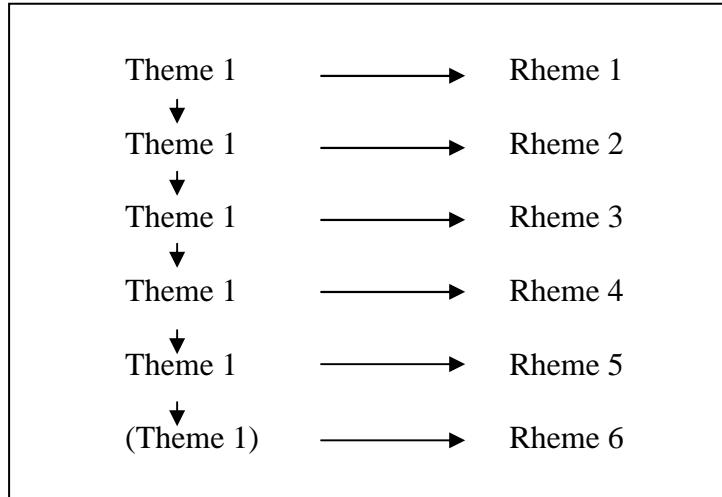


Figure 11 Thematic progression: Theme reiteration or constant Theme pattern

(based on Martin and Rothery, 1986 as cited in Paltridge, 2000: 140)

b) A zig-zag or linear Theme pattern

In this thematic progression pattern, the subject matter in the Rheme of the previous clause is taken up in the Theme of a following clause as illustrated in Figure 12.

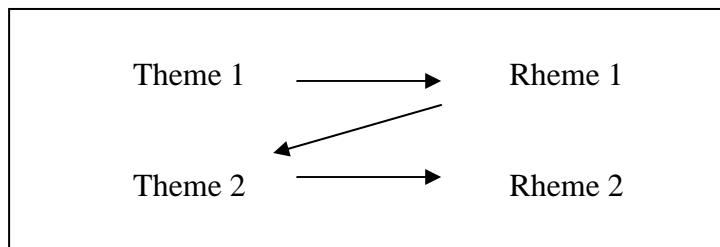


Figure 12 Thematic progression: A zig-zag or linear Theme pattern

(based on Clegg and Wheeler, 1991: 83 as cited in Paltridge, 2000: 140)

c) A multiple Theme or split Rheme pattern

In multiple Theme or split Rheme progression, a Rheme may include a number of different pieces of information, each of which may be taken up as the Theme in a number of subsequent clauses as illustrated in Figure 13.

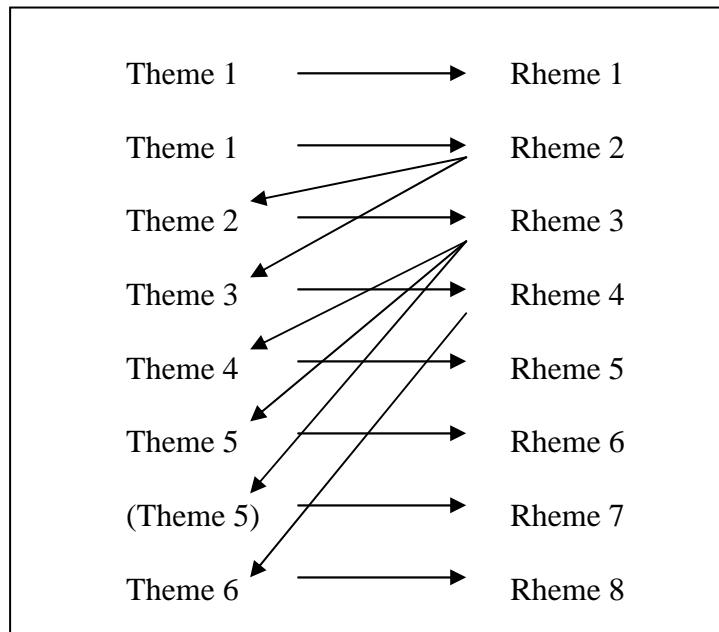


Figure 13 Thematic progression: A multiple Theme or spilt Rheme pattern

(based on Nesbitt et al, 1990: 21 as cited in Paltridge, 2000: 143)

The examples of thematic patterns found in the fourteen news reports are presented as follows:

5.1.1 Theme reiteration or constant Theme pattern

Examples of Theme reiteration or constant Theme pattern found in this study are illustrated in example 4:80, Figure 14, example 4:81, Figure 15.

(4:80) Text [8:48.1], [8:48.2] and [8:48.3]

No.	Theme	Rheme
48.1	<p>Theme 1:</p> <p>Bánh chung, square glutinous rice cake,</p> <p>bánh nép glutinous rice cake</p>	<p>Rheme 1:</p> <p>được gói rất ASP.:Pfv.:ability wrap very</p> <p>đẹp mắt, beautiful eyes</p>
48.2	<p>Theme 1:</p> <p>Ø: it = bánh chung, square glutinous rice cake,</p> <p>bánh nép glutinous rice cake</p>	<p>Rheme 2:</p> <p>được bày bán ASP.:Pfv.:ability arrange sell</p> <p>khắp nơi every place</p>
48.3	<p>Theme 1:</p> <p>Ø: it = bánh chung, square glutinous rice cake,</p> <p>bánh nép glutinous rice cake</p>	<p>Rheme 3:</p> <p>khiến người xem make people watch</p> <p>không muốn rời bước. NEG: not want leave walk</p>

“Banh chung (square glutinous rice cake) and banh nep (glutinous rice cake) were attractively wrapped and arranged for sale everywhere which was why people were looking and did not want to leave.

The thematic progression of the example 4:80 is illustrated in Figure 14.

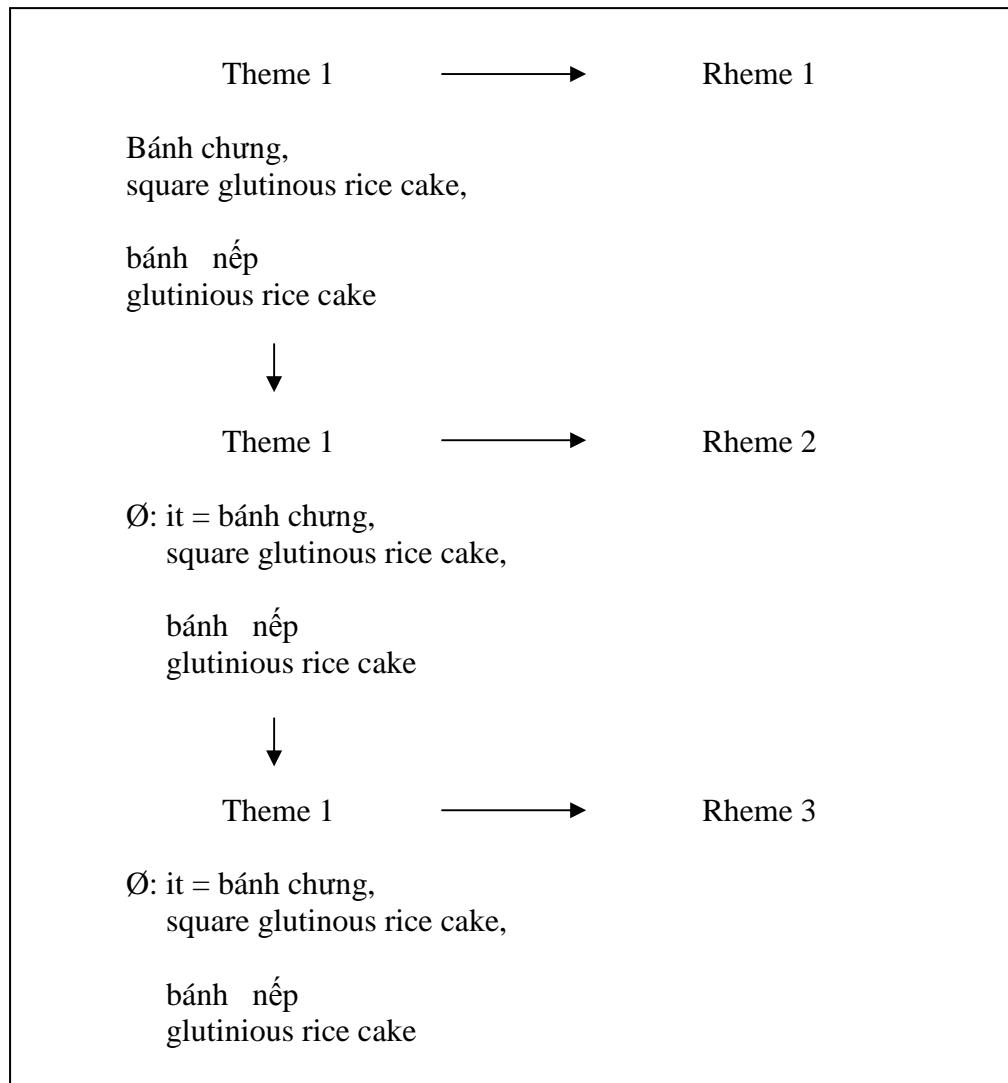


Figure 14 Thematic progression: Theme reiteration or constant Theme pattern

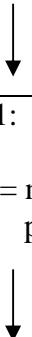
(based on example 4:80 Text [8:48.1], [8:48.2] and [8:48.3])

The thematic progression as illustrated in Figure 12 shows that the unmarked topical Theme bánh chưng “square glutinous rice cake” and bánh nép “glutinous rice cake” (in Text [8:48.1]) function as the point of departure of the clause. Although Themes in Text [8:48.2] and [8:48.3] are ellipsed, but they still can be tracked back or interpreted from the preceding clause as shown in Text [8:48.1]. It illustrates that the Theme of Text [8:48.2] and [8:48.3] are bánh chưng and bánh nép.

So it means that in Text [8:48.2] and [8:48.3], bánh chung and bánh nếp are picked up as Themes again but they are expressed by ‘zero morphemes’ or ellipsed subject Themes. According to thematic development pattern where Theme is picked up and repeated at the beginning of each clause (as shown in Figure 14), it is a Theme reiteration or constant Theme pattern.

Another example of Theme reiteration or constant Theme pattern is illustrated in example 4:81, Figure 15.

(4:81) Text [8:49.1], [8:49.2], [8:49.3] and [8:49.4]

No.	Theme	Rheme
49.1	Theme 1: 	Rheme 1: đi xem, go watch
49.2	Theme 1: Ø: they = người people 	Rheme 2: đi mua go buy
49.3	Theme 1: Ø: they = người people 	Rheme 3: đến từ nhiều tiểu bang come from many state khác nhau, different each other
49.4	Theme 1: Ø: they = người people	Rheme 4: vào chợ vui và come into market enjoy and háo hức như được sống hanker like ASP.:Pfv.:ability live trong không khí của quê hương. in atmosphere belonging native land

“People went to watch and buy, they came from many different states and they went to the market with the feeling of joy wishing to relive atmosphere of the hometown.”

The thematic progression of the example 4:81 is illustrated in Figure 15.

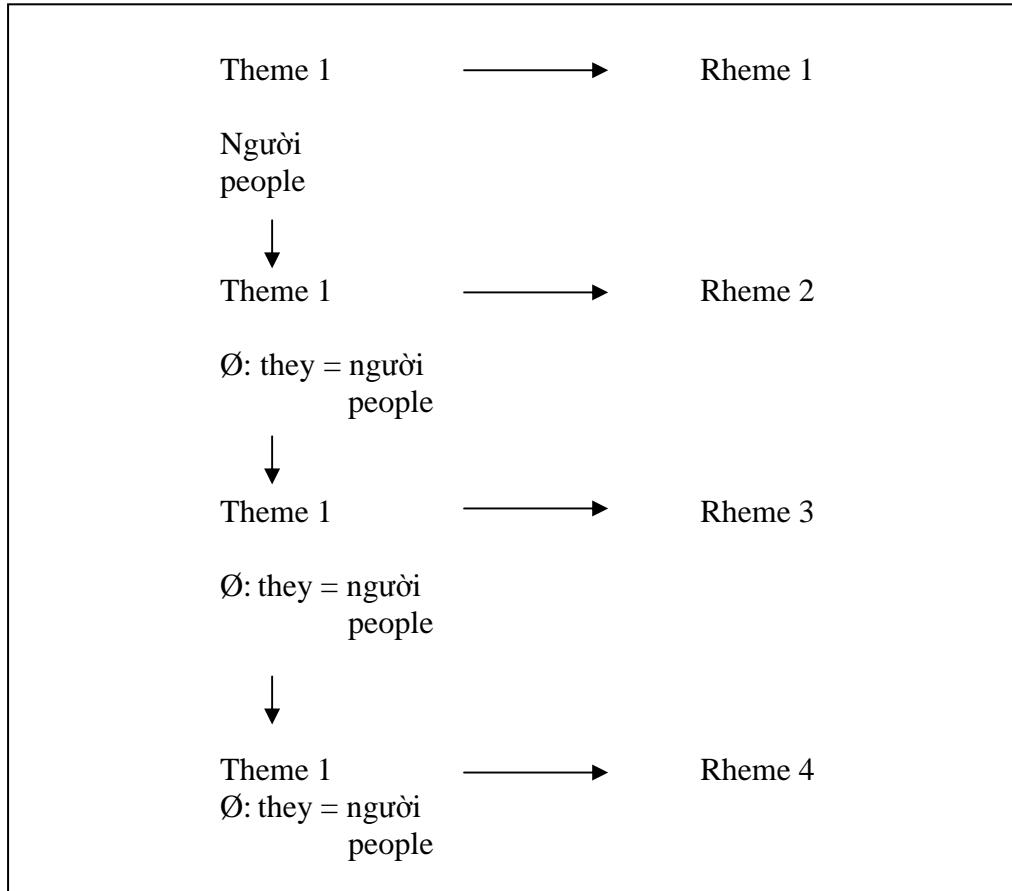


Figure 15 Thematic progression: Theme reiteration or constant Theme pattern

(based on example 4:81 Text [8:49.1], [8:49.2], [8:49.3] and [8:49.4])

The thematic progression as illustrated in Figure 13 shows that the unmarked topical Theme *người* “people” not only function as Theme of the first clause (Text [8:49.1]) but it can be interpreted as Theme of the three following clauses (Text [8:49.2], [8:49.3] and [8:49.4]). Therefore the thematic progression pattern of this example is Theme reiteration or constant Theme pattern.

5.1.2 A zig-zag or linear Theme pattern

Examples of a zig-zag or linear Theme pattern found in this study are illustrated in example 4:82, Figure 16 and example 4:83, Figure 17.

(4:82) Text [14:2.1] and [14:2.2]

No.	Theme	Rheme
2.1	<p>Theme 1:</p> <p>Đêm 10/2 Night 10, February</p> <p>(mùng 2 tết) (the second day of Tet festival)</p> <p>lễ hội bánh tết - festival cylindrical glutinous rice cake</p>	<p>Rheme 1:</p> <p>được ASP.:Pfv.:ability</p> <p>nhân dân TP.HCM people Ho Chi Minh city</p> <p>mong đợi nhất wait mostly</p>
2.2	<p>Theme 2:</p> <p>và \emptyset: it = lễ hội and festival</p>	<p>Rheme 2:</p> <p>đã diễn ra ASP.: Pfv.: already perform out</p> <p>thật hoành tráng rộn rã ngay really grand noisy straight</p> <p>trước nhà hát TP in front of theater city</p>

“At the night 10, February (the second day of Tet festival), the *banh tet* (cylindrical glutinous rice cake-filled with green bean paste and fat pork) festival, was the festival which people in Ho Chi Minh city waited for the most. And this festival had already had a really grand and noisy opening in front of the city theater.”

The thematic progression of the example 4:82 is illustrated in Figure 16.

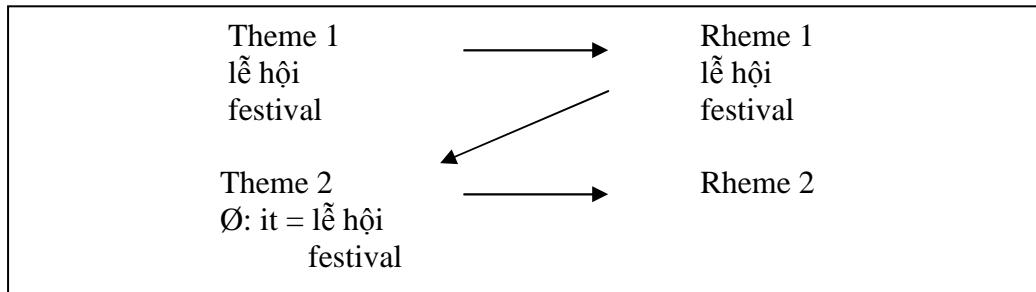


Figure 16 Thematic progression: A zig-zag or linear Theme pattern

(based on example 4:82 Text [14:2.1] and [14:2.2])

The thematic progression as illustrated in Figure 14 shows that lễ hội “festival” functions as the subject matter in the Rheme of the first clause (Text [14:2.1]) and then it is taken up again as the Theme of a following clause (Text [14:2.2]). When clauses have text development like this, it is interpreted as a zig-zag or linear Theme pattern.

(4:83) Text [8:15.1] and [8:15.2]

No.	Theme	Rheme
15.1	Theme 1: Thậm chí còn có even also exist/have	Rheme 1: cả at all con lợn sữa quay sucking-pig roast (roasted sucking-pig)
15.2	Theme 2: Ø: it = con lợn sữa quay sucking-pig roast (roasted sucking-pig)	Rheme 2: được đặt từ ASP.:Pfv.:ability order from nhà hàng trên Warszawa. shop on Warszawa

“It also even had roasted sucking-pig. It was ordered from the shop in Warszawa.

The thematic progression of the example 4:83 is illustrated in Figure 17.

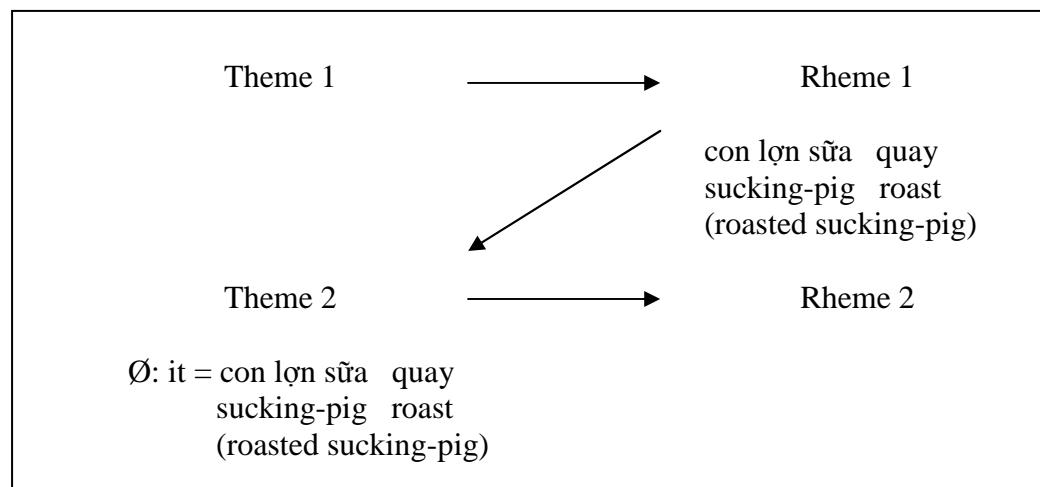


Figure 17 Thematic progression: A zig-zag or linear Theme pattern

(based on example 4:83 Text [8:15.1] and [8:15.2])

The thematic progression as illustrated in Figure 15 shows that *con lợn sữa quay* “roasted sucking-pig” functions as the subject matter in the Rheme of the first clause (Text [8:15.1]) and then it is taken up again in the Theme of a following clause (Text [8:15.2]). This thematic progression of this example is also a zig-zag or linear Theme pattern.

5.1.3 A multiple Theme or split Rheme pattern

Example of a multiple Theme or split Rheme pattern found in this study is illustrated in example 4:84, Figure 18.

(4:84) Text [5:21.1], [5:21.2], [5:21.3], [5:22.1] and [5:22.2]

No.	Theme	Rheme
21.1	Theme 1: Có have	Rheme 1: 5 đúra con 5 CLASS. child
21.2	Theme 2: thì hai đúra then two CLASS.	Rheme 2: cũng bị nhiễm chất also be catch chemical element độc da cam toxic orange
21.3	Theme 3: Ø: hai đúra two CLASS.	Rheme 3: là con Ra và be child Ra and thằng a designation used Veng. a designation used Veng. in contempt or abuse before a proper name
22.1	Theme 4: Ra Ra	Rheme 4: năm nay 14 tuổi, year this 14 age
22.2	Theme 5: Veng Veng	Rheme 5: 12 tuổi 12 age

“Ro Cham Noi had five children, and then two children were affected by Agent Orange. Those two children were Ra and Veng. Ra was 14 years old in this year. Veng was 12 years old.

The thematic progression of the example 4:84 is illustrated in Figure 18.

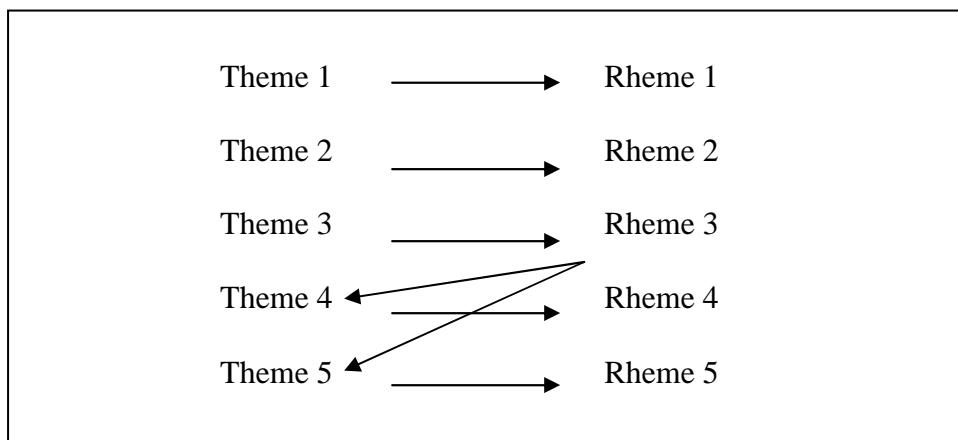


Figure 18 Thematic progression: A multiple Theme or split Rheme pattern

(based on example 4:84 Text [5:21.1], [5:21.2], [5:21.3], [5:22.1] and [5:22.2])

The thematic progression as illustrated in Figure 18 shows that *con Ra và thắng Veng* “Ra and Veng” are Rheme of clause (Text [5:21.3]) which include a number of different pieces of information: Ra and Veng. In the text development each Rheme is taken up as the Theme in a number of subsequent clauses as Ra in Text [5:22.1] and Veng in Text [5:22.2]. The thematic progression as shown in Figure 18 is a multiple Theme or split Rheme pattern.

Figure 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18 present some parts of the fourteen news reports analysed in terms of the thematic progression. Three different types of thematic progression include (i) Theme reiteration or constant Theme pattern, (ii) a zig-zag or linear Theme pattern, and (iii) a multiple Theme or split Rheme pattern.

In addition, the thematic progressions of news reports seem to be complicated. This study revealed that in one text, more than one thematic progression could be found as shown in Figure 19 and Figure 20. The Figure 19 is taken from Text 10: *Tết quê ở đồng bằng Bắc bộ* “Provincial Tet festival at the northern delta of Vietnam”. The Figure 20 is taken from Text 14: *Hàng ngàn người tham dự Lễ hội bánh tết* “Thousands people joined *banh tet* (cylindrical glutinous rice cake) festival” (see the details of thematic progression analysis of Text 10 and Text 14 in Appendix B).

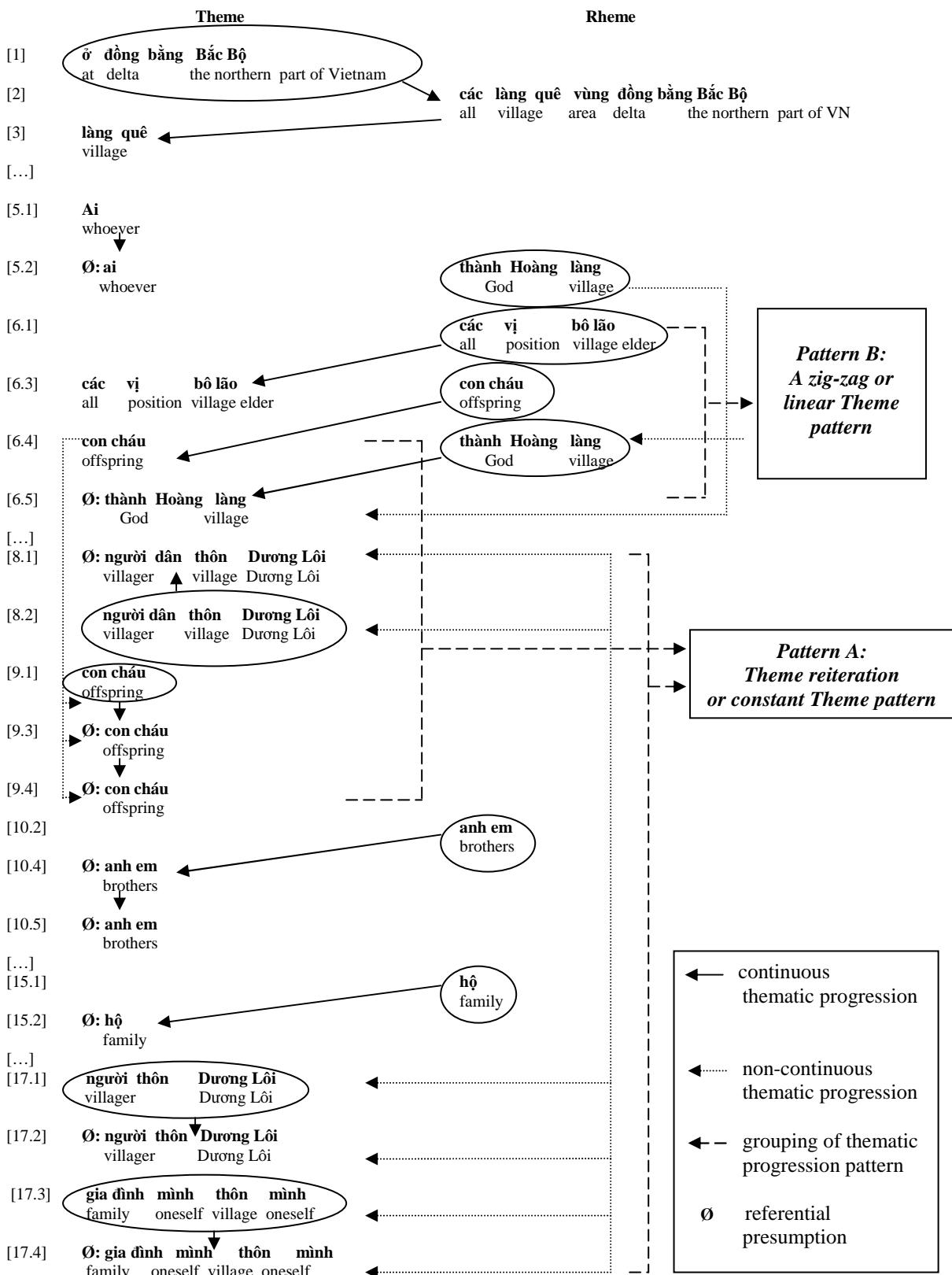


Figure 19 Thematic progression of Text 10: Provincial Tet festival at the northern delta of Vietnam

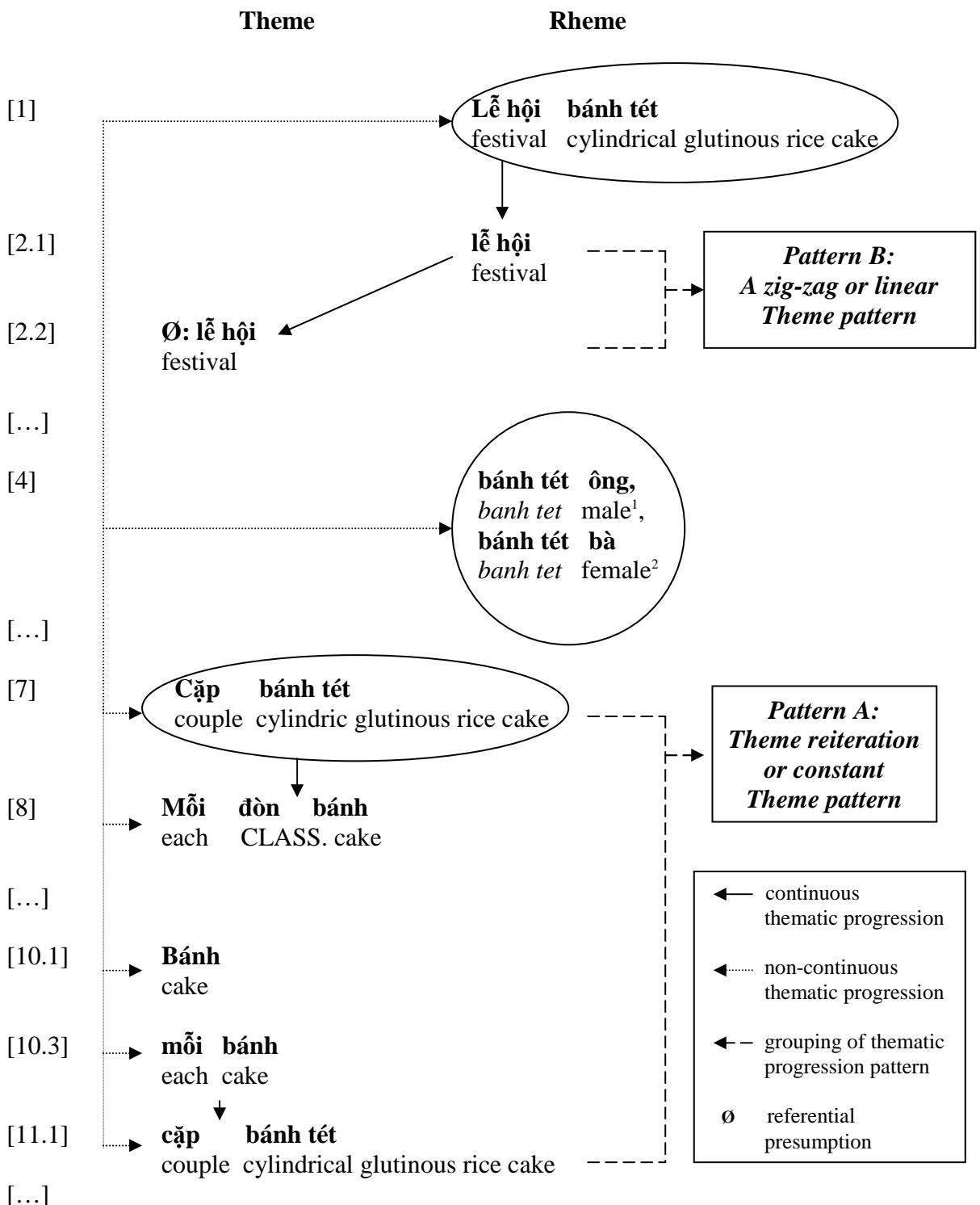


Figure 20 Thematic progression of Text 14: Thousands people joined the *banh tet* (cylindrical glutinous rice cake) festival

¹ Literal translation of ông

² Literal translation of bà

Figure 19 and Figure 20 show that there is various thematic progression patterns found in one text. As in Figure 19, there are two thematic progression patterns found, for example:

- a) Theme reiteration or constant Theme pattern (clause 6.4 to clause 9.4; clause 5.2 to clause 6.4 and clause 6.5; clause 8.1 to clause 17.1 and clause 17.2)
- b) A zig-zag or linear Theme (clause 1 to clause 3, clause 6.1 to 6.3, clause 6.3 to clause 6.4, and clause 6.4 to 6.5)

As in Figure 20, there are two thematic progression patterns found, for example:

- a) Theme reiteration or constant Theme pattern (clause 2.1 to clause 2.2)
- b) A zig-zag or linear Theme (clause 7 to clause 11.1)

However it is challenging to identify the whole thematic progression of those fourteen news reports. The variety of thematic progression pattern within a text seems possible; this is because news reports are composed of different text types. Within a news report, it may comprise narrative text (as in example 4:85), interview text (as in example 4:86) or instruction text (as in example 4:87). In addition, reporter's writing styles may contribute to different text types constituting news reports.

• narrative text

(4:85) Text [10:4.1], [10:4.2], [10:4.3], [10:4.4] and [10:4.5]

No.	Theme	Rheme
4.1	Mặc dù Ø: it Although	vừa qua một đêm ASP.: Pfv.: just pass one night
4.2	để for	chào đón thời khắc greet welcome time giao thừa the time between the old year and the New Year
4.3	nhưng ngay but immediately từ sáng sớm, tại from early in the morning at ngôi đình lớn CLASS. communal house big của thôn Dương Lôi, belonging village Duong Loi xã Tân Hồng, huyện Từ Sơn, village Tan Hong, district Tu Son tỉnh Bắc Ninh, province Bac Ninh	có tên là exist/have name be đình communal house in the village containing shrine of tutelage deity Sám Sam
4.4	Ø: it = đình Sám communal house Sam deity	đã ASP.: Pfv.: already tấp nập in great numbers and in a bustle
4.5	các gia đình all family	đến dâng lễ. arrive offer worship

“Although the night, when people went to bed late after welcoming the new year, had just passed, early in the morning, at the big communal house named Sam (containing shrine of tutelage deity) of Duong Loi village, Tan Hong town, Tu Son district, Bac Ninh province was crowded with families who had come to worship at the shrine in the big communal house.”

- interview text

(4:86) Text [10:12.1], [10:12.2] and [10:13]

No.	Theme	Rheme
12.1	Ông Nguyễn Như Toán, Mr. Nguyễn Như Toán, trưởng thôn leader village Đương Lôi, xã Tân Hồng, Duong Loi, town Tan Hong, huyện Từ Sơn, tỉnh Bắc Ninh district Tu Son, province Bac Ninh	cho biết: inform
12.2	“Thực tế là các nghề actually be all career	tạo thu nhập create income khá cho người dân be better give people citizen đã xuất hiện ASP.: Pfv.: already appear ngày một nhiều trong thôn day one many in village (day by day) như nghề mộc nghề such as woodwork career xây dựng... construction
13	Đời sống của life belonging người dân people citizen	được ngày một ASP.: Pfv.: ability day one cải thiện...” improve

“Mr. Nguyen Nhu Toan, the headman of Duong Loi village, Tan Hong town, Tu Son district, Bac Ninh province explained: “It was actually that all careers such as woodwork and construction created better incomes. A villager’s life improved day by day.”

- instruction text

(4:87) Text [14:8], [14:9], [14:10.1], [14:10.2] and [14:10.3]

No.	Theme	Rheme
8	Mỗi đòn bánh each CLASS. cake	sử dụng 700 kg, nếp, 120 kg, đậu xanh, use 700kg, glutinous 120 kg, green bean 100kg nhân thịt và khoảng 300 kg 100kg seed meat and about 300 kg lá chuối + dây buộc, banana leaf + string tie với nhiên liệu gồm khoảng 80m ³ with fuel include about 80m ³ củi, 100 m ² nước và 30 nhân công. firewood, 100 m ² water and 30 labor
9	Thời gian gói time wrap bánh và cake and nấu bánh boil cake	mất 56 giờ (48 giờ nấu bánh). spend 56 hour (48 hours boil cake).
10.1	Bánh cake	được nấu chǎn cǎp trong một ASP.: Pfv.: ability boil couple in one lò nấu tự chế pot boil control oneself kích thước 1,60m x 2,60m x 5,50 m size 1,60m x 2,60m x 5,50 m
10.2	và sau khi Ø: it and after	nấu boil
10.3	mỗi bánh each cake	có trọng lượng 2 tấn. exist/have weight 2 ton

“Each cake was used 700 kilograms of ingredients, 120 kilograms of glutin, green beans, 100 kilograms of meat, 300 kilograms of banana leaves and string, 80 m³ of firewood, 100 m² water and 30 workers.”

There are three type of thematic progressions found in this study: a Theme reiteration or constant Theme pattern; a zig-zag or linear Theme pattern and a multiple or split Rheme pattern. The thematic progressions of news reports seem to be complicated. That is in one text more than one thematic progression could be found.

5.2 Some significant features of Vietnamese online news reports

Based on the writing structure of general news report they comprise four important elements: headline, lead, neck, and body (Hiranrak, 1988: 46).

Headline is the first short clause or phrase which summarizes the news report content and attracts the reader's interest in the content of the news report.

Lead is the opening paragraph of a news report and its function is to summarize the story and/or to draw the reader into the news story. The lead can be a full summary of the "5W's" of journalism (who, what, where, when and why) and it can be presented in a literary style (Young People's Press as cited in http://www.mediaawareness.ca/english/resources/specialinitiatives/toolkit_resources/tipsheets/writing_newsstory.cfm, 9 Dec.2007).

Neck is a short clause which refers the source or background before getting into the news story.

Body is the content of news report. It combines factual data, opinions of the people who are interviewed, and a narrative which helps the story flow.

News report writing structure is illustrated by the "inverted pyramid" format. The "inverted pyramid" format provides the most substantial, interesting, and important information that the writer wants means to convey first (or on the top of the triangle), followed by more details of the news story, and the least important information is at the end of the news report (or at the bottom of triangle). This format is valued because readers can leave the story at any point and understand it, even if they do not have all the details. It also allows less important information to be more easily removed by editors so the article can fit a fixed size (http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inverted_pyramid, 20 Feb. 2008). "Inverted pyramid" format is illustrated as below.

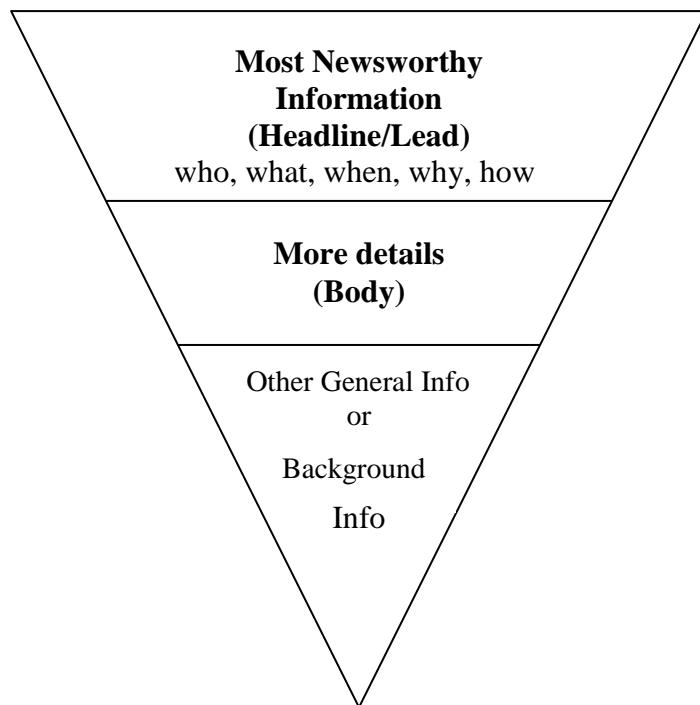


Figure 21 Inverted pyramid based on news report writing structure

(adapted from International reading association:

http://www.readwritethink.org/lesson_images/lesson249/pyramid.pdf, 20 Feb. 2008)

Based on the results of the study, when one uses textual metafunction to explore the writing structure of Vietnamese online news reports, some significant features can be addressed as follows:

(i) Theme selection of Vietnamese news reports relates to news reporting. That is, news reports often narrate the facts in five important topics, including who, what, when, where, why and how. The relationship between Theme selection and five important topics of news reports writing are elaborated as follows.

Who (the person or the people who were reported in the news reports or the subject of the clause) is often expressed by unmarked Themes.

What (situation or something happened) is often expressed by unmarked Themes (including existential Theme).

When (happening time of the situation in news reports) is expressed by temporal marked Themes.

Where (the place of happening situation) is expressed by spatial marked Themes.

Why and How tend to be expressed by marked circumstantial Themes of cause, angle and manner.

Based on the main topics of the news report, it shows that unmarked Theme has the highest probability of occurring in Theme selection which relates to the nature of the news report.

(ii) Non Rheme structure is usually found in the Headline. This result relates to the news writing structure. That is, Headline is short clause where subject is elided. Headline can be a group or phrase and is not a full explanation if it can cover the main idea of news reports. Examples of non Rheme structure are given below:

- Non Rheme structure in headline

(5:1) Text [4:1]

Theme		Rheme
topical Theme		
marked Theme	unmarked Theme	
	Ăn eat (celebrate) tết Tet festival ở Trường Sa at Trường Sa (Spratley archipelago)	

“Celebrated Tet festival at *Truong Sa* (Spratley archipelago)”

(5:2) Text [5:1]

Theme		Rheme
topical Theme	marked Theme	
	<p>Rạo rực eager</p> <p>âm thanh đêm sound night</p> <p>giao thừa the time between the old year and new year</p>	

“Be eager to the sound of the *giao thừa* (the countdown time to the New Year) night.”

(iii) In terms of thematic progression, the patterns of Vietnamese online news found in this study vary. A typical thematic progression cannot be specified. But there are internal Thematic progression relations which present through thematic progression. That is, the main topic which is presented in the headline will be picked up or elaborated many times in the lead and the body. Examples are illustrated in Figure 21 and Figure 22.

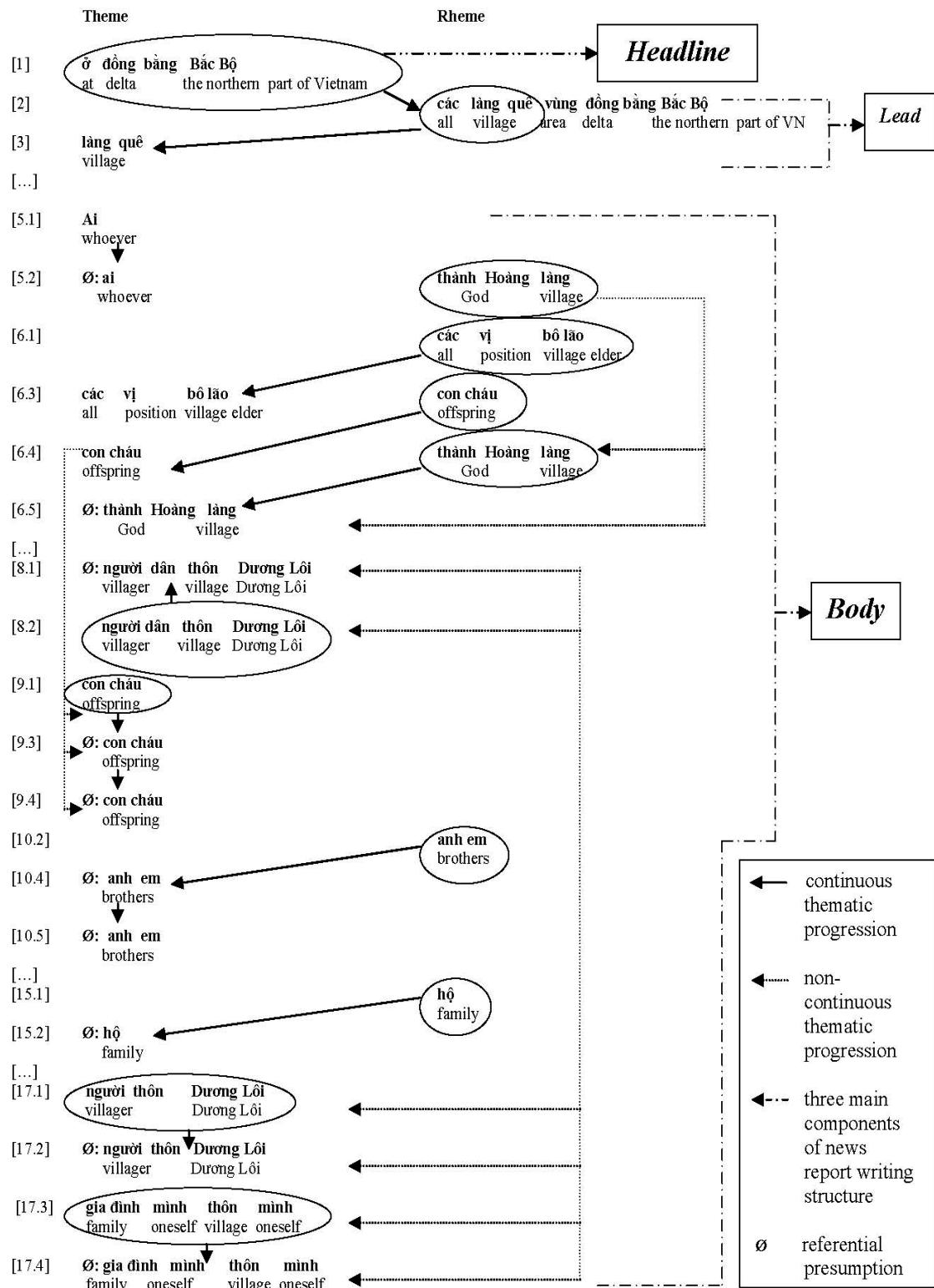


Figure 22 Thematic progression relationship between headline, lead, and body of Text 10: Provincial Tet festival at the northern delta of Vietnam

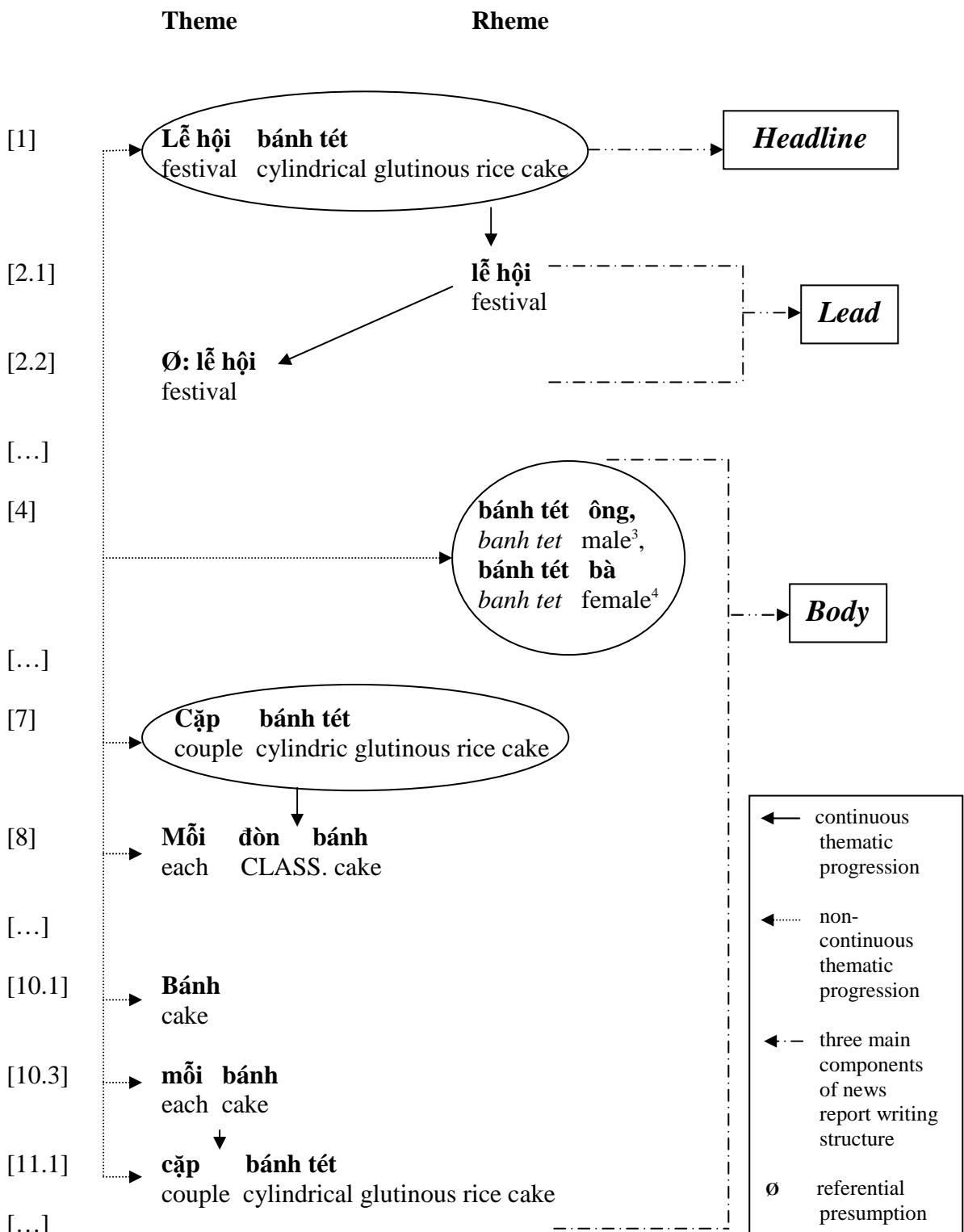


Figure 23 Thematic progression relationship between headline, lead, and body of Text

14: Thousands people joined the *banh tet* (cylindrical glutinous rice cake) festival

³ Literal translation of ông

⁴ Literal translation of bà

Figure 21 and Figure 22 show the relationship between headline, lead, and body. That is, the important messages or keywords in headline such as làng quê “village” or người dân thôn Dương Lôi “Duong Loi villagers” in Figure 21, and bánh tét “cylindrical glutinous rice cake” in Figure 22 will be elaborated several times in the lead and body by means of constant thematic progression.

(iv) ellipsed unmarked topical Theme (\emptyset) or referential presumption is an important strategy of thematic continuity. That is in Vietnamese the subject can be ellipsed and it will be referred by a zero morpheme. Figure 21 and Figure 22 illustrated above show that ellipsed unmarked topical Themes (\emptyset) are picked up several times through Vietnamese news report organization.

This result is similar to that of Gomez, M.A.(1994) who analysed BBC news reports. Gomez found that in BBC news reports, *third person pronouns* are significantly promoted to thematic position (which contradicted Halliday’s predictions that subject first person are the most unmarked Themes in declarative English clauses).

(v) According to writing features of news report (Metropolitan East Disadvantage Schools Program, 1994), it can be noted that the fourteen Tet festival online news reports are examples of “soft news⁵” and “news feature⁶”. These two types of news reports are typically different from that of “hard news⁷” type.

In addition, news report and news feature are meant to complement each other, and allow a newspaper to offer well-rounded coverage that varies in depth and timeliness. While the two styles share basic elements, they differ in the treatment of an issue, the depth of research, the style of writing and the structure of the piece. (<http://www.yorku.ca/protem/en/writing/Feature%20Writing.html>, 20 Feb. 2008)

⁵ Soft news are stories that exemplify social values, and show the ‘recurring events’ are aspects of the order of social system (Metropolitan East Disadvantage Schools Program , 1994: 138, 148).

⁶ News Features tend to elaborate on events and issues by giving more details, more background or by focusing on individuals affected by what has happened (Metropolitan East Disadvantage Schools Program , 1994: 166).

⁷ Hard news carries the most urgency and high impact of what happened in the real situation (Metropolitan East Disadvantage Schools Program , 1994: 106-107).

According to writing features of news report and news feature as mentioned above, the fourteen Tet festival online news reports can be divided into two groups as follows:

Soft news group:

Soft news includes stories that exemplify social values, and show ‘recurring events’. They which are aspects of the order of the social system (Metropolitan East Disadvantage Schools Program, 1994: 138, 148). The writing structure of these stories relies on an “inverted pyramid” format. Soft news items found in this resources of the study are as follows:

Text 2: Tết Việt online: Trước giao thừa

(Tet Viet online: Before the New Year's Eve)

Text 3: Tết Việt online: Tối 30

(Tet Viet online: Night 30 – the last day of old year)

Text 9: Bệnh viện không có Tết

(Hospital did not have Tet festival)

Text 14: Hàng ngàn người tham dự Lễ hội bánh tet

(Thousands people joined *banh tet* - cylindrical glutinous rice cake festival)

News Feature group:

A news feature elaborates the news stories more than the facts. It sets the scene, narrates the story, explores several different aspects of an issue or profiles a person's life or career (<http://www.yorku.ca/protom/en/writing/Feature%20Writing.html>, 20 Feb. 2008). The writing structure of features is flexible; more complicated than news reports, and does not rely on the “inverted pyramid” format. In addition, a feature story may comprise many text types such as narrative text, descriptive text, exposition text and interview etc. News Features found in the study are as follows:

Text 1: Dâu, rể Tây ăn Tết Ta

(The foreign daughter in law and foreign son in law celebrated non-western Tet festival)

Text 4: Ăn tết ở Trường Sa

(Tet festival celebrating at *Truong Sa* – Spratley archipelago)

Text 5: Tết về làng “siêu khó khăn” ở Gia Lai

(Tet came back to the super - poor village at Gia Lai)

Text 6: Đêm 30, nghe đồng hồ điểm giao thừa bên hồ Hoàn Kiếm

(The 30th night, listen to a clock sound on countdown beside the Hoan Kiem lake)

Text 7: Rạo rực âm thanh đêm giao thừa

(Excitement from the sounds of the countdown to the New Year)

Text 8: Tết Việt online: Mồng 1 của người xa xứ

(Tet Viet online: 1st day of Vietnamese people living away)

Text 10: Tết quê ở đồng bằng Bắc bộ

(Provincial Tet festival at the northern delta of Vietnam)

Text 11: Tết...quê

(Provincial Tet festival)

Text 12: Tết nơi cửa Phật

(Tet festival in a Buddhism temple)

Text 13: Canh trộm ngày Tết với thiết bị an ninh không dây

(Guard thief in Tet days with security wireless equipments)

In addition, “soft news” and “news feature” characteristics (found in the fourteen Tet festival online news reports) reflect their thematic progressions. The thematic progression of “soft news” and “news feature” is different from that of “hard news”. The difference can be accounted for in terms of thematic progression. That is, “soft news” and “news feature” tend to use a narrative or descriptive writing style to elaborate the news story, instead of giving the facts of events or describing what happened following the main event of a news report such as, who, what, when, where, why and how. Therefore, their thematic progressions vary as a result so we are unable to specify the particular thematic progression. In contrast, “hard news” usually

focuses on providing the facts of events or detailing what happened following the main topics of news reports (who, what, when, where, why and how) in a simple writing style, so their thematic progression patterns seem to have a systemic writing style so we can specify their thematic progression patterns.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter will summarize the results of this study and discuss some significant features found in the study. It begins with (i) Theme and Rheme structure, (ii) internal Theme structure (iii) Thematic progression and it is followed by (iv) some significant features of Vietnamese online news reports.

6.1 Conclusions

6.1.1 Theme and Rheme structure

This study focused on the analysis of textual metafunction of the fourteen Vietnamese online-news reports. Textual metafunction is one of three metafunctions of systemic functional grammar: textual metafunction, interpersonal metafunction, and topical (ideational) metafunction (Halliday & Matthissen, 2004). This study employed textual metafunction as a tool to identify Theme structure and text organization.

Theme structure is one form of text organization which combines with two important parts: Theme and Rheme. Theme is the point of departure of the clause; Rheme is the remainder of the clause (Halliday & Matthissen, 2004: 64).

The internal Theme structure consists of three Theme choices: (i) textual Theme, (ii) interpersonal Theme, and (iii) topical (ideational) Theme. Each Theme choice will be discussed in turn in section 6.1.2.

As for thematic progression, it is the illustration which shows how the information flows in text (Matthissen, 1995: 572-573). This study divides thematic progression based on Paltridge's proposal. He divides thematic progression into three patterns (Paltridge, 2000: 140-143): (i) a Theme reiteration or constant Theme pattern, (ii) a zig-zag or linear Theme pattern, and (iii) a multiple Theme or split Rheme pattern. The following section will summarize the Theme structure and thematic progression.

6.1.2 Internal Theme structure

Internal Theme structure consists of three Theme choices: (i) textual Theme, (ii) interpersonal Theme, and (iii) topical (ideational) Theme. Each Theme choice found in this study are as follows:

Conjunction group is the most highly selected in textual Theme. There were three types of conjunction: (i) elaborating, (ii) extending and (iii) enhancing conjunctions (see chapter 4, section 4.3.1.1.1).

It is interesting to note that Vietnamese has special conjunctions which have more than one meaning and grammatical function. That is, mà meaning “which, that, whom” and thì meaning “but, then”. Mà has two grammatical categories: a relative pronoun and a conjunction. In terms of conjunction, mà can be both (i) an extending conjunction in various meanings: “but”; “and”; “yet”, “nevertheless” and (ii) an enhancing conjunction in various meanings: “if”; “then”; “as a result”. As for thì, it also has more than one meaning. In terms of grammatical function thì can be an extending conjunction meaning “but” and an enhancing conjunction meaning “then”. In addition, thì can be an adverb meaning “certainly” and “for sure”. In lexical terms thì means “prime of youth” and “full season”.

Vietnamese also has a non structural conjunction expressed by rằng “say” or “that” which functions as a clause binder. It functions as a clause linker to bind clauses into clause complexes.

In addition, it is interesting to note that the Vietnamese conjunction system can be expressed both within clause complexes (linking clause simplexes into clause complexes) and between clause complexes. Examples of conjunction linking simplex clauses into clause complexes are và meaning “and” (presented in example 4:8.1-4:8.3, on page 52-53) and nhung meaning “but” (presented in example 4:9.1-4:9.1, on page 54). Examples of conjunction linking between clause complexes are tiêu biếu meaning “particularly” (presented in example 4:5.1-4:5.5, on page 47-48) and đặc biệt “especially” (presented in example 4:6.1-4:6.4, on page 49-50).

(ii) Interpersonal Theme

Most of interpersonal Themes found in this study were modal adjuncts and there were no examples of wh-elements and vocatives found. This may be because news reports were composed of subtext types — narrative text, reporting text, interview text, and expository text. Interpersonal Themes were typically found in conversations so interpersonal Themes, especially continuative⁸, vocative⁹ and wh-element (e.g. who, what, when where, why and how) were unlikely in this news corpus.

Topical Theme

In terms of Theme selection, this study found two Theme selections: unmarked Theme (82.67%) and marked Theme (17.33%). The most favored unmarked topical (ideational) Theme is an unmarked “non-ellipsed” topical Theme or Subject as Theme (45.31%). Besides the unmarked “non-ellipsed” topical Theme and unidentified Subject Theme, the topical (ideational) Theme can be an ellipsed Subject Theme which is expressed by a zero morpheme as found in Thai (Patpong, 2002). The realization of ellipsed Subject Theme is also a significant feature of Vietnamese. That is, once a subject is introduced into the discourse context, two clauses can be linked together with or without a linking word. The subject of the following clause may be ellipsed or understood from the preceding clause.

As for the marked Theme, the most favored marked Theme is the circumstantial Theme (16.23%). The most favored subtype of circumstantial Theme is circumstantial Theme of time (10.55%), followed by circumstantial Theme of place (4.99%).

These results are related to news writing structure which is concerned with specific details about who, what, when, where, why and how (Metropolitan East Disadvantage Schools Program, 1994: 157) and this is why a number of temporal

⁸ Continuatives are a small set of words which link or signal move in discourse. They are a response in dialogue and they are always at the beginning of the clause and signal that a new move is beginning. For example: well, right, ok, now, anyway, of course (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004:81).

⁹ Vocatives are used for identifying the particular person being addressed or marking the interpersonal relation and sometimes claiming the superior status or power (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 81 and 134).

circumstantial Themes and spatial circumstantial Themes are relatively selected in this study. In particular, the content of news reports analysed in this research is mainly concerned with three important days of the most important festival of Vietnam – the Tet festival. It is thus common to find a number of circumstantial resources throughout the text organization.

In this study, there is no instance of process Theme and participant Theme or non-subject complement Theme. Process Theme is found in verbal clauses that project quotes and follow the quoted clause (Matthissen, 1995: 551). In English, process Theme is realized by the word “said”, as in the following example.

“Yes, teacher,” said student John.

Vietnamese does not have process Theme functioning as Theme as found in English so there is no instance of process Theme found in this study.

Marked participant Theme or non-subject complement Theme is presented to the addressee as recoverable at that point in the discourse. It is realized by a nominal group which functions as an object complement and set up at the beginning of the clause (Matthiessen, 1995: 550).

As for circumstantial marked Themes, there is no instance of marked circumstance of accompaniment and role. Accompaniment as Theme extends the meaning of “and”, “or” and the process or participants by specifying an addition or an alternative (Matthissen, 1995: 343). Role as Theme specifies the role or capacity of the participants that are involved in the process and elaborates the nature of the participants. It can be either depictive or resultative. In English, it can be presented by the word “as”, “for example”, “as a whole”, “as beautiful” (Matthissen, 1995: 343).

The Theme range found in this study can be either a single Theme or a multiple Theme. The sequence of multiple Theme consisted of two or three elements, for example:

- (i) textual Theme + topical (ideational) Theme,
- (ii) textual Theme + interpersonal Theme + topical (ideational) Theme,

(iii) topical (ideational) Theme + textual Theme (see section 4.3.3, on page 117).

In terms of Theme in existential clauses, this study found two Vietnamese words which function as lexical verbs meaning something exists or happens. That is, có meaning “exist/have” and sót meaning “remain”. In terms of textual organization, they function as unmarked topical (ideational) Themes.

It is interesting to note that the textual Theme in Vietnamese is similar to what was reported in Patpong (2002). That is, textual Theme is an optional element and it can be found right after the topical Theme or a position preceding Rheme (see example 4:68 Text 2:44.1, page 117).

6.1.3 Thematic progression

There are three types of thematic progression pattern found in this study: (i) a Theme reiteration or constant Theme pattern, (ii) a zig-zag or linear Theme pattern and (iii) a multiple Theme or split Rheme pattern. In this study, we cannot draw a final conclusion of the typical thematic progression pattern of Vietnamese news reports because the thematic progression of this particular text type is quite complicated. That is, in the corpus of fourteen news reports, there is more than one thematic progression found within one text. However, there is one feature of Vietnamese news reports that can be addressed in this study. That is, the typical thematic progression pattern is a Theme reiteration or constant Theme pattern which is the highest selection of thematic progression pattern found in the fourteen news reports.

6.2 Discussion

6.2.1 Some significant features of Vietnamese language and Vietnamese online news reports

Based on the results of the study, when one uses textual metafunction to explore the writing structure of Vietnamese online news reports, some significant features of Vietnamese language and Vietnamese online news reports can be addressed, as follows:

- Some significant features of Vietnamese language

(i) ellipsed unmarked topical Theme (\emptyset) or referential presumption is an important strategy of thematic continuity. That is, in Vietnamese the subject can be ellipsed and it will be referred by a zero morpheme.

(ii) Vietnamese has special conjunctions which have more than one meaning and grammatical function. That is, ‘mà’ meaning “which, that, whom” and ‘thì’ meaning “but, then”. In addition, textual Theme in Vietnamese is an optional element and it can be found right after the topical Theme or a position preceding Rheme which is similar to Thai (as reported in Patpong, 2002).

- Some significant features of Vietnamese online news reports

(i) Theme selection of Vietnamese news reports relates to news report writing. The relationship between Theme selection and five important topics of news reports writing is elaborated as follows.

Who (the person or the people who were reported in the news reports or the subject of the clause) is often expressed by unmarked Themes.

What (situation or something happened) is often expressed by unmarked Themes (including existential Theme).

When (happening time of the situation in news reports) is expressed by temporal marked Themes.

Where (the place of happening situation) is expressed by spatial marked Themes.

Why and How tend to be expressed by marked circumstantial Themes of cause, angle and manner.

Based on the main topics of the news report, it shows that unmarked Theme has the highest probability of occurrence in Theme selection which relates to the nature of the news report.

(ii) Non Rheme structure is usually found in the headline. This result relates to the news writing structure. That is, headline is short clause where subject is elided. Headline can be a group or phrase and is not a full explanation if it can cover the main idea of news reports.

(iii) In terms of the thematic progression, the patterns of Vietnamese online news found in this study vary. A typical thematic progression cannot be specified. But there are internal Thematic progression relations which present through thematic organization. That is, the main topic which is presented in the headline will be picked up or elaborated many times in the lead and the body.

(iv) “Soft news” and “news feature” tend to use a narrative or descriptive writing style to elaborate the news story, instead of giving the facts of events or describing what happened according to the main event of a news report such as, who, what, when, where, why and how. Therefore, their thematic progressions vary as the results shown so we are unable to specify the typical thematic progression.

(v) Interpersonal Themes of wh-elements and vocatives do not found in this study. This may be because interpersonal Themes were typically found in conversations.

6.2.2 Some guidelines for news report writing

According to the results of this present study, the Theme structure and thematic progression of Vietnamese news reports provide some guidelines for news report writing as summarized below.

(i) It provides the method of writing text, article or news report. If a writer uses a systemic textual Theme selection, it will make text flow smoothly and easy to understand.

(ii) Non-Rheme structure found in headline shows that headline writing does not need to be a complete sentence, it can be a nominal group or a phrase.

(iii) The relationship of thematic progression organized in news reports shows the relationship of headline, lead and body of news reports writing structure which is consistent with the news reports writing method. That is, headline and lead are drawn from the main idea which is explained in the body.

(iv) Complex thematic progression found in “soft news” and “news feature” shows the significant writing style of these two types of news reports. It shows that these two news report types do not rely on “inverted pyramid” format as in general news report writing style and are not restricted to the five important topics of

news report writing structure (i.e. who, what, where, why and how). But they employ a narrative or descriptive writing style to elaborate information.

6.3 Recommendation for further studies

Besides the results of this study, there remain other topics that should be further explored both in terms of discourse analysis and semantics studies. Some further studies are suggested below.

6.3.1 Study news reports by analysing other metafunctions: interpersonal resources and ideational resources.

6.3.2 Study varieties of Vietnamese news reports topics to cover and to identify the whole Theme system and thematic progression pattern of Vietnamese news reports.

6.3.3 Extend the study to other text types such as narrative discourse, instructural discourse, and persuasive discourse in Vietnamese.

6.3.4 Extend the study to semantics and culture studies.

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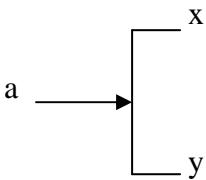
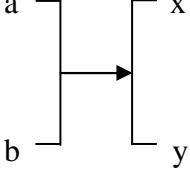
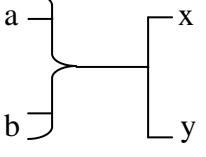
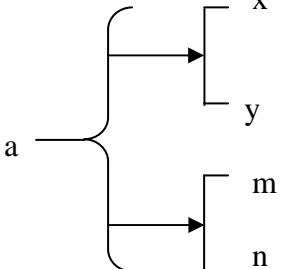
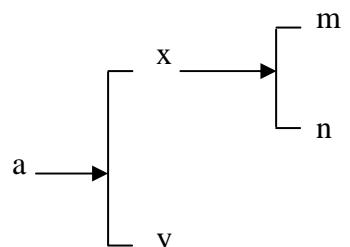
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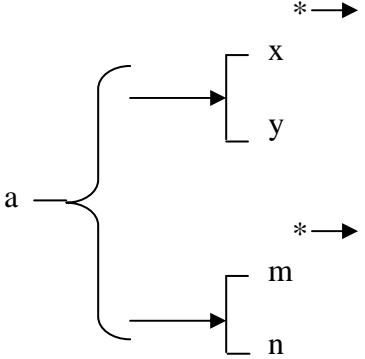
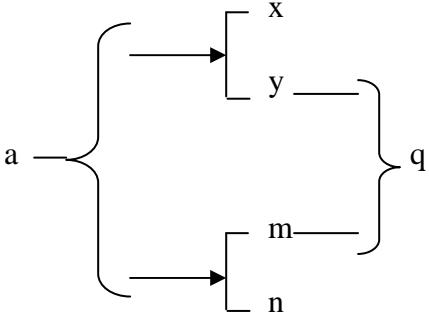
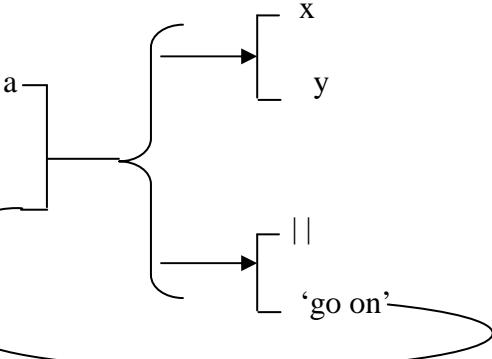
APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

Systemic conventions

1. System network conventions: The syntax and semantics of the system

graphic conventions	algebraic equivalents
	system: if 'a', then 'x' or 'y'; abbreviated as 'a: x/y'
	disjunction in entry condition: if 'a' / 'b', then 'x' / 'y'
	conjunction in entry condition: if 'a' and 'b', then 'x' and 'y'
	simultaneity: if 'a', then simultaneously 'x/y' and 'm/n'
	delicacy ordering: if 'a', then 'x/y'; if 'x', then 'm/n'

graphic conventions	algebraic equivalents
	conditional marked if 'a', then 'x/y'; if 'x', then also 'm'
	recursive system (logical relation): (one choice only) if 'y' and 'm', then 'q'
	recursive system (logical relation): if 'a', then 'x/y' and simultaneously option of entering and selecting in the same system again

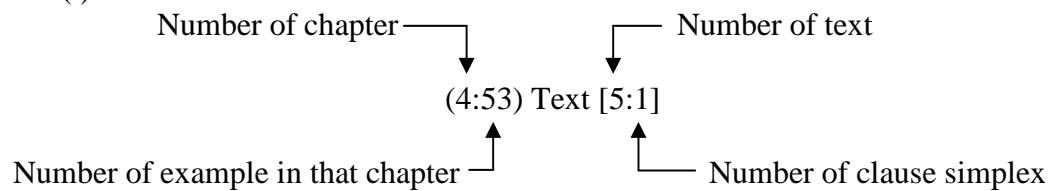
Source: Systemic conventions are taken from Matthissen (1995)

2. Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Functional terms
ASP.: Pfv.	Perfective aspect markers
ASP.: Impf.	Imperfective aspect markers
CLASS.	Classifiers
NEG.	Negative marker

3. Numbering system

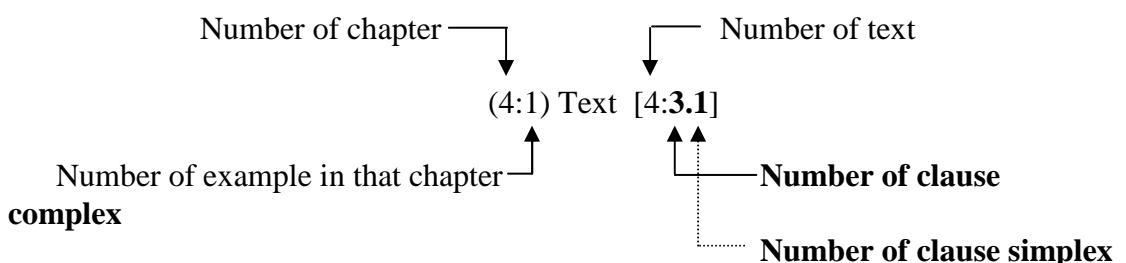
(i)



For example,

(4:53) Text [5:1] This example is the fifty-three example of chapter 4,
this example is taken from text 5, clause simplex 1

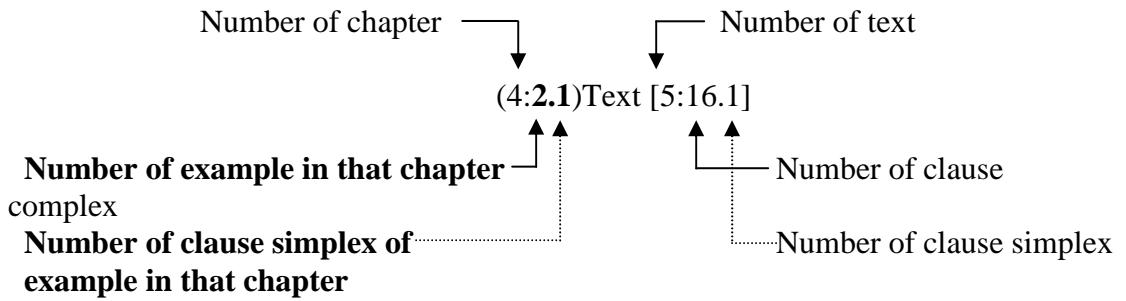
(ii) In some cases examples given include two or three simplex clauses in sequence building a clause complex. The following numbering system is used.



For example,

(4:1) Text [4:3.1] This example is the first example of chapter 4,
this example is taken from text 4,
clause complex 3, and clause simplex 1

(iii) When examples given include two or three simplex clauses in sequence building a clause complex. The number of example in that chapter will be ranked as follows.



For example,

(4:2.1) Text [5:16.1] This example is **the second example** of chapter 4,
it is the first clause simplex,
 this example is taken from text 5,
 clause complex 16, and clause simplex 1

(4:2.2) Text [5:16.2] This example is **the second example** of chapter 4,
it is the second clause simplex,
 this example is taken from text 5,
 clause complex 16, and clause simplex 2

APPENDIX B

Thematic progression

This study divides thematic progression into three patterns followed Paltridge's classification (2000: 140-143). Information of thematic progression and examples are as follows:

a) Theme reiteration or constant Theme pattern

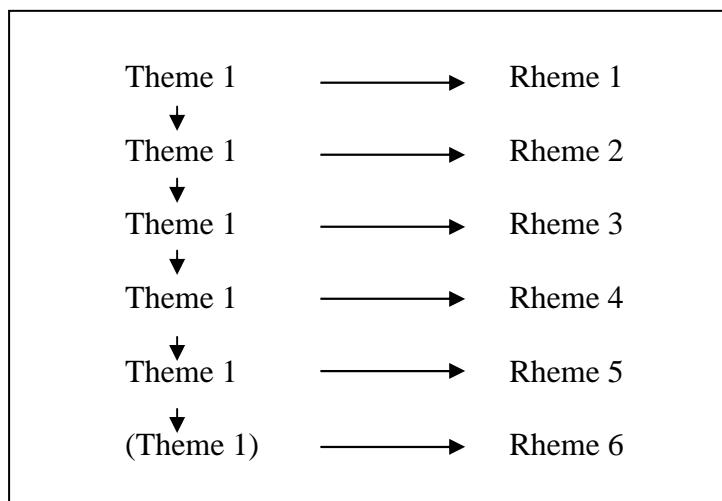


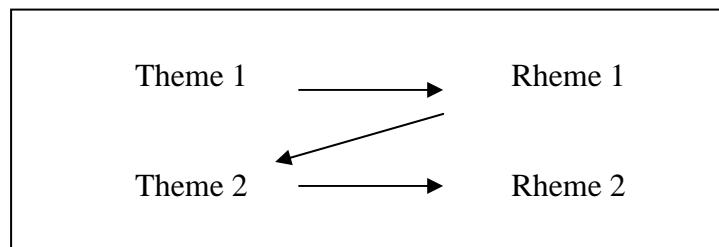
Figure 11 Thematic progression: Theme reiteration or constant Theme pattern

(based on Martin and Rothery, 1986 as cited in Paltridge, 2000: 140)

Figure 11 is drawn from Martin and Rothery (1986) which is shown below.

Theme	Rheme
The bat	is a nocturnal animal
It	lives in the dark.
There are	long nosed bats and mouse
	eared bats also lettuce
	winged bats.
Bats	hunt at night.
They	sleep in the day
and	are very shy.

b) A zig-zag or linear Theme pattern

**Figure 12** Thematic progression: A zig-zag or linear Theme pattern

(based on Clegg and Wheeler, 1991: 83 as cited in Paltridge, 2000: 140)

Figure 12 is drawn from Clegg and Wheeler (1991) which is shown below.

Theme	Rheme
The American Psychological Association	specifies documentation format required by most psychology, sociology, communication, education and economics instructors.
This format	includes parenthetical documentation in the text that refers to an alphabetical reference at the end of chapters.

c) A multiple Theme or split Rheme pattern

In multiple Theme or split Rheme progression, a Rheme may include a number of different pieces of information, each of which may be taken up as the Theme in a number of subsequent clauses as illustrated in Figure 13.

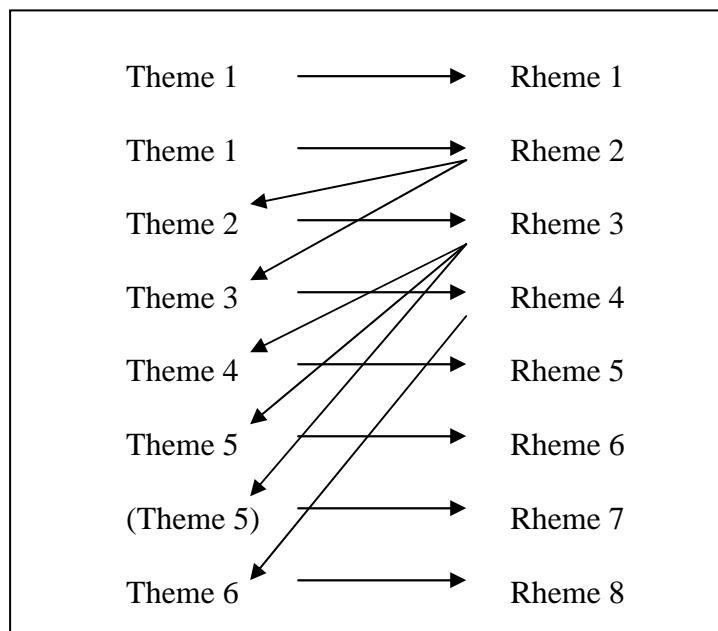


Figure 13 Thematic progression: A multiple Theme or split Rheme pattern

(based on Nesbitt et al, 1990: 21 as cited in Paltridge, 2000: 143)

Figure 13 is drawn from Nesbitt et al (1990) which is shown below.

Theme	Rheme
When Japanese people they	write their language use a combination of two separate alphabets as well as ideograms borrowed from Chinese.
The two alphabets	are called hiragana and katakana.
The Chinese ideograms	are called kanji.
Hiragana	represents the 46 basic sounds that are made in the Japanese language.
Katakana	represents the same sounds as hiragana
but	is used mainly for words borrowed from foreign languages and for sound effects.
Kanji	are used to communicate an idea rather than a sound.

APPENDIX C

Thematic progression and method of development

Text 10: Tết quê ở đồng bằng Bắc bộ

"Provincial Tet festival at the northern delta of Vietnam"

No	Theme			Rheme
	textual	interpersonal	topical	
Headline 1			marked	unmarked
Lead 2				
3				

Diagram illustrating thematic progression and method of development:

- Headline 1:** Tết quê ở đồng bằng Bắc bộ (Tet festival at the northern part of Vietnam) is enclosed in a large oval. The oval covers the first three columns of the table.
- Lead 2:** Cây đa - bến nước (Banyan tree little port) is enclosed in a smaller oval. The oval covers the first three columns of the table.
- Text 3:** Nhóm làng quê ấy (many village village those) is enclosed in a smaller oval. The oval covers the first three columns of the table.
- Thematic Progression:**
 - From Headline 1 to Lead 2: An arrow points from the oval of Headline 1 to the oval of Lead 2.
 - From Lead 2 to Text 3: An arrow points from the oval of Lead 2 to the oval of Text 3.
- Method of Development:**
 - From Headline 1 to Lead 2: An arrow points from the oval of Headline 1 to the oval of Lead 2.
 - From Lead 2 to Text 3: An arrow points from the oval of Lead 2 to the oval of Text 3.

Annotations for the table cells:

- Headline 1:** The first three columns are marked as "textual" and the last column as "interpersonal".
- Lead 2:** The first three columns are marked as "interpersonal" and the last column as "topical".
- Text 3:** The first three columns are marked as "topical" and the last column as "textual".

No	Theme				Rheme
	textual	interpersonal	topical	marked	
Body 4.1	Mặc dù Although		[O]	unmarked	textual
4.2	để for				vừa qua just to pass by one night
					thúc muộn nhất trong năm manner late most in year
					chào đón thời khắc giao thừa to greet welcome time the transition hour between the old year and the new year
4.3	nhưng but ngay immediately		từ from sáng sớm, early in the morning	có tên là đình have name be communal house	Sá m Sá m

No	Theme				Rheme
	textual	interpersonal	topical	marked	
			tại ngôi đình at class. communal house	lớn big	unmarked
		của belonging	thôn village		textual
	Duong Lôi, Duong Loi				
	xã village	Tân Hồng, Tan Hong			
	huyện district	Tử Sơn, Tu Son			
	tỉnh province	Bắc Ninh, Bac Ninh			
4.4			Ø: đình communal house	Sám Sam	đã already tập in great numbers nập and in a bustle

No	Theme				Rheme
	textual	interpersonal	topical marked	unmarked	
4.5				các gia đình all family	đến dâng lễ. arrive offer worship
5.1			Ai whoever	↓	cũng muốn là người đầu tiên also,too want be people first
5.2			Ø: ai whoever	↓	được gặp ASP.:Pfv.:ability meet
					thành Hoàng làng God village
					và chư vị thần linh trong năm And all position God inside year
					mới. new

No	textual		interpersonal		topical		Theme		textual		Rheme	
	marked	unmarked	Theo According to	phong tục, custom	các all	vị position	bô lão village elder	đức virtue	cứ ASP.:Pfv.:ability	ra begin out	cứ ASP.:Pfv.:ability	trống drum
6.1					cao high	vọng great	trọng important	được	cứ	ra	cứ	ra
6.2	để to let							đánh to hit	nhiều class	hồi sound	trống drum	
6.3								và and	chiêng gong	thật to be real	lớn to be big	
6.4								chào to greet	đón welcome	con cháu offspring	thôn village	

No	Theme				Rheme			
	textual	interpersonal	topical marked	unmarked	textual	textual	textual	textual
6.5				Ø: thành Hoàng God	là thành God	mẫu mother	Phạm Thị Ngà, Phạm Thị Ngà	
				làng village	thân sinh parents	vị position	vua king	khởi nguyên start originate
					của belonging	triều dynasty	family	
					Lý - Lý Công Uẩn			
7.1				Tương truyền legend	đã already	được ASP.: Pfv.:ability	dân citizen	
				ngôi đình class, communal house	làng village	lập establish		
7.2	ngay immediat ely			triều Lý dynasty family Lý	còn trị vì also administer and	và already	đã nearly	ngót nghét
	từ khi from when				hơn nghìn more	năm year	năm year	tuổi.

No	Theme				Rheme
	textual	interpersonal	topical	marked	
8.1	Sau khi After		<i>Q</i> : người dân villager	unmarked	<p>dâng offer</p> <p>tại at</p> <p>đình pavilion</p> <p>làng village</p>
8.2	thì then		đối với as for	<p>người dân villager</p> <p>thôn Dương Lôi, village Duong Lôi,</p>	<p>bữa com trưa ngày mùng meal launch day precedes one of the numerals from 1 to 10 to denote one of the first ten days of the month</p> <p>1 Tết là bữa cơm đặc biệt one Tet festival to be meal special quan trọng important</p>

No	Theme				Rheme
	textual	interpersonal	topical marked	unmarked	
8.3 để for					tưởng hớ ông bà think remember grandparents tổ tiên và sum họp. ancestor and with together
9.1 Vì thế, dù therefore though			con cháu offspring ↓		có đi đâu về đâu have go wherever back wherever
9.2 thì then		ngày này day this			cũng phải nhớ về nhà thờ also have to remember back church họ family
9.3			Ø: con cháu offspring ↓		tham dự bữa cơm to take part in meal
9.4			Ø: con cháu offspring ↓		gặp mặt ông bà, anh em meet face grandparents brothers trong họ in family

No	Theme				Rheme	
	textual	interpersonal	topical marked	unmarked	textual	
10.1				Đây This		cũng also
10.2	để for					là be
10.3			năm qua year pass by		đã already	dip do
10.4	và and Անձ			Q: anh em brothers	bày tỏ express	ASP..Pfv..ability what
10.5	cũng also,for like	như like		Q: anh em brothers	nguyễn vọng aspiration	được gi
10.6			những ai many whoever		bàn bạc discuss	công việc – giúp đỡ work help
					gặp meet	khó khăn. difficult

No	Theme				Rheme			
	textual	interpersonal	topical marked	unmarked	textual	textual	textual	textual
11	Tuy nhiên, However							

No	Theme				Rheme	
	textual	interpersonal	topical	marked	unmarked	
12.1				Ông Nguyễn Như Toán, Mr. Nguyen Nhu Toan, trưởng thôn leader village Duong Loi, Duong Loi	xã Tân Hồng, village Tan Hong, huyện Từ Sơn, district Từ Sơn, tỉnh Bắc Ninh province Bắc Ninh	cho biết: inform

No	textual	interpersonal	topical marked	Theme unmarked	textual	Rheme
12.2	“Thực tế actually				<p>là các nghề tao thu nhập khá be all career create income be better</p> <p>cho người dân đã to give people citizen already</p> <p>xuất hiện ngày một nhiều to appear day one many (appeared day by day)</p> <p>trong thôn in village</p> <p>như nghề mộc nghề xây dựng... such as woodwork career construction</p>	
13				Dời sống của Life belonging	<p>được ngày một ASP.: PfV.: ability day one</p> <p>được cải thiện... ASP.: PfV.: ability improve</p>	

No	Theme				Rheme			
	textual	interpersonal	topical marked	unmarked	textual	textual	textual	textual
14			Theo According to thống kê statistics	thì then	cả all có have	thôn village trên over với join	Dương Lôi Dương Lôi 700 civil 3.000 3,000	Dương Lôi Dương Lôi hộ gia đình family khẩu mouth (people)

No	Theme				Rheme	
	textual	interpersonal	topical marked	unmarked	textual	
15.1			Năm nay, year this		cá all còn still	thôn small village đã to have already không not nào which
15.2				Ø: hộ family	bị be	xếp arrange vào into diện case nghèo. poor

No	Theme				Rheme			
	textual	interpersonal	topical	marked	textual			
16			Cũng có thể Also can vì thế so, therefore	unmarked	mà then	định communal một one dâng offer	làng house người people lễ worship	mỗi each đến come hơn. more
17.1	Bởi Because				tin believe	người thôn villager Duong Lôi Duong Lôi		

No	Theme				Rheme			
	textual	interpersonal	topical marked	unmarked	textual			
17.2	rằng that nếu if			O: người thôn villager	cứ continue cần cù diligent theo follow của of	làm do chăm chỉ industrious lời spoken word thánh God	ăn eat mẫu mother	
				Dương Lôi Dương Lôi	day teach			thành God
17.3	thì then	chắc chắn certainly		gia đình family thôn village	sẽ will được ASP.:Pfv.:ability	còn still cải thiện improve	tiếp tục continue	

No	Theme				Rheme
	textual	interpersonal	topical marked	unmarked	
17.4	và and			O: gia đình family thôn village	phát triển develop mạnh strong
18	Và and tất nhiên however như thế likethis thì then		ăn eat tết Tet festival		cũng also sẽ will vui enjoy hon. more

Thematic progression and method of development

Text 14: Hàng ngàn người tham dự Lễ hội bánh tết

“Thoundsands people join *banh tet* (cylindrical glutinous rice cake) festival”

No	textual	interpersonal	topical	Theme	Rheme
Headline 1			marked	unmarked	textual
Lead 2.1				Hàng ngàn người thousands people	<p>Lễ hội bánh tết festival cylindrical glutinous rice cake</p> <p>tham dự join</p> <p>được ASp.:Pfv.: ability</p> <p>lễ hội festival</p>
2.2				<p>Đêm 10/2 Night 10/2</p> <p>(mùng 2 tết) (2 nd tet)</p> <p>lễ hội bánh tết - festival banh tet</p>	<p>nhân dân people</p> <p>TP.HCM city.Ho Chi Minh</p> <p>mong đợi to wait for</p> <p>nhất most</p> <p>đã to have already</p> <p>diễn ra perform</p> <p>rộn rã noisy</p> <p>trước in front of</p> <p>nhà hát TP. theater city</p> <p>hoành tráng grand</p>

No	Theme				Rheme			
	textual	interpersonal	topical	marked	unmarked	textual	textual	
Body 3.1			Từ 18h, From 18h,			đại lộ Lê Lợi highway Lê Lợi	dẫn về to reach	Nhà hát thành phố theater city
						đã to have already	đông kín crownded	người people
						chờ xem wait watch	đoàn xe group vehicle	bánh tết parade bánh tết
						xuất hành to go out	từ công viên from park	văn hóa culture
						Dàn Sen Dam Sen	diễu hành qua. procession pass	
						Đi trước go	hai chiếc xe in front of two class	chở cặp vehicle carry
4.1						bánh tết ông bánh tết grandfather	bánh tết bà grandmother	
4.2						là từng be each	người people	mặc wear
						dân tộc ethnic	cờ lọng, with flag	trang phục costume
						dân tộc với ethnic	chiêng trống, parasol, gong	drum,

No	Theme				Rheme
	textual	interpersonal	topical marked	unmarked	
4.3			nhiều thiếu nữ many woman		gánh carry (something dangling from the ends of a shoulder pole) hoa, flower,
4.4			nhiều chiếc many class.	chở to load all	chiếc bánh tết "con cháu", bánh tết "offspring", đầy sắc hoa, full color flower,
4.5			nhiều chiếc many class.	đoàn múa group dance	đoàn múa tứ linh group dance the four supernatural creatures với rồng, lân, quy, phượng.. with dragon, fabulous unicorn, tortoise, phoenix
5			Dừng 19h51 right 19h51 phút, minute,	chiếc bánh đầu tiên class cake first	cắt ra trong tiếng trống hội tung bùng. ASP.: Pv.: ability cut out in sound drum fair bustling

No	Theme				Rheme			
	textual	interpersonal	topical	marked	unmarked	textual	textual	
6			Sau nghi lễ after ceremonial			là phần biểu diễn múa rồng lửa be part perform dance dragon fire		
			cắt bánh cut cake			[[(còn gọi là rồng nhang),]] [[(also call be dragon fire),]]		
						múa tứ linh dance the four supernatural creatures and		
						biểu diễn văn nghệ mừng xuân. perform musical wish spring		
						có kích thước và trọng lượng như exist/have size and weight as		
						năm ngoái last year		
7						Cặp bánh tết couple bánh tết		
						không lồ giant		
						truyền thống tradition		
								(đường kính 0,8m; dài 3,5m; nặng 1.750kg). (diameter 0.8m; long 3.5m; heavy 1,750kg)

No	Theme			Rheme
	textual	interpersonal	topical	
	marked	unmarked	textual	
8				<p>sử dụng 700 kg nếp, 120 kg, đậu xanh, use 700kg, glutinous 120 kg, green bean</p> <p>100kg nhân thịt và khoảng 300 kg 100kg seed meat and about 300 kg</p> <p>lá chuối + dây buộc, banana leaf + string tie</p>
				<p>với nhiên liệu gồm khoảng 80m³ with fuel include about 80m³</p> <p>củi, 100 m² nước và 30 nhân công. firewood, 100 m² water and 30 labor</p>
9			<p>Thời gian gói time wrap</p> <p>bánh và cake and</p> <p>nấu bánh boil cake</p>	<p>mất 56 giờ (48 giờ nấu bánh). spend 56 hour (48 hours boil cake).</p>

No	Theme				Rheme
	textual	interpersonal	topical	marked	
				unmarked	textual
10.1				Bánh cake	<p>được ASP.: PfV.: ability</p> <p>nấu boil</p> <p>chǎn cǎp couple</p> <p>trong in</p> <p>một one</p> <p>lò pot</p> <p>nấu boil</p> <p>tự ché control oneself</p> <p>kích thước size</p> <p>1,60m x 2,60m x 5,50 m 1,60m x 2,60m x 5,50 m</p>
10.2	và and				<p>nấu boil</p>
10.3	sau khi after			mỗi each	<p>có have</p> <p>trọng lượng weight</p> <p>2 tấn. 2 ton</p>
11.1				Điều thing	<p>là be</p> <p>chất lượng quality</p> <p>bánh cake</p> <p>ngon delicious</p> <p>hơn more</p> <p>hẳn quite</p> <p>năm ngoái last year</p>
				của of	<p>tết tet</p> <p>năm nay this year</p>
				cặp couple	<p>bánh cake</p>

No	Theme				Rheme
	textual	interpersonal	topical	marked	
11.2	nhờ because			unmarked ban tổ chức organization committee (tổng công ty (general company du lịch Sài Gòn travel Sai Gon và công viên and park văn hóa Đàm sen) culture Đàm sen)	textual rút pull back experience from last year kinh nghiệm từ năm trước.

No	Theme				Rheme
	textual	interpersonal	topical	marked	
12.1				[O] unmarked	<p>Thưởng thức chiếc "bánh tết Tổ" class "cake tet big"</p> <p>enjoy</p> <p>trong tiếng trống hội sôi động</p> <p>in sound drum festival jolly</p> <p>giữa những màn múa</p> <p>among many screen dance</p> <p>tứ linh đặc sắc và</p> <p>the four supernatural creatures outstanding and</p> <p>lễ hội xiếc trên đường phố,</p> <p>festival circus on road</p>
12.2			dêm nay this night,		<p>người dân thành phố đã</p> <p>people city already</p> <p>được ASP.: PfV.: ability hòa vào một không khí</p> <p>join into one atmosphere</p> <p>lễ hội thật sự đậm nét văn hóa cổ truyền</p> <p>festival real full culture traditional</p> <p>của Tết Nguyên Đán VN.</p> <p>belonging Tet Nguyen Dan Vietnam</p>

APPENDIX D

THE DATA

Text 1: Dâu, rễ Tây ăn Tết Ta

Những chàng trai, cô gái ấy có quốc tịch, màu da khác nhau nhưng đều thích bánh chưng, tận hưởng niềm hạnh phúc sum họp gia đình, yêu phô phờng ngày Tết; mỗi mùa xuân lại thêm mến yêu đất nước đã cho "một nửa" đời mình.

"Tết Việt là hạnh phúc sum họp và bày tỏ tình yêu"

Năm nay, cái Tết thứ 7 tại Việt Nam, Han Seung Mok (sinh 1971, quốc tịch Hàn Quốc) vẫn thấy vui náo nức. Dù bận bịu suốt tuần trong vai trò Giám sát bán hàng, Phòng Kinh doanh sản phẩm công nghệ cao của LG Việt Nam, anh vẫn cùng vợ lên kế hoạch mua sắm, đi chơi Tết từ rằm tháng Chạp.

Chỉ cây bích đào cánh dày và hồng tươi mơn mởn trong góc phòng khách, Han bảo, vợ chồng anh đem về từ vườn đào đẹp nhất ở Nhật Tân. Hai cặp bánh chưng mua ở chợ Hàng Bè, hàng ngon nhất Hà Nội (ít thế thôi vì định "ăn chục" bố mẹ vợ cả Tết). Giò lụa Ước Lễ, Nem Phùng, bia Hà Nội, cam Canh, bưởi Diễn nằm xếp hàng trong tủ bếp.

Đêm 30, đôi vợ chồng trẻ lại rời căn hộ xinh đẹp ở Khu đô thị Trung Hòa - Nhân Chính, hòa vào dòng người trên phố náo nức đón giao thừa, hân hoan ngắm pháo hoa. Sáng mồng Một, họ lại mua muối - những gói giấy đỏ hình chóp nón xinh xinh (Han bảo, để cầu tình "gừng cay, muối mặn" suốt năm), xông nhà bố mẹ vợ (để nhận tiền mừng tuổi, lấy "hên", "mua may, bán đắt") rồi lên chùa lễ Phật (theo anh, để cầu hai chữ tịnh tâm). Tết năm nào cũng đến bằng áy nori, làm bằng áy việc nhưng họ vẫn thấy thật là mới mẻ, bâng khuâng, hồi hộp trong lòng.

Tết đầu tiên (1998), Han bùi ngùi nhớ quê. Trong cư xá sinh viên ĐH Bách khoa Hà Nội, anh cô đơn ngồi gặm bánh mì cả ngày mồng Một; các quán ăn đóng cửa kín mít. Tết thứ hai, anh mới được tận hưởng không khí xuân nồng ấm nhân chuyến thăm nhà một bạn học người Việt ở Hải Dương. Tết thứ 3 (Xuân Canh Thìn, năm 2000) mới là cái Tết đầy ấn tượng: Han vừa "cura" đồ một nàng xinh đẹp cùng lớp ở Khoa Tư pháp, ĐH Luật Hà Nội tên là Trịnh Lan Hương (nay là vợ anh). Giao thừa, anh bất ngờ hiện ra trước cửa nhà nàng với một ôm hoa (công việc anh làm ròng rã các sáng thứ 7 hai năm qua), rất vô tư thành khách xông nhà của gia chủ.

Tết áy, lần đầu tiên Han được thưởng thức hàng chục món ăn truyền thống của Việt Nam, do mẹ vợ "tương lai" nấu (đến giờ, ấn tượng vẫn là "Nhiều món ngon quá!"). Đặc biệt, món bánh chưng khiến Han mê mẩn; anh có thể một mình xơi hết cả chiếc to. Han nói, anh thích bánh chưng không chỉ vì hương vị thơm ngon đặc biệt, còn bởi rất giống một loại bánh Tết có tên xông-piêng ở quê nhà (gói bằng lá, làm bằng bột mì, nhân rau và đường hấp chín).

Han không thấy lạ lẫm với Tết Việt Nam. Ở quê hương anh, dân cũng ăn Tết theo lịch âm, cũng có tục *tống cựu nghênh tân* (thu dọn, quét tước nhà cửa, mặc quần áo mới), có tục *mừng tuổi* nhưng không có tục *xông nhà* (đó là lý do vì sao anh rất thích xông nhà vợ). Ngày Tết, người Hàn Quốc cũng sum họp gia đình, tưởng nhớ tổ tiên, về quê viếng mộ, chúc Tết bạn bè, người thân. Đất nước của Han cũng tôn vinh giá trị gia đình, coi trọng không khí đầm ấm sum họp mỗi độ xuân về. Anh nói: "Thiếu gia đình, người ta không có tất cả: cả cuộc sống và hạnh phúc".

Trả lời câu hỏi tại sao lại yêu cái Tết Việt Nam, Han nói: "Mỗi dịp Tết đến, cả nước Việt Nam thiết tha trở về sum họp với gia đình, báo hiếu cha mẹ, tri ân tổ tiên, nguồn cội; đây là điều đáng quý. Ở đất nước tôi Tết lại là cơ hội cho nhiều người lũ lượt đi du lịch để rời xa mái nhà mình và thay đổi không khí. Mỗi Tết, có đến hơn 1 triệu người Hàn Quốc đi du lịch".

Hơn nữa, theo Han "Tết Việt Nam là dịp những người vợ, người mẹ trổ tài vén khéo, đức chịu thương chịu khó, hết lòng chăm sóc gia đình và những người đã nâng đỡ, nuôi dưỡng, sinh thành". Anh yêu phụ nữ Việt Nam chính bởi những điều này. Han tiết lộ, vợ anh luôn dậy sớm chuẩn bị bữa sáng cho chồng, lại rất khéo tay. Chỉ làm

món kim chi ngon đặc biệt, trong khi em gái anh (cũng đang làm việc tại Hà Nội) "bó tay", thỉnh thoảng lại đến nhà anh xin về một thầu.

Giống mọi người Hàn Quốc và Việt Nam, Han cũng có nhiều ước mong khi Tết đến, Xuân về. Năm Ất Dậu, anh ước có một *baby* và nhập được quốc tịch Việt Nam. Han rất giỏi tiếng Việt và biết thành ngữ "*Dâu con, rể khách*"; anh ước không còn là *khách*, mà thành *con đẻ* của gia đình vợ và đất nước Việt Nam - đất nước anh đã đem lòng mến yêu.

"Tết, tôi vui hơn một em bé, ưu tư ngang... một bà cụ!"

Nói đến Tết tại Hà Nội, Lidia Dobrevska (quốc tịch Macedonia, nhạc công Dàn nhạc Giao hưởng Quốc gia Macedonia) nghĩ ngay đến một không gian ẩm ướt; mưa phùn giăng sương mờ ảo xuống khắp phố phường. Mưa đầy, nhưng nắng cũng bùng lên bất chợt khiến người ta thấy hú hú, thực thực, lúc phấn chấn, lúc nao nức, bâng khuâng.

Tết với Lidia là những cành hoa đào chi chít bông đỗ, những cây đào thế, chậu quất lúc lúi trái vàng rung rinh trên những chiếc xe đạp cũ kỹ, bám đầy đất vườn nâu tươi len lỏi giữa phố đông. Lần đầu tiên thấy quất, chị cứ tự hỏi: Sao lại có loại "mandarin" nhỏ đến vậy, lại sai chũi chít, chỉ lấp ló chút lá xanh; cứ như một bức tranh tĩnh vật sống? Cả những mèt hoa như những đốm màu rực rỡ trên xe người bán rong khắp phố, bao giờ cũng khiến chị ngạc nhiên, xao xuyến lạ thường. Và ngó theo đến hút tầm mắt.

Không chỉ náo nức với niềm vui đón Tết trên phố, nàng dâu Tây cũng có những ngày bận bịu bếp núc như mọi nàng dâu Việt. Kỳ nghỉ cuối tuần ở Macedonia, Lidia cặm cụi cuốn nem, nấu phở và nướng chả quạt để chồng với nỗi nhớ quê; còn mỗi Tết ở Hà Nội, chị lại toát mồ hôi với dưa hành, canh bóng, gạo nếp, lá dong...

Lidia cũng có những giây "trầm" trước giao thừa như mọi người dân Việt. Chị bảo: "Đêm giao thừa ở Hà Nội thật linh thiêng. Tất cả nín thở chờ phút giây chuyển giao thiêng liêng của đất trời đang tới. Trong không gian thơm nồng hương trầm, đại gia đình chúng tôi thường thức bữa cơm sum họp đầm ấm cuối năm. Có lần, tôi thấy xúc động đến trào nước mắt".

Tết Việt Nam với Lidia còn là không gian tinh khôi của sáng mồng Một, khi chị cùng chồng - nhạc sĩ, Nhạc trưởng Dàn nhạc Giao hưởng Quốc gia Macedonia Lê Phi Phi đạo quanh Hồ Gurom. Tháp Rùa cổ kính vẫn còn chìm đắm trong sương. Đường phố phong quang, lác đác người đi thư thả; nét mặt bừng sáng hơn ngày thường; những điều ước năm mới tràn đầy trong tâm khảm. Lidia bảo, đây là khoảng thời gian duy nhất trong năm vợ chồng chị tận hưởng sự yên tĩnh trọn vẹn, không bị khuấy động bởi những dòng người hối hả, xe cộ ồn ào ở Macedonia.

Lidia thích nhiều món ăn Tết Việt Nam, nhưng bánh chưng vẫn khiến chị "mê" nhất. Chị khâm phục bàn tay vén khéo của phụ nữ Việt Nam; những chiếc bánh to, xanh rờn; lá dong, gạo nếp, đậu xanh, hành và thịt hòa quyện tạo nên một hương vị khó quên, ăn rồi nhớ mãi.

Những ngày đầu xuân, Lidia còn thích cùng chồng ngồi vỉa hè ăn nộm su hào, đu đu, thịt bò khô. Vừa nhâm nháp vị mặn, ngọt, chua, cay đến tê đầu lưỡi của món ăn đặc biệt này, anh chị vừa trông ra hồ Gurom, ngắm mặt nước xanh tĩnh lặng và cầu Thê Húc đỏ soi bóng xuống mặt hồ. Lidia cũng "nghiện" nhiều loại mứt, nhất là mứt sen, loại bọc ít đường bồ chồng chị, nhạc sĩ Hoàng Vân, mua ở phố Hàng Buồm. Chị bảo, Macedonia không có loại mứt nào ngọt, bùi, để lại trong miệng một hương thơm tinh khiết đặc biệt đến thế.

Với con trai của anh chị, cháu Adam Linh (8 tuổi), Tết ở Việt Nam là niềm vui bất tận. Cậu bé không chỉ được "chén" thả cửa các món "khoái khẩu" và không dễ có ở Macedonia như nem, bánh chưng rán, phở, bún và kiệu muối mà còn được nhận tiền mừng tuổi từ sáng đến tối, bất cứ khi nào có người lớn đến chơi (ở Macedonia, trẻ nhỏ chỉ được nhận quà của "Ông già Tuyết" vào đêm Noel, lại không phải do người thân như ông bà, bố mẹ, họ hàng trực tiếp trao tay đầy âu yếm).

Lidia bảo: "Người Macedonia có câu ngạn ngữ *Chuyện hay thường qua mau*. Sau những cuộc đi chơi thăm thú họ hàng và bạn bè ngày Tết là hành trình trở về Macedonia. Tâm trạng của gia đình tôi, nhất là anh Phi lúc này, không nói ra chắc các bạn cũng hiểu... Hà Nội ơi, xin hẹn đến Tết sang năm!...".

Text 1: The foreign daughter in law and foreign son in law celebrated non-western Tet festival

Men and women were of different nationalities and had different colored skin but they liked *banh chung* (square glutinous rice cake). It made them happy, meeting family, loving their country during Tet festival. Each spring raised the country beloved which gave the “husband or wife” a life.

Vietnamese Tet festival was full of happiness, gathering, and love expression

This year was the seventh Tet festival in Vietnam for Han Seung Mok. Han Seung Mok (born in 1971, in Korea) was a funny and enthusiastic person, although he was busy through the week. He was a shop supervisor for LG hi-tech products business department of Vietnam and he and his wife planned to go shopping. They went to Tet markets on the full-moon day of twelfth lunar month.

He pointed to peach blossoms which had thick, fresh and bright pink petals in a flowerpot in the corner of the room. Han said that his wife brought it from the most beautiful peach blossoms garden in Nhat Tan. A couple of *banh chung* (square glutinous rice cake) was bought from Hang Be market, the most delicious shop of Ha Noi. They bought only a few pieces of *banh chung* (square glutinous rice cake), because they intended to eat them at his wife’s parent home. Lean pork pasts were bought from Uoc Le village. Spring rolls were bought from Phung village. Ha Noi beers and oranges were bought from Canh village. Pomelos were bought from Dien village. They were laid in line up in a cupboard.

On the 30th night, the couple went out from a beautiful apartment, located in Trung Hoa-Nhan Chinh city area. They joined the crowd on the lively street to welcome the countdown. They were pleased to watch fireworks. On the morning of the 1st Tet festival day, they also bought salt which was wrapped by a piece of red beautiful cone shape paper. Han told that these things were arranged to wish for a good love liked Vietnamese idiom “the more spicy as ginger, the salty as salt” all year), *xong nha* (first-foot at someone’s house on the lunar New Year’s Day) at his wife’s parent house (for receiving the lucky money, and lucky in business liked “lucky buy, bestseller”).

Then they went to pagodas to worship the Buddha (according to his opinion, these things were for wishing for two words – peace for heart). Tet festival activities at those places are the same as in every year but they were still exciting.

The first Tet festival in 1998, Han was depressed from homesickness. Living in a student hostel at Bach Khoa University, Ha Noi, Han was lonely. He sat and chewed *banh mi* (Vietnamese bread) all through the 1st day of Tet festival because all food shops were quietly closed. During the second Tet festival in Vietnam, he joined the warm spring atmosphere by visiting a Vietnamese friend's house at Hai Duong province. The third time for Tet festival in Vietnam (the year of big snake of lunar calendar, year 2002) was an impressive day of Tet. Han fell in love with a beautiful girl who studied in the same class at Faculty of Justice, Law University, Ha Noi. Her name was Trinh Lan Huong who became his wife. At the countdown time to the New Year, he stood in front of her house door with a big bunch of flowers (he always gave flowers to her every Saturday for two years), Han felt relaxed as he stayed at home, when he became a guest who was first-foot at head of the family's house on the lunar New Year's Day.

That Tet was the first time that Han ate tens of traditional Vietnamese food which was cooked by the future mother-in-law (his impression was “a lot of delicious food to eat !”). Particularly, *banh chung* (square glutinous rice cake), Han liked it very much, he could eat a whole big one. Han said, he liked *banh chung* (square glutinous rice cake), not only its special delicious taste but it was very much like one of New Year's cakes named *xong-pieng* at his hometown (it was wrapped by leaves, cooked with flour, vegetable filling, sugar and then steamed).

Han did not feel strange about traditional Vietnamese Tet festival. In his hometown, people also celebrated the Tet festival according to the lunar calendar, and also welcomed the New Year custom, cleaned house and wore new clothes, gave lucky money but there was no *xong nha* custom (first-foot at someone's house on the lunar New Year's Day), that was the reason why he liked *xong nha* custom at his wife's very much). On New Year days, Korean people also met family, remembered ancestors, went back to their hometown to visit their ancestor's tombs, and welcomed Tet with their friends and loved ones. Han's country also respected their families'

values, enjoyed gathering and doing things in a joyous mood every spring. He said: "If there was no family, people did not have anything even life and happiness."

He answered the question why he loved the Vietnamese Tet festival, saying that "When Tet festival arrived, all Vietnamese who lived in other countries, wished to go back for meeting their families, paid respect to their parents and their ancestors. That was a valuable thing." At my country, Tet festival was an occasion for people to travel, stayed with their families, and changed atmosphere. Tet festival in every year, they were more than one million Korean people who traveled.

Moreover, according to Han the "Vietnamese Tet festival" was an occasion that his wife and mother would demonstrate their skills and their habit such as diligent, took care of family and people, gave a treat to children and gave birth. He loved Vietnamese woman because these things. Han revealed that his wife always woke up in the early morning to prepare breakfast for husband, and she was very skillful. She cooked *kim chi* (traditional Korean pickle). It was very delicious, while his sister (also worked in Ha Noi) could not cook it. Sometimes his sister went to his house and asked for a glass pot of *kim chi* (traditional Korean pickle).

Liked every Korean and Vietnamese people, Han also had many wishes when Tet festival was arriving. In the year of chicken in the lunar calendar, he dreamed of having one child and got Vietnamese nationality. Han was very good at Vietnamese language and knew an idiom "daughter in law was the real child, son in law was the guest". He dreamed that he would not be a guest anymore but he would become the real child of his wife's family and Vietnamese country. which he enjoyed and loved dearly.

"Tet, I enjoyed more than children, worried liked an old person"

Talking about Tet at Ha Noi, Lidia Dobrevska (Macedonia nationality, the musician of the National Macedonia Philharmonic Orchestra) thought immediately about wet atmosphere; frosted rain showing widely the city. It was raining but the sunshine was immediately distinct. That made the people felt unrealistical, realistical, sometimes excited, eager and dazed.

Tet for Lidia was very crowded with red bunches of flower, many blossoms peach trees, and yellow tangerines in the flowerpot. Tangerines hung off old bicycles with their wheels caked with brown soil from the garden while riding down on the street. It was the first time she saw tangerines. She asked herself continuously why there was mandarin species which small liked this. It was fruitful. There was a few green leaves flickered it, liked a lively painting. All flower baskets liked splendid color point on the seller's vehicle everywhere. It was also make her surprised. She got flurried and strange.

Not only eager with enjoyment of Tet welcoming on the street had foreign daughter in law also very busy days in the kitchen liked every Vietnamese daughter in law. The last week at Macedonia, Lidia was diligent to wrap spring rolls, cooked *pho* (Vietnamese noodle) and grilled pork for reducing husband homesickness. As for each Tet festival at Ha Noi, she was sweat by cooking pickle, dried pig skin soup, sticky rice, arrowroot leaves.

Lidia also had the second deep thought before the countdown time to the New Year liked Vietnamese people. She told that “the countdown time to the New Year at Ha Noi was really blessing. Everybody held their's breath to wait for the blessing time which they believed was the time of change for land and sky. In the fragrant atmosphere of joss-sticks, my large family ate the meal to welcome and farewell the end of the year. Sometimes I felt moved to tears.

Vietnamese Tet festival for Lidia was the pure atmosphere of the 1st of Tet festival's days, when she and her husband Lê Phi Phi – a composer and a bandmaster of National Macedonia Concert Band went for a walk around *Ho Guom* (Guom lake). An old *Thap Rua* (the Tortoise Tower) which was full of fog. The street was empty, a few people went out for leisure, their face looked freshly more than normal day, and many dreams in the New Year were full in the innermost heart. Lidia told that this was an unique time of the year which she and her husband made the most of the completely peace, which were not disturbed by the hurried people stream and the noisy vehicles at Macedonia.

Lidia liked many Vietnamese dishes but *banh chung* (square glutinous rice cake) made she infatuated mostly. She greatly admired of Vietnamese women skills. Many big cakes, lushly green, arrowroot leaves, sticky rice, green bean, onions and meat were mixed together. It created one taste which was difficult to forget and will remember forever.

Many days of the beginning of spring, Lidia and husband also liked to sit along the sidewalk, eat *nom* (sweet and sour grated salad) which was cooked of kohlrabi, papaya and dried beef. Taste the salt, sweet, sour, spicy made the tongue tip numb by this special food. While they were looking out to Ho Guom (Guom lake), they looked into the green calm water surface and red The Huc bridge which reflected on the lake surface. Lidia was also “addicted” to many kinds of sugar preserved fruit. Sugar preserved lotus seeds covered with a few sugars which her husband’s father, Hoang Van, a composer bought at Hang Buom street. It was the kind of sugar preserved fruit that she liked the most. She told that Macedonia did not have any kind of sugar preserved fruit which was sweet, having a buttery taste and having special pure fragrant when it was kept it in the mount like this.

As for their son, Adam Linh (8 years old), Tet festival at Vietnam was an enjoyment. A little boy was not only eating “feast” all of “delicious” food. It was not easy to have them at Macedonia such as spring rolls, fried *banh chung* (square glutinous rice cake), *pho* (Vietnamese noodle), *bun* (rice vermicelli), onion pickle. And he also received lucky money from the early morning to the night whenever there was an elder came to visit (at Macedonia the little children only received gift from Santa Claus in the Noel night, and it was not given by the acquaintance like grandparents, parents, relatives which was given from hand to hand with caress).

Lidia told that Macedonian people had a proverb “the good story always passes rapidly.” After relatives and friends visited in Tet festival days there was the time to go back to Macedonia. My family’s feeling, most of Phi feeling at this time, did not speak out clearly but it could understand. Ha Noi made an appointment for Tet festival in the next year.

- Quảng Hạnh

Text 2: Tết Việt online: Truớc giao thùa

Những nhóm sinh viên ở Hàn Quốc đang quây quần bên mâm cơm tất niên và có gọi điện về nhà. Những gia đình người Việt ở Sydney đang có chen chân trong chợ hoa Việt Nam để tìm một cành hoa vạn thọ... Và không khí Tết đang tràn ngập trên đại lộ ở TP.HCM. Đó là những thông tin mới nhất mà chúng tôi mới nhận được.

Sydney, Úc: Chợ hoa người Việt chỉ có cúc vạn thọ....

Xuân Ât Dậu này ở tây phương rơi vào ngày giữa tuần của lịch tây. Người Việt ở đây coi như mất tết. Nhưng các gia đình người Việt ở xứ Úc này cũng không thể để ba ngày xuân trôi đi oan uổng như vậy.

Chợ tết người Việt ở Sydney năm nay họp chính vào hai ngày cuối tuần trước tết (hai bảy và hai tám tháng chạp). Cũng nên nói thêm, tại Sydney, người Việt sống tập trung vào ba khu vực chính: quanh quận (suburb) Cabramatta, quanh Marickville và xung quanh thành phố Bankstown. Cabramatta gần như trở thành thủ phủ không ngai của người Việt ở Sydney. Đi ngoài đường quanh khu thương mại ở đây thì nghe tiếng Việt nhiều hơn tiếng Anh và các thứ tiếng khác. Hàng quán, thương xá ngoài tiếng Anh đều có kèm theo tiếng Việt.

Khu người Việt vốn lúc nào cũng đông đúc người qua kẻ lại, những ngày cận tết càng đông đúc hơn. Vì chỉ có hai ngày để mua sắm, người Việt khắp nơi đổ dồn về đây đông như trẩy hội. Bánh chưng bánh tết, bánh mứt chất thành chồng; câu đồi, câu liễn, bao lì-xì xếp thành đống đỏ sắc cả gian hàng. Hoa tết cũng ê hè, nhưng ở đây hoa ngày tết chỉ có hoa vạn thọ.

Gia đình tôi năm nay cũng như lệ thường, đón tết xứ người có gì là vui, nhưng cũng là để nhắc nhớ đến tổ tiên, nguồn cội, chim có tổ, người có tông; để cho con cháu còn nhớ đến cội nguồn, gốc rễ Việt Nam của mình, cũng đi sắm tết. Cặp bánh chưng xanh, đôi hoa vạn thọ, hộp mứt lấy là để chưng lên bàn thờ tổ tiên. Sau giờ làm việc rồi cũng có giao thùa của riêng gia đình. Năm mươi phút nữa là giao thùa của nước Úc, giờ đi

trước Việt Nam 4 tiếng. Vợ tôi đang sửa soạn bàn thờ, mùi hương nén quen thuộc lại bốc lên, lòng tôi lại chợt nhớ quê nhà.

Ba mươi phút nữa, giờ giao thừa sẽ điểm trên đất Úc, một nén tâm hương hướng về tổ quốc nơi tôi đã sinh ra và lớn lên, nơi đó là hồn thiêng là lá chắn cho tôi vững chãi trên mọi nẻo đường lưu lạc... “Quê hương nếu ai không nhớ, sẽ không lớn nổi thành người”.

Hàn Quốc: Đường điện thoại về Việt Nam bị nghẽn

Hàn Quốc cũng là đất nước ăn Tết Âm lịch như Việt Nam. Người Hàn được nghỉ 3 ngày Tết và họ thường về nhà ăn Tết cùng gia đình ở quê cùng bố mẹ, ông bà. Thế nên du học sinh Việt Nam ở Hàn ngày Tết cũng được nghỉ, và do vậy, càng có điều kiện để nhớ nhà hơn.

Có lẽ với những bạn ở các nước khác, ngày Tết các bạn vẫn phải lên lab, công việc sẽ cuốn các bạn khiến cho những ngày Tết sẽ qua nhanh hơn. Ngày Tết ở Hàn chúng tôi nhớ nhà lắm. Ra đường, đường phố vắng lặng, xe cộ thưa thớt, thỉnh thoảng lại gặp vài ông bà già hoặc vài gia đình người Hàn mặc quần áo truyền thống hoặc lịch sự đi chúc Tết lẫn nhau, rất giống như mừng một Tết ở nhà mình.

Ở đây, người Hàn cũng dành mừng một Tết cho gia đình. Từ sáng sớm, cả gia đình dậy sớm, rồi con cháu làm lễ ván an, chúc Tết ông bà, cha mẹ, mừng tuổi trẻ con... sau đó họ làm bữa cơm năm mới với các món cổ truyền của ngày Tết rồi cả gia đình cùng quây quần. Ngày mừng hai Tết là ngày cho người trẻ đi chơi. Thanh niên Hàn đi chơi, thăm hỏi lẫn nhau. Ngày mừng 3 là ngày cuối cùng của Tết, mọi người bắt đầu trở về nhà và nghỉ ngơi nốt để ngày mừng 4 đi làm bình thường. Người Hàn làm việc và nghỉ ngơi rất nghiêm túc và độc lập, có lẽ, hơi khác với Việt Nam chúng ta, nơi mà không khí Tết vẫn còn vương lại suốt cả tuần sau Tết.

Ngày Tết, chúng tôi thường tụ tập các nhóm nhỏ anh em không về Việt Nam ăn Tết được để ăn Tết cùng nhau. Ngay từ 27-28 Tết, anh em đã đi chợ phiên mua các đồ thực phẩm để chuẩn bị cho 3 ngày Tết. Chúng tôi mua gạo nếp, đậu xanh, thịt lợn và giấy thiếc để gói bánh chưng; gói giò xào, ngâm măng khô để nấu nồi canh măng không thể

thiếu của Tết; và tất nhiên là một con gà trống thiến để cúng Tất Niên. Chiều 30 Tết, anh em tụ tập đông đủ tại khu nhà rộng nhất rồi bắt đầu chuẩn bị. Con trai thì lo lau chùi, dọn dẹp, trang trí nhà cửa, con gái thì lo nấu nướng, bày cỗ. Quá trình chuẩn bị rất vui, giống như khi chúng tôi chuẩn bị nấu cỗ Tết ở nhà.

Khoảng 7h tối, mâm cơm cúng với con gà ngâm bông hoa hồng, chai rượu, bát canh măng, bát miến, đĩa xôi, đĩa xào, đĩa nem và bát nước chấm có rau củ tía hoa được bày lên nóc chiếc tủ lạnh. Mọi người ngồi nói chuyện chút, chụp ảnh với mâm cỗ và chuẩn bị dọn cơm. Ai cũng muốn gia đình mình ở Việt Nam thấy mình ăn Tết thế nào. Tết của chúng tôi không có hoa mai, hoa đào. Chúng tôi cùng ăn bữa cơm tất niên từ khoảng 7 giờ rưỡi đến 10 giờ, vừa ăn vừa nói chuyện Tết ở Việt Nam. Sau 10 giờ, tất cả tập trung vào việc gọi điện về Việt Nam để chúc Tết gia đình mình. Hàn Quốc có múi giờ sớm hơn Việt Nam hai tiếng nên giờ đó là khoảng sau 8 giờ tối của Việt Nam.

Chỉ thêm một lúc nữa thôi là đường truyền điện thoại về Việt Nam gần như nghẽn mạch hoàn toàn. Và việc gọi điện chắc chỉ có thể thực hiện được sau 1 giờ đêm giờ Việt Nam. Sự tắc nghẽn này thường kéo dài đến hết ngày mùng 1 Tết. Việc xem truyền hình trên mạng cũng rất khó khăn vì có quá nhiều người truy cập vào trang đó. Từ khoảng 1 giờ sáng ngày mùng 1 Tết ở Hàn, chúng tôi ngồi nói chuyện, nghe nhạc và kể cho nhau nghe những kỷ niệm ở nhà mình. Xa nhà ngày Tết, các câu chuyện dường như mang nhiều ý nghĩa hơn.

Cứ như vậy, 3 ngày Tết của chúng tôi sẽ là 3 ngày sinh hoạt chung. Trừ những lúc chát hoặc điện thoại về cho gia đình ở Việt Nam, chúng tôi nấu nướng, ăn uống, nói chuyện xung quanh ấm chè và chơi tú lơ khơ. Cũng giống như người Hàn, ngày mùng 4 Tết chúng tôi có mặt tại lab và làm việc bình thường như tất cả những ngày làm việc khác quanh năm.

Giao thừa sắp đến rồi. Chúc tất cả mọi người một năm mới hạnh phúc, vạn sự bình an, giống như câu chúc mừng năm mới truyền thống của người Hàn "Se-he (năm mới) puk mani (nhiều phúc) pat-tu-sip-seyo (nhận được nhiều)". Năm mới nhiều hạnh phúc !!

HCM: Tết tràn trên đại lộ

Hòa tràn trên nhiều đại lộ, đó đây vang tiếng trống múa lân... Đó là không khí của Sài Gòn ngày cuối cùng của năm Giáp Thân. Đây là năm thứ hai phố hoa trở lại với Sài Gòn. Điều đáng chú ý là năm nay có nhiều khách nước ngoài tìm đến hơn. Đường như người nước ngoài lâu dần cũng thâm phong tục Việt Nam. Tại chợ hoa Nguyễn Huệ, chủ đề Nam Bộ năm ngoái được thay bằng "TP.HCM - Phát triển và hội nhập". Dọc hai bên đường bên đường được thiết kế như những dòng sông bồng bềnh hoa trôi. Những đồ gốm, tượng nung được đặt hài hòa bên những giò lan quý, những chậu mai vàng rực ngay chân tượng Bác Hồ...

Hàng nghìn người đến Tao Đàn để thưởng thức sự liên kết những chủ đề cũ-mới, sắc xuân nay và sắc xuân xưa. Bên cạnh những giống hoa mới, lạ là những hiện vật đã đoạt giải vàng từ năm 1981 đến nay, gồm những bộ sưu tập bướm, san hô, tranh hoa chất liệu bằng hoa, lá, gỗ, đá, và cả những tranh thêu vẽ sơn mài... Các bon-sai vẫn kiêu hãnh khoe mình trong nắng. Đáng chú ý là năm nay hiện diện những giống cá cảnh lạ, khiến du khách trầm trồ, nhưng giá... "cắt cổ". Tiêu biểu là loại cá La Hán giá lên tới... 17.000 USD/1 con. Đây là giống cá rất kén nước: Nuôi nước sạch thì hiện chữ nho trên thân, nuôi nước đục thì chữ nho sẽ biến mất.

Trên các điểm bán hoa, cây cảnh, quất và đào - những cây cảnh miền Bắc - tràn ngập và nhiều hơn rất nhiều so với năm ngoái. Cây cảnh "tầm tầm" giá chừng vài trăm ngàn. Nhiều hộ sành chơi đã đặt nuôi cây từ cách đây 1 năm với giá 1 triệu đồng lại. Còn ở chợ hoa 23/9, dễ thấy là năm nay ngập tràn hoa lan. Lan từ Đà Lạt có, Thái Lan hay Đài Loan cũng chẳng thiếu và gần một phần nửa hội chợ nổi bật màu lan sắc sỡ: vàng, trắng, tím...

Ông Ngọc Tuyền, một nghệ nhân trồng hoa ở Gò Vấp, giải thích: "Do năm nay thời tiết thay đổi liên tục nên đào và mai nở sớm, nên hoa lan càng lên hương". Tại công viên 30/4 (Q.1), hàng chục người đang rộn rịp trang hoàng sân khấu cho chương trình văn nghệ mừng xuân mới. Trong những quận vùng ven trung tâm, nhiều hoa nhất tiêu biểu phải kể đến đường Trần Xuân Soạn (Q.7). Hoa từ mấy tỉnh lân cận đổ về sắc sỡ dọc nhánh sông Sài Gòn. Tiếng người lao xao mua hoa trộn lẫn tiếng trống múa lân thùng thùng...

Đọc theo đường Trần Xuân Soạn là đến đường Phạm Thé Hiển (Q.8). Tại đây, nước sông đã gần cạn, nhiều con tàu trơ đáy, đầm mìn xuống bùn. Chị Mỹ Quỳnh, một chủ tàu cùi, nói: "Nước cạn cũng không sao. Tàu bị mắc lại, càng có cớ nghỉ Tết lâu. Đêm nay, như mọi năm, chúng tôi sẽ kéo còi tàu thật dài để mừng năm mới...".

Nắng vàng ngập quê Bác

Đất trời Nghệ An tràn ngập màu vàng của nắng xuân. Từ ngày 27 tháng Chạp, các khu phố chính của thành phố Vinh đã tấp nập người qua lại bán hàng, sắm Tết.

Đào Nhật Tân từ Hà Nội, đào rừng từ miền núi Nghệ An như Kỳ Sơn, Đô Lương, Tân Kỳ, mai vàng từ miền Nam, tầm xuân, và nhiều loại hoa khác từ mọi miền Tổ quốc như khoác lên thành phố Vinh một tấm áo choàng đùi màu sắc. Năm nay, người dân thành phố quê hương Bác Hồ dường như chuộng đào rừng hơn đào bích Nhật Tân và mai vàng. Nếu như năm ngoái mỗi gốc mai được bán với giá hơn 3 triệu đồng mà vẫn "cháy chợ" thì năm nay giá sụt xuống chỉ còn khoảng 6-700.000 đồng.

Anh Thành, người bán mai tại chợ Vinh, cho biết: "Tưởng dân tình vẫn chuộng mai như năm ngoái, tôi đưa từ miền Nam ra hơn một trăm gốc mai với giá 1,3 triệu/gốc. Hóa ra dân Vinh năm nay chuyển "gu", đâm ra lỗ to, chưa kể đến tiền công vận chuyển". Các loại hoa tươi khác vẫn bán chạy, giá cả không khác lắm so với Hà Nội, vì chủ yếu được nhập về từ thủ đô.

Người dân Nghệ An vẫn duy trì được truyền thống tự gói lấy bánh chung cho nhà mình. Mỗi gia đình gói khoảng 12-15 chiếc, vừa đủ một nồi quan dụng, trừ một số nhà vì bận công việc làm ăn nên đành phải đặt bánh tại các cơ sở sản xuất. Mỗi chiếc bánh chung được bán với giá 11.000 đồng, theo đánh giá chung là "tương đối hợp lý" so với mặt bằng thị trường.

Đêm giao thừa, các đường phố thành Vinh trở nên tấp nập với hàng ngàn chiếc xe máy, chủ yếu là thanh thiếu niên và các cặp vợ chồng trẻ chở nhau đi dạo phố chờ đến thời khắc giao thừa. Năm nay, các điểm vui chơi khác đều khá vắng vẻ, bởi vì hầu hết người dân Vinh đều tập trung tại một điểm duy nhất: Quảng trường Hồ Chí Minh. Tại đây, mọi người sẽ được tận mắt chứng kiến những hoạt động chính của thành phố đón

mừng giây phút chuyển giao giữa năm cũ và năm mới như múa lân, văn nghệ, và bắn pháo hoa. Quán cà phê Vạn Tuế bên cạnh quảng trường cũng được "thơm lây", được nhiều người chọn làm điểm dừng chân ôn chuyện năm cũ và chờ đón năm mới.

Mới chỉ 22 giờ đêm nhưng đèn Củi (thờ quan Hoàng Mười theo tín ngưỡng dân gian) đã lắp nập những tốp thanh niên đến xin lộc. Thông thường, thời điểm đông người viếng đèn nhất vẫn là sau phút giao thừa. Mọi người thành kính thấp những nén hương dâng lên bè trên, cầu cho một năm mới tràn đầy phúc, lộc.

- Khánh Linh - Quốc Cường - Quang Nguyễn - Phạm Cường - Khánh Toàn

Text 2: Tet Viet online: Before the New Year's Eve

Student groups at Korea were gathering around a tray of a meal in the end of the year and tried to telephone back to home. Many Vietnamese families at Sydney were trying to penetrate into the Vietnamese flower market for finding a marigold bunch. The Tet festival atmosphere was full on the Ho Chi Minh City's highway. That was the latest information which we (Vietnamnet reporters) just received.

Sydney, Australia: Vietnamese flower market had only chrysanthemum and marigold

In the chicken year in the lunar calendar, in the western was the middle day of the week in the western calendar. Seven Vietnamese people here seemed to do not have Tet festival. But many Vietnamese families at Australia also did not let the three days of spring passing away liked this.

Vietnamese Tet festival market in Sydney in this year was fallen into two days of the end of week (27 and 28 the twelfth month of lunar calendar). In addition, at Sydney, Vietnamese people lived together in three main areas: Cabramatta suburb, around Marickville, and around Bankstown city. Cabramatta suburb nearly became the informal capital of Vietnamese people in Sydney. Outside in the shopping area one could hear more Vietnamese and other languages than English too. In the shops and market, besides English, signs were in Vietnamese.

In Vietnamese areas everywhere was crowded with people. The closer it was to Tet festival, the more crowded it was. Because there was only two days for shopping, Vietnamese people from everywhere came here like they were going to a festival. Banh chung (glutinous rice cake), banh tet (cylindrical glutinous rice cake) and sugar preserved fruit were arranged into a couple of pole shapes. That were a couple of parallel sentences, lucky envelope which were arranged in the high heap, whole shop was full of red color. Tet flowers were abundant. But here, Tet flowers were only marigold flowers.

This year, my family welcomes the Tet festival overseas. But it was important to remember ancestors, origin and their origin. A Bird had nest, the people had lineage. My Vietnamese origin also went to shop for Tet festival stuff. A couple of green *banh chung* (glutinous rice cake), a couple of marigold flower, sugar preserved fruit boxes. It was displayed a little, just for showing on ancestor's altar. After working hours, there was also the countdown time to the New Year of private families. There was 50 minutes, it would be the countdown time to the New Year in Australia, the time was faster than Vietnam four hours. My wife was preparing the altar, the familiar joss-stick smell soared into the air, and my heart was moving and homesick.

There was 30 minutes, it would be the countdown time to the New Year in Australia, one joss-stick was made from heart turned to my country where I was born and grew up. That place was the holy spirit place where the barrier for me and made me was solid on the way of "far from home". "If anyone did not remember the hometown, they would not grow up and change."

Korea: The telephone line back to Vietnam was hang down.

Korea was also the country where celebrated the New Year following the lunar calendar like Vietnam. Korean stopped working three days during the New Year days and they often went back home to celebrate the New Year at their hometown. They celebrated with their parents and grandparents. So that the Vietnamese abroad students at Korea rested. Because of this reason, they had conditions to get homesick more.

May be other friends from different countries still had to go to the lab on Tet festival days and work would drive them and made the Tet festival day pass more rapidly. The New Year days at Korea, we were homesick very much. Going outside on the street, the street was quiet. There were a few vehicles. Sometimes we met some elderly men and women, or some Korean families wearing traditional or polite clothes, going to greet each other. It very liked the 1st of Tet festival day at my home.

Here Korean people spent the 1st day of the New Year with family. All family members woke up early, and then the children held a ceremony for New Year to greet grandparents, and parents. They gave lucky money to the children. After that, they cooked the New Year meal, that was the traditional food of the New Year days, and then all family members gathering around. The second day of the New Year was the day for the youngsters to travel. The Korean teenagers traveled and visited each other. The third day of the New Year was the last day of the New Year period and everyone began to go back home and rest, then the New Year was finished. On the fourth day they went to work as usual. Korean people worked and rested on time. It was rather diffent from the Vietnamese where the New Year atmosphere existed right through the week after New Year's Day.

Tet festival days, we clustered with all small groups of brothers who did not went back to Vietnam for celebrating Tet together. From 27th -28th of the Tet festival days, brothers went to a market place. They bought all foodstuff for preparing of tree Tet festival days. We bought sticky rice, green bean, pork and foil for banh chung (glutinous rice cake) and pork paste wrapping, steeped dried bamboo shoot for cooking bamboo shoot soup, and including a castrated cock for the end of the year's worship. In the afternoon of 30th of Tet festival days, brother clustered in crowded at widest place, and then began to prepare. Men were responsible for wiping, cleaning and decorating house. Women were responsible for cooking and feast arrangement. The long time of preparing was very enjoyable liked we prepared Tet feast at home.

Around 7pm., the meal tray included a chicken holding a rose in its mouth, an alcohol bottle, a bowl of bamboo shoot soup, a bowl of green bean noodle soup, a dish of sticky rice, a dish of fried, a dish of spring roll and a cup of sauce with vegetables and carving flowers which were arranged on the top of a refrigerator. Everybody sit and talked for a few moments, then took photograph with the meal tried and prepared for eating. They wanted their families at Vietnam seeing that how did they celebrate Tet festival. Our Tet did not have apricot blossoms and peach blossoms. We ate the meal of the end of the year together from 7.30pm. to 10pm. We ate, while we talked about the Tet festival in Vietnam. After 10pm., everybody gathered to telephone back to

Vietnam for Tet greeting to their families. Korean time was two hours earlier than Vietnam, so at that time it was about 8pm. in Vietnam.

Only one more hour, the telephone line backing to Vietnam nearly seemed to be blocked completely. And they may telephone rainging again after 1am. of Vietnam time. This telephone blocking often occurred until the 1st of Tet festival days finished. Online television watching was also very difficult and had many people watching on those webpage. From around 1am. in the morning of the 1st of Tet festival days in Korea, we sit for talking, listened to the music and talked about many memories at hometown to each other. Far from home on Tet festival days, all stories may bring much more meaning.

Continuously liked this, three days of Tet festival would be the three days for having activities together. Besides chat time or telephoning back to family in Vietnam, we cooked, ate, drank, talked around the tea pot and played a card game. It was similar to Korean people. The fourth day of Tet festival days we met at a lab and worked normally like others working days of the year.

The countdown time to the New Year nearly arrived. The New Year's greeting for everybody with happiness and living in security and good health liked the New Year's greeting words of Korean people “"Se-he (New Year) puk mani (very happy) pat-tu-sip-seyo (received many)". Very happy in the New Year !!

Ho Chi Minh city: Tet festival overflowed on the highways

Flowers overflowed on the sides of many highways. At many places, people listened to the drums of the unicorn dance show. That was atmosphere of the ending day of the monkey year in the lunar calendar. This was the second year that the flower street was moved back to Sai Gon. The most interesting thing was that this year they had more foriegn guests coming. Foreigners seemed to deeply appreciate Vietnamese customs. At the Nguyen Hue flower market, the last year topic was changed to “Ho Chi Minh city – developed and intergrated.” Along two streets, beside the street they was designed liked there were flowers floated on a river. Many ceramics and baked clay

figures were arranged in a balancing way located beside valuable orchids and many yellow splendid apricot blossoms belied the “Uncle Ho” statue.

Thousands people came to the Tao Dan park for enjoying the relation of an old and new topic, that was this spring and the old spring environment. Besides the view of new and strange flowers there were the things which won the gold championship since 1981 until now. This included butterfly collection, corals, flower pictures which were made of flowers, leaves, wood, stone, all embroider pictures and lacquer paintings. All bonsai trees were displayed in the sunshine. It should be noted that this year there were strange kinds of fish which surprised visitors, but their prices were very high. In particular, the fish named La Han, the price was from 17,000 dollars per one fish. This fish was in selected water. If one fed them in clean water, then it would appear an old Sino script on its body, but if one fed it in dirty water, an old Sino script would not appear.

At the flower stalls, there were ornamental trees, tangerines peach blossoms. There were ornamental trees from the south in abundance more than last year. Ornamental trees priced from 200,000 – 300,000 dong (Vietnamese currency unit). Many fashionable families reserved the trees more than one year ago with the price at least one million dong (Vietnamese currency unit). At the 23/9 flower market it was easy to see that this year places were overflowed with orchids. There were orchids from Da Lat. Orchids from Thailand and Taiwan were not lacking. Nearly a half of flower festival was the colorful orchid’s colors; yellow, white and purple.

Mr. Ngoc Tuyen, one of the professional flower plantings at Go Vap, explained that “Because this year the weather changed continuously, so peach blossoms and apricot blossoms bloomed earlier, then the orchids were much more expensive.” At 30/4 public park (district one), tens people were busy with decorating stage for the new spring’s music show program. Many areas near the center had many flowers, in particular, Tran Xuan Soan street (district seven). Flowers from many provinces looked like flowers presenting their splendid color along the Sai Gon River. The sound of uproarious flowers buying blended with the drum sound of unicorn dancing.

Along the Tran Xuan Soan street to Pham The Hien street (District eight), here the river was nearly shallow. And many boats were at the bottom of the river. They sunk into mud. Mrs. My Quynh, one of the boat owners, smiled and said that “The shallow water did not matter. The boats were not able to go, there were reasons to rest in Tet festival longer.” This night liked every year, we would pull the boat’s whistle really long for New Year greetings.

Sunshine floated in “Uncle Ho” hometown

The sky of Nghe An overflowed with the yellow color of sunshine spring. From the 27th of the twelfth month of the lunar calendar, all main places of Vinh city were overflowed with the people who passed to sell and buy the Tet festival goods.

There were Nhat Tan’s peach blossoms from Ha Noi, forest peach blossoms from Nghe An’s mountain such as Ky son; Do Luong;, Tan Ky, yellow apricot blossoms from the southern, briar and many kind of flowers differenting from others region of country. Vinh city looked like cover with colorful overcoat. This year the people of “Uncle Ho” hometown seemed to like forest peach blossoms more than Nhat Tan peach blossom and yellow apricot blossoms. If it liked last year, each apricot tree was sold at a price of more than three million dong (Vietnamese currency unit) but it was still rapidly sold. This year the price went down only about 600,000-700,000 dong (Vietnamese currency unit).

Mr. Thanh, an apricot blossoms seller at Vinh market, informed that “I thought the people still liked apricot blossoms liked the last year, I bought more than 100 trees from the southern with 1.3 million dong (Vietnamese currency unit). But Vinh people changed their tastes, so I lost it very much, not including the transportation cost.” All kinds of fresh flowers were sold quickly; the price was not much different compared with piece at Ha Noi, because almost flowers were imported from the capital.

Nghe An people still continued to follow traditional *banh chung* (glutinous rice cake) wrapping for their families. Each family wrapped about 12-15 *banh chung* (glutinous rice cake) for enough of the the military pot. Besides business with working, they had to reserve the cakes at all production place. Each *banh chung* (glutinous rice cake)

was sold at price 11,000 dong (Vietnamese currency unit). According to the normal price, this price was reasonable compared with the marketing price.

At the countdown time to the New Year night, all Vinh streets were crowded with shops and motorcycles. The majority was the teenagers and all couples of younger husbands and wifes carried together on the motorcycles to go sightseeing in the city, waiting for the countdown time to the New Year. This year, all entertainment places were rather empty because the majority of Vinh people were gathered at only one place: Ho Chi Minh square. Here everybody would watch many activities of the countdown time to the New Year such as unicorn dancing, music show and fireworks shooting. The Van Tue coffee kiosks beside the square was also a popular place because there were many people who selected this place for stopping to review the story in the old year, and waiting for New Year's welcoming.

It was only 10pm., but Cui temple (respected to Hoang Muoi saint following the believing of the people) was crowded with the teenagers who came to ask for luck. Normally, the most crowded time was the time after the countdown time to the New Year's minute. Everybody burned joss-sticks and raised them up sincerely to respect, and wished for the New Year full of happiness and luck.

- Khánh Linh - Quốc Cường - Quang Nguyễn - Phạm Cường - Khánh Toàn

Text 3: Tết Việt online: Tôi 30

Tết nhớ quê ở Canada, Boston (Mỹ), ở Tâybanha... Tết đậm đặc không khí truyền thống ở Huế, Hà Tây, Tết dành cho người nghèo ở Gia Lai. Tết sôi động ở Hà Nội, TP HCM - đó là những gì mà chúng tôi đem đến cho bạn đọc trong chiêu, tôi nay. Mời bạn đọc cùng cập nhật với VietNamNet.

Tết của người Việt ở Canada: Chợ Việt đông vui

Trong khi người dân khắp mọi miền đất nước náo nức chờ đợi phút giao thừa, ở bên kia bờ Thái Bình Dương, cộng đồng người Việt tại Canada cũng bắt đầu cảm nhận được không khí tết.

Do chênh lệch múi giờ (cách nhau 12 tiếng), tối giao thừa ở Việt Nam sẽ là sáng 30 tại Canada. Trong khi một bộ phận người Việt vẫn tiếp tục tối sập làm, một số người khác đặc biệt là người lớn tuổi chuẩn bị cho đêm giao thừa. Cũng giống như ở Việt Nam, người Việt tại Canada đón Tết bằng bánh chưng, bánh tết, các loại bánh, mứt kẹo.....không thiếu thứ gì. Tất cả những mặt hàng này đều được nhập khẩu từ Trung Quốc, Việt Nam, Thái Lan.

Song thay vì những cây mai vàng, bích đào thắm sắc xuân, trong mỗi gia đình người Việt tại Canada là những cành mai giả bằng nhựa. Trên bàn thờ mỗi gia đình đều bày bánh chưng, bánh tết, rượu, trái cây, bánh mứt kẹo và hạt dưa đỏ.

Tại Toronto, một thành phố lớn phía đông Canada, nơi có khoảng 50.000 người Việt sinh sống, không khí vô cùng nhộn nhịp. Nhiệt độ lúc này là 3 độ C. Ở các khu phố Trung Hoa (Chinatown) phía đông và phía tây thành phố hoặc các khu chợ Hongkong, Mississauga nằm trong vùng Toronto mở rộng (Greater Toronto Area), mặt hàng phục vụ Tết nguyên đán được bày bán với nhiều chủng loại.

Trong siêu thị Bến Thành, Đại Giang, Tân Hưng, những cây mai giả bằng nhựa được trưng bày chính giữa kèm theo băng rôn: "Chúc mừng năm mới Ất Dậu" bằng 3 thứ tiếng Anh, Việt, Hoa. Bánh chưng, bánh tết, hạt dưa đỏ, dưa hấu, bao lì xì, trà, cà phê.... bày la liệt trong siêu thị kèm theo các chiêu khuyến mại hấp dẫn. Ví dụ, khách mua hàng trị giá trên 50 đô la Canada (CAD) được tặng thêm 1 chai nước mắm; mua

trên 200 CAD được tặng gói quà gồm bánh, mứt, kẹo, và phiếu bốc thăm trúng thưởng.

Vào đêm giao thừa, cũng giống như ở Việt Nam, người Việt tại Toronto có thói quen đi lễ chùa đầu năm. Không khí tại các ngôi chùa như Pháp Vân, Từ Ân, Linh Sơn... rất nhộn nhịp vì đây là nơi người Việt tới để xin lộc và gặp mặt bạn bè, bà con.

Từ hôm 5/2, cộng đồng người Việt tại Toronto đã có buổi họp mặt mừng năm mới kéo dài từ 10h sáng tới 8h tối tại Trung tâm Hershey, Mississauga. Đây là dịp để Việt kiều tại Toronto nhớ về quê hương và người Canada được thưởng thức những hình ảnh, âm thanh, hương vị của Việt Nam. Hàng năm, những buổi họp mặt thế này thu hút từ 10.000-12.000 người tham dự. Sau buổi họp là chương trình nhạc hội khiêu vũ kéo dài từ 9h tối tới 2h sáng với sự tham gia của các ca sĩ, nghệ sĩ hài nổi tiếng hải ngoại.

Tại Winnipeg, một thành phố nằm trên vùng đồng bằng thảo nguyên miền trung Canada, nơi chỉ có khoảng 5.000 người Việt sinh sống và tại thủ đô Ottawa nơi có khoảng 10.000 người Việt sống, không khí đón Tết trầm lắng hơn. Tết ở đây chỉ mang tính chất gia đình và thường không có những buổi hội họp lớn mang tính cộng đồng giống ở Toronto. Người Việt ở hai thành phố này cũng đi chùa vào đêm giao thừa và thăm bà con, bạn bè vào ngày mồng 1 Tết.

Thứ cuối năm từ Boston

Cộng tác viên của VietNamNet, chị Cao Hà, một lưu học sinh gửi từ Boston Mỹ cho biết: Mọi người đang vô cùng nhớ đất nước và quê hương khi Tết đang đến. Vì Tết Việt năm nay không trùng với ngày nghỉ bên Mỹ nên những người trẻ tuổi vẫn phải lo đi học, đi làm. Những người như chị Hà không có thời gian để hưởng Tết ta.

"Chị vừa nhận được thư của mẹ chị ở nhà. Chị càng thấy nhớ bỏ mẹ, em trai và những người thân ở Việt Nam thật nhiều. Chị xa nhà đi học từ năm 18 tuổi và cảm thấy đã trưởng thành lên rất nhiều và luôn mong một ngày trở về được gop sức cùng với thanh niên Việt Nam đang học tập và làm việc ở khắp nơi trên thế giới tạo nên những chuyển động tích cực trên quê hương mình, tạo nên những giá trị tinh thần và vật chất mang tính đột phá cho xã hội. Đây thực sự là mong ước của chị và chị nghĩ cũng chính là trách nhiệm xã hội của thanh niên, của thế hệ trẻ chúng ta với vận mệnh và

sự phồn vinh của đất nước. Từ mơ ước đến thành công còn cả một chặng đường nhưng chỉ tin chỉ không phải là người duy nhất có hoài bão ấy. Rất nhiều thanh niên Việt Nam ở trong cũng như ngoài nước đang áp ủ giấc mơ ấy, giấc mơ được cống hiến cho đất nước. Chính vì thế, khi chúng ta đoàn kết lại, chúng ta sẽ có được sức mạnh vô cùng to lớn."

Chị Cao Hà đã nhắc tới bài viết của TS Vũ Minh Khương_mới được đăng trên VietNamNet với tất cả sự trân trọng. Chị nói rằng mình rất tâm đắc đối với phần "Đổi mới tư duy: những nội dung cấp bách". Theo chị, "rất có thể chìa khoá của sự phát triển chính là từ đây, bắt đầu từ sự thay đổi về tư duy, hướng tới những giá trị đích thực từ cuộc sống, tới nhân bản, hoài bão và tinh thần học hỏi. Chị lâu rồi không nói chuyện với các sinh viên trong nước, chị không biết các bạn có nghĩ như vậy không? Nếu em có thể tổ chức một buổi thảo luận với các bạn sinh viên ở các trường Đại học, trung học về bài viết cũng như chủ đề trên, chị cảm ơn em và VietNamNet rất nhiều."

Người Việt ở Tây Ban Nha: Nghỉ việc đón Tết

Như thông cảm với số người Việt ít ỏi tại Tây Ban Nha, thời tiết mấy hôm nay ở Madrid giống Việt Nam đến lạ: âm u và lát phát mưa phùn. Cộng đồng người Việt ở TBN rất nhỏ với khoảng 500 người, sống rải rác ở khắp các vùng, riêng thủ đô Madrid chỉ khoảng 7 – 10 hộ gia đình.

Những ngày cuối Giáp Thân đầu Ất Dậu là dịp mọi người tạm dừng công việc thường ngày để thu dọn nhà cửa, mua sắm và chuẩn bị đón năm mới theo phong tục của người Á Đông. Bà con chuẩn bị Tết theo phong tục quê hương: Gói bánh chưng, mua mứt kẹo và cố tìm bằng được gà sống để thắp hương cúng Tổ tiên đêm 30. Họ chờ đến phút giao thừa để gọi điện chúc Tết nhau, chúc Tết bà con trong nước và ở các nước khác.

Cùng vào dịp này, cộng đồng người Trung Quốc ở TBN khá đông (khoảng 70.000 người) cũng rầm rộ chuẩn bị Tết, các cửa hàng Tàu bán rất nhiều đồ Tết khiến người VN càng háo hức hơn. Do cộng đồng người Việt quá nhỏ bé không đủ thành lập hội đoàn, một số cũng mượn không khí tổ chức của người Hoa để có thêm khí thế.

Sắp tới phút giao thừa, mọi người sẽ quây tụ bên VTV4 cùng đón Tết với đất nước, vui mừng cho cuộc sống ngày càng phát triển ở quê nhà, và cầu chúc một năm mới với bước tiến mới, phồn thịnh hơn năm cũ. Rồi ai cũng thầm mong năm tới có dịp về quê ăn Tết để thật sự sống cõng niềm vui ngày đầu xuân.

Tết ở Tokyo: Đọc VietNamNet mới thấy Tết

5 năm rồi tôi không được ăn Tết ở nhà, mỗi dịp Tết về lại nhớ những kỷ niệm ngày Tết năm xưa.

Nhật Bản từ lâu không ăn Tết âm lịch nữa... Tết Dương lịch đã thành ngày mừng năm mới của người Nhật, với những lễ nghi, tập tục truyền thống... Sau đó, mọi thứ trở lại bình thường. Nhịp sống gấp gáp, sôi động của một xã hội công nghiệp... Xa nhà, những ngày Tết Tây với tôi thành lạnh lẽo, mọi người quay về sum họp gia đình, còn tôi chỉ một mình... Ở đây, người ta vẫn đi làm, đi học, những chuyến xe điện vẫn đông nghịt khách, những khu phố trung tâm vẫn sáng đèn suốt đêm... Tôi bị cuốn hút vào nhịp sống bận rộn ấy, nếu chẳng ai nhắc đến, nếu không mở VietNamNet để thấy không khí mùa xuân tràn ngập khắp mọi "ngõ ngách" của báo các bạn, sẽ quên khuấy đi, hoặc chỉ hững hờ: "À, đó này ở nhà là Tết đây"...

Đêm giao thừa ở VN trang nghiêm, bồi hồi, là cảm giác hân hoan ấm áp bên người thân, bạn bè, còn ở Tokyo với tôi lúc này là những giây phút bù đầu với bài vở. Có lẽ, bận rộn vẫn hay hơn, vì còn có gì đó để làm, để tạm quên đi cảm giác nhớ Tết, nhớ nhà, nhớ những món ăn mẹ nấu... Từ lâu rồi tôi không còn buồn vì xa nhà ngày Tết, mà chỉ tiếc cho mình không được hưởng cái không khí thân thương, đầm ấm mỗi độ xuân về...

Giao thừa, cầu chúc cho hạnh phúc luôn rạng ngời (or sáng ngời) trên khắp quê hương Việt Nam.

Huế: Đồ làm sẵn không lợt mắt các bà nội trợ vốn kỹ tính

Dù năm nay, các mặt hàng thực phẩm truyền thống của Huế như mứt gừng, dưa món và thịt ngâm được bày bán ở chợ từ đầu tháng Chạp thì đến chiều 30 Tết, nhiều thứ vẫn nằm im lìm trên quầy hàng. Những người nội trợ của Huế vốn kỹ tính thường tự tay mình làm lấy các thứ để cúng trong ngày Tết bởi người Huế rất coi trọng đời sống tâm linh.

Năm nay ở Huế, thực phẩm và bánh kẹo ế hơn. Chợ Đông Ba còn đỡ, các chợ lẻ như An Cựu, Bên Ngự, Tây Lộc ế khách. Giá cả của Huế không tăng mấy. Sức mua không tăng. Thịt lợn: 45.000 đồng/kg, bò: 80.000 đồng/kg. Gà có bán nhưng ế hơn mọi năm. Lượng tồn hơn mọi năm. Chợ hoa đẹp và phong phú vì có nhiều tinh đưa hoa về. Năm nay mai vàng của Huế lên ngôi nhưng nói chung chợ hoa phong phú giúp người mua có quyền lựa chọn cao. Nhà giàu muốn hoa gì, đẹp và đắt bao nhiêu cũng có. Người nghèo cũng có thể mua chậu hoa giá khoảng mười lăm ngàn đồng.

Hồi trước, người Huế chỉ đón Tết trong gia đình nhưng mấy năm gần đây có bắn pháo hoa nên vào tối 30 Tết, người ta tụ tập trước Đại Nội đón giao thừa rất đông. Già có, trẻ có, đông đến dăm ba nghìn người.

Ở Huế, ngày 30, các chùa trang hoàng lộng lẫy, chuẩn bị để đón các Phật tử đi lễ vào sáng mồng 1. Người Huế có thói quen đi lễ Chùa vào sáng mồng 1 và vì sự kiêng kỵ nên người ta rất hiềm đến nhau vào ngày đầu năm nay. Tại các khách sạn dành cho Tây ở đầu đường Nguyễn Tri Phương, khách từ châu Âu và Mỹ đến đây rất đông từ giữa tháng Chạp. Chủ khách sạn Phong Nha nói: "Chúng tôi đã chuẩn bị nhiều thứ thực phẩm Tây và các loại mứt Huế để mời khách (miễn phí) trong đêm 30 và ngày 1 Tết.

Hôm qua (29 Tết), giáo xứ và nhà thờ Phú Cam tổ chức gặp mặt 200 cụ bà ông trên 75 tuổi và con cái của họ để tặng quà. Buổi chiều, họ gặp gỡ khoảng 160 cụ già neo đơn người tàn tật, người có hoàn cảnh khó khăn - không kể có là người theo đạo Thiên Chúa hay không - để tặng quà Tết và chúc mừng năm mới. Xóm Đạo cũng tổ chức Lễ thánh đêm giao thừa.

Hà Nội văn người

Vắng vẻ, quang đãng... đó là không khí của Hà Nội ngày cuối năm. Không còn những cảnh ồn ào thường thấy vào giờ cao điểm. 7h sáng, chúng tôi vòng qua Ngã Tư Sở, Ngã Tư Chùa Bộc - Tôn Thất Tùng, xe vẫn lướt êm trong không gian giá lạnh của Xuân Hà Nội ngày cuối năm.

Những hàng quán, hàng đào đang có rốn nốt ngày cuối cùng chờ đợi những người khách đến muộn. Hoàng, một chủ cửa hàng trên đường Tây Sơn tàn ngần: "Năm nay quất tinh về đẹp không thua quất Tây Hồ, Quảng Bá. Giá cũng rẻ". Anh còn vài cây quất, đang có nán lại đến cuối giờ chiều mới đóng cửa, về nhà.

Đọc những con phố mua bán sầm uất như Chùa Bộc, Nguyễn Lương Bằng, hay Hàng Bông..., không còn thấy cảnh xe máy xếp đầy trước cửa, người mua kẻ bán bận rộn đến không kịp gạt mồ hôi như 2-3 ngày trước. Nhiều dãy phố đóng cửa im ắng. Những cửa hàng còn mở thi thoảng mới đón được vài khách ghé thăm.

Đường Đê La Thành vốn dĩ là phố chuyên bán đồ ăn, đồ uống, ồn ào, tắc đường thường xuyên nhưng 12h trưa nay đã có nhiều hàng cơm đóng cửa. Muốn kiếm bát cơm cho chắc bụng, chỉ còn nước... chịu khó đi tìm.

Hà Nội thường ngày vốn ồn à, nay trở nên tĩnh lặng đến không ngờ. Giá đánh sạch một đôi giày của chú bé trước hàng cơm chúng tôi thường ngồi ngày thường chỉ 2.000 đồng, nay lên 5.000 đồng/ đôi.

Hà Tây: Những cây nêu đã dựng

Chợ quê ở Hà Tây vui và đậm đặc không khí Tết đất Bắc: quất, đào tràn ra tận cửa ngõ. Sáng 30 Tết, chợ làng nào cũng đông. Người ta tranh thủ bán nốt mớ cá cuối cùng của ao nhà, rổ rau cần hái ở ruộng nhà sau khi gieo nốt đám mạ và xem lại thửa ruộng vừa cày ải. Hơi buồn một chút vì gia cầm bán không chạy vì ảnh hưởng của dịch cúm.

Những chợ quê ven đường 23 (đường dẫn lên chùa Hương), hàng hoá tràn ra các ngả đường. Mùa xuân theo chân người dân nơi đây len lỏi vào tận những ngõ nghách sâu

nhất của các xóm làng. Trên những con đường làng, tấp nập chiếc xe đạp, xe máy đi lễ chùa và cúng gia tiên cuối năm. Rộn rã những lời mời đến thăm nhau trong ba ngày té... Dọc theo các con đường quốc lộ, nhà nhà cờ Tổ quốc tung bay tô điểm cho năm mới thêm xuân. Từ nhà ở tới từ đình chùa miếu mạo, nhà thờ, nghĩa trang... nơi nào cũng được vôi ve thay áo mới. Những trò chơi dân gian truyền thống đang được chuẩn bị ráo riết chờ khai cuộc... Ta bắt gặp cả cây nêu tưởng như chỉ còn lại trong tiềm thức người già hay trang sách họ trò một thủa...

- Bích Ngọc - Huyền Trang - Cao Hà - Trần Anh Dũng - Huy Nam - Hồng Ngọc - Trường Giang - Minh Thúy

Text 3: Tet Viet online: Night 30 – the last day of old year

Tet is a reminder of home for the Vietnamese who lived in Canada, Boston (USA) and Spain. There was a traditional Tet festival atmosphere, focusing on Hue and Ha Tay, Tet for poor people at Gia Lai, enjoyable Tet at Ha Noi and Ho Chi Minh city. Those were many things which we brought for the readers through this afternoon and evening. We would like to welcome the readers to join and update Tet festival atmosphere with VietNamNet.

Tet of Vietnamese people at Canada: Vietnamese market was enjoyable

While the people in every regions of the country were exciting to wait for the countdown time. At Pacific coasts, Vietnamese community in Canada began to feel about Tet atmosphere.

According to an unequal time (12 hours difference), the countdown time to the New Year's night at Vietnam would be the morning of the 30th day of Canada time zone. While some Vietnamese people worked continuously, some Vietnamese, especially elders, prepared for the countdown time to the New Year's night. It was similar to elders in Vietnam. Vietnamese people in Canada welcomed Tet by *banh chung* (square glutinous rice cake), *banh tet* (cylindrical glutinous rice cake), all kinds of sugar presereved fruit and candies. There was everything of Tet products. All those products were imported from China, Vietnam and Thailand.

But Vietnamese families in Canada, many yellow apricot trees and peach blossom trees which had strong color of spring were replaced by many artificial apricot trees which were made of plastic materials. On an altar prepared for an ancestor cult, each familiy arranged *banh chung* (square glutinous rice cake), *banh tet* (cylindrical glutinous rice cake), alcohol, fruit, *banh mut* (sugar presereved fruit), candy and red water-melon seeds.

In Toronto, a big city of the east of Canada, there were about 50,000 Vietnamese people lived here, the atmosphere was extremely bustling. The temperature was three Celsius now. In all Chinatown streets, the east and the west side of the city or the

Hongkong, Mississauga markets in the Greater Toronto Area, many kinds of serviced products of Tet nguyen dan (traditional Vietnamese New Year) were arranged for selling.

At Ben Thanh, Dai Giang and Tan Hung department stores, many plastic apricot trees were showed in the middle, following with a long tape which was written “Happy the At Dau (the chicken year in the lunar calendar) New Year” written in three languages: English, Vietnamese and Chinese. *Banh chung* (square glutinous rice cake), *banh tet* (cylindrical glutinous rice cake), red water-melon seeds, water-melon, lucky envelope, tea and coffee were arranged in abundance in the department store, following by an attractive sale way. For example, the customers bought some goods with price more than 50 Canada’s dollars (CAD), they would get a bottle of fish sauce; they bought over 200 Canada’s dollars (CAD), they would get a gift including *banh mut* (sugar presereved fruit), candy and a lucky coupon.

The countdown time to the New Year night were similar to one in Vietnam. Vietnamese people in Toronto were used to going to worship at pagodas. The atmosphere of all temples such as Phap Van, Tu An and Linh Son were very bustling and these were the places where Vietnamese people came to ask for the luck, possibility to meet friends and brothers.

From the 5th, February, Vietnamese community in Toronto had a meeting time for New Year greeting. It took for a long time starting from 10am. to 8pm at the center of Hershey, Mississauga. This was an occasion for the oversea Vietnamese in Toronto to remember the homwtown. Canadian people enjoyed many images, sounds and tastes of Vietnam. Every year, the meeting time like this attracted 10,000-12,000 people. After the meeting time, there was a music show and dancing program starting from 9pm. to 2am. of the next morning with the join of all singers and famous oversea jokers.

At Winnipeg, a city was in the steppe area of the central region of Canada, this place had only about 5,000 Vietnamese people. And at the capital Ottawa, there were about 10,000 Vietnamese people; the atmosphere of welcoming Tet festival was calmer. Tet here was only in the family and there was not as big as one in the Vietnamese

community at Toronto. Vietnamese people at these two cities went to the temple in the countdown time to the New Year night, and visited brothers and friends in the morning of the 1st day of the Tet festival.

The letter of the end of the year from Boston

The contributor of VietNamNet, Ms. Cao Ha, a student learning abroad, sent letter from Boston, USA to inform that everybody extremely missed the country and hometown when Tet was arriving. Because the Tet in this year did not correspond to any holiday in USA, so many youngers still worried about going to study and work. Many people liked Ms. Ha did not have time to enjoy our Tet festival.

“I just received a letter from my mother. I really very missed my parents, brother and many familiar people at Vietnam much more. I lived far from home since I was 18 years old. I felt that I grew up very much. And I always wished that I and Vietnamese youth who were studying and working around the world would contribute to good moving forward to our hometown, to make a new social attitudes and values. This was my real wish and I thought that was the duty to the social of the youth and the younger generation with the destiny and the prosperity of the country. Wishing to be successful was also one way, but I believed that I did not the only person who had those hope. Many Vietnamese youths in the country were similar to those who lived outside country. They kept those hope, the hope for working for country. Because of this reason, we were harmonious; we would have more strong power.”

Ms. Cao Ha reminded about an article written by Dr. Vu Minh Khuong who just published his article in VietNamNet with all best regard. She said that we were very interested in the part of “The new chance of thinking: urgent contents.” According to her opinion, many keys of development from this content began from the chance of thinking to many real values of life, human culture, humanities hope and learning mind. She did not talk to the student in country for a long time. She did not know all friends thinking like this. If you could arrange a discussion with all students, friends at all universities and high schools about the article like the topic as mentioned above, she thanked to you and VietNamNet very much.

Vietnamese people at Spain: Stopped working to welcome Tet

Sympatized with a few Vietnamese people at Spain, during these few days the weather at Madrid was similar to one in Vietnam. It was gloomy and drizzly. Vietnamese community in Spain was very small about 500 people. They lived scattered in every area. The capital Madrid had only 7-10 families.

Many days of the end of the monkey year of the lunar calendar and the beginning of the chicken year of the lunar calendar were the chance for everybody to stop working temporary, to tidy up the house, to shop and and prepare to welcome the New Year of the Asian custom. Brothers prepared Tet according to the hometown custom, wrapped *banh chung* (square glutinous rice cake), bought sugar preserved fruit and tried to find a cock for worshipping the ancestors in the 30th night. They waited until the countdown minute to telephone for greeting New Year to each other, brothers at home and in other countries.

In this occasion, the Chinese community in Spain was rather crowded (about 70,000 people). They also were excited to prepare for Tet festival; all Chinese shops sold many things of Tet festival which made Vietnamese people's expectation for Tet festival much greater. Because Vietnamese community was too small, it was not enough for establishing a union. They had to borrow the Chinese New Year atmosphere to create the Tet festival atmosphere.

It nearly reached the countdown time to the New Year minute. Everybody would gather tuned to VTV4 chanel together to welcome Tet with homeland. Everyone was happy with the life which much more developed day by day at hometown, and wished for the New Year with the new progression and prosperous more than the old year. Whoever wished for having a chance to go back to celebrate the Tet festival at hometown and really lived together with happiness in the beginning day of the year.

Tet at Tokyo: Reading VietNamNet just felt Tet

It had been already five years that I did not celebrate Tet at hometown. When each Tet arrived, I thought of the memory of Tet days in the old years.

Japanese did not celebrate the New Year following the lunar calendar for a long time ago. The New Year of the sun calendar became the greeting day of Japanese people, including the rituals and traditional customs. After that, everything turned to normal. The pressure life, effervescent industry social, living far from home in western New Year days for me was more cold and cheerless. Everybody returned to meet family. As for me, I was alone. Here, the people were still going to work and study. Many trains were still crowded with passengers. Many streets in the center were still lighting through night. I was attracted to those busy lives. If there were anyone warned about Tet festival to me, and I did not open VietNamNet to watch spring atmosphere which were found everywhere in newspaper. I would forget or felt indifferent: “Eh... at home, it was Tet festival now”

The countdown time in Vietnam was blessing. It was a pleasing feeling and warm among familiar people and friends. As for in Tokyo, for me, I was very busy May be it was better to be busy, because there were works to do for forgetting the feeling of missed Tet, home and many foods which mother cooked. I was not sad anymore when I was far from home in Tet days for a long time. But I only regreted that I did not enjoy the atmosphere of beloved and warm when each spring returned.

The countdown time to the New Year, wishing for the happiness, was always dazzling bright everywhere in Vietnam homeland.

Hue: the readymade things were not interesting for all meticulous housewives

Although this year all traditional food products of Hue such as sugar preserved ginger, pickle and soaked meat arranged for selling at the market since the beginning of the twelfth lunar month to the afternoon of the 30th day of Tet, many things were still laying quietly on the stall. Many meticulous Hue housewives usually cooked many things for worshipping in the Tet day by themself. Because Hue people highly thought of life and mind.

At Hue in this year, food, cake and candy did not sell much more. The Dong Ba market was better market, but all small markets such as An Cuu, Ben Ngu and Ty Loc did not have customers. The price at Hue did not increase too much. Purchasing capacity did not increase. Pork was sold 45,000 dong per kilo, beef was sold at 80,000 dong per kilo. There was chicken for selling but it was not sold more than every year. Goods remained more than every year. The flower market was beautiful and abundant because there were many provinces which brought the flowers to sell here. This year yellow apricot blossoms of Hue were the most popular. But in general, the flower markets were abundant and helped the customer had highly choosing. The rich family wanted whatever flowers, how many beautiful and expensive flowers; flower markets could serve their needs. The poor people could buy flowerpots at price of 15,000 dong.

In the past, Hue people only welcome Tet in family but a few years ago there was fireworks performance. So on the 30th day of Tet, the people gathered in front of Dai Noi palace to welcome the countdown time to the New Year. There were both old people and children. It was crowded of thousands people.

At Hue in the 30th day, all temples were decorated magnificently. They prepared to welcome all Buddhists who went to worship on the morning of the 1st Tet day. Hue people were familiar with going worshipping at a temple in the morning of the 1st Tet day. Because of the taboo, there were a few people who came to the house of each other at the beginning of the year. At all hotels for the foreigners at the beginning of Nguyen Tri Phuong street, the tourists from Europe and USA came here. It was very crowded since the middle of the twelfth lunar month. A hotel owner at Phong Nha said that “We have already prepared many western foods and all kinds of Hue sugar preserved fruit to welcome the customers (free of charge) on the 30th day night and the 1st Tet day.”

Yesterday (the 29th Tet day), ministers and the Phu Cam church arranged a meeting of 200 old people who were over 75 years old and their offsprings to give gifts to them. In the afternoon, there were a meeting of 160 old people who were lonely, the crippled, and the trouble people. It was arranged for all whether they were the Christians or not. This meeting was for giving Tet's gift and greeting New Year for

them. Christian village also arranged the Le Thanh (Saint-ceremony) in the countdown time to the New Year night.

Ha Noi was clear

Empty and clear roads were the atmosphere of Ha Noi in the end of the year's days. There was not the traffic-jam which saw in the rush hours. At 7am, we turned to the Nga Tu So, Nga Tu Chua Boc-Ton That Tung junction. Vehicles still scampered smoothly in the cold atmosphere of Ha Noi in the end of the year.

Many tangerine shops and peach blossoms shops were trying to wait for the customers who came later. Mr. Hoang, a shop's owner on the Tay Son street, was stunned and, said that "This year tangerines from other provinces were beautiful as tangerines from Tay Ho and Quang Ba. Price was also cheap." He still remained a few tangerine trees. He was trying to wait until late hours of the afternoon and then he would close shop and go back home.

Along the crowded and bustling of trading streets such as Chua Boc, Nguyen Luong Bang or Hang Bong one did not see a picture of motorcycles parking in front of the shop. Two-three days before, the trading on those streets were very busy. But now, many shops in many streets were closed. Many shops were still opened. Sometimes they just opened to welcome a few customers.

De La Thanh road was used to be a food selling street. It was crowded, loudly and always got traffic-jam since this noon. There were many food shops closed. We (reporters) were hungry and would like to have some rice but there was only water (there were no food shops opened in these days), so we had to try to find some food shop continuously.

Ha Noi was always used to be loudly, but now it became a unexpectedly calm city. The price of shoes cleaning in front of food shops running by a boy who always sit there. Normally it was only 2,000 dong but today it was up to 5,000 dong.

Ha Tay: Many Tet poles were set up.

The countrifield market at Ha Tay was enjoyable and concentrated with Tet atmosphere of the northern land: tangerines and peach blossoms were abundant everywhere. On the mornig of the 30th Tet day, all village markets were crowded. The people took advantage of selling the last fish's batch which was caught from a pond in their house, selling the water dropwort's basket which was picked from the family's ricefield after sowing, planting and watching the plot of ricefield which was just ploughed. It sad because domestics fowls did not good sell because the effects of flu epidemic.

Many countrifield markets along the 23 road (the road leadinf to the Huong temple), the goods was abundant all roads. The spring atmosphere seemed to follow people steps from here and penetrated into the deepest corners of all villages. On many village roads, it was crowded with bicycles and motorcycles which went to worship the temple and worship the ancestors in the end of the year. There was a boisterous brouhaha of welcome to vistit each other on the three Tet days. Along all national highways, every houses were decorated by national flags which fluttered into the air and they seemed to increase the enjoyable atmosphere of Tet festival . From house to the communal house, temples, shrines, church and graveyard were changed to new. Many traditional folk games were prepared hardly to wait for the opening ceremony. We surprised when saw Tet pole which we thought that there were it only in the old people thinking or in the old textbooks.

- Bích Ngọc - Huyền Trang - Cao Hà - Trần Anh Dũng - Huy Nam - Hồng Ngọc - Trường Giang - Minh Thuy

Text 4: Ăn té tết ở Trường Sa

Trường Sa, một huyện đảo không có chợ, không tiêu tiền, không có bóng dáng phụ nữ... Vì thế, té tết ở đây cũng mang nét đặc trưng không nơi nào có: Bằng tâm tình và đôi bàn tay, những người lính mang mùa xuân về.

Cuối tháng 12 dương lịch, thời tiết trên quần đảo Trường Sa bắt đầu có chút thay đổi. Trời vẫn lồng lộng và nắng vẫn chang chang như thế, nhưng chập tối đã thấy se se lạnh, phảng phát ngọn gió bắc đầu mùa. Hình như cái tiết khí ấy ngấm vào lòng biển cả, để những ngọn sóng giao hòa với gió từ đất liền, hân hoan dâng trào. Vậy là mùa xuân đã cận kề.

Cũng bánh chưng xanh, thịt mỡ, dưa hành

Đã 30 năm sau ngày giải phóng, lớp lớp cán bộ chiến sĩ đã đến đây, đổ mồ hôi (và cả máu) để xây dựng, bảo vệ đảo. Hắn nhiên cái té tết này xôm tụ nhất. Không còn cảnh một người 4 lít nước/ngày. Vài năm trở lại đây, các đảo đều có hệ thống bể dự trữ, đủ nước dùng cả năm. Đặt chân đảo Đá Tây - hòn đảo toàn đá - khách được chứng kiến ngay hai điều ngạc nhiên: Ở cầu tàu là hai hàng chậu thau nước trong veo với khăn mặt trắng tinh (dành cho khách rửa tay); và phía trong kia là vùng đất xanh tươi với những cây dừa, bàng vuông và “cây bàng lá đỏ”, rộn ràng bởi hàng chục cánh chim bồ câu chao lượn.

Đã qua lâu rồi cái thời canh mây (loáng thoảng vài cọng rau muống, xắt khúc nấu canh, khoáng không chạm đũa). Nay giờ, bình quân đầu người trên dưới 150 kg rau mỗi năm. Ngoài rau muống “chủ lực”, các đảo đều được bổ sung và nhân giống nhiều loại rau khác, trong đó nhiều nhất là rau sam. Không thể ngờ cái thứ rau dại ở đất liền lại phát triển được ở đảo và trở thành đặc dụng. Bình nhất Nguyễn Văn Đôn, đảo Trường Sa Đông giới thiệu hệt như một thày thuốc đồng y “Rau sam tính ôn, có vị chua, ăn vào mát ruột, nhuận tràng”.

Cũng đã qua lâu rồi cái thời thực phẩm tươi sống là mối lo của đảo mỗi khi té tết đến. Chục năm trở lại đây, chỉ tiêu chăn nuôi tự túc luôn vượt kế hoạch. Ngoài thịt heo đảm bảo đủ thịt cho nhân bánh chưng, còn có thêm... chó, gà. Thịt chó trên quần đảo thuộc

loại ngon nhất... nước. Từng bầy chó ăn no, giỡn nhau; nóng thì vảy cát, hoặc “tự động” nhảy tùng xuống biển tắm. Bảo sao không chắc thịt, da dẻ... thơm tho.

Ngày té, nhà phân đội rực rỡ sắc màu bởi các chùm hoa làm bằng ốc biển; hoa đào, hoa mai làm bằng giấy. Hoa trên đảo, đẹp nhất có lẽ là bàng vuông. Bàng vuông sống khỏe không thua gì cây phong ba. Hoa giống hoa điệp, cánh trắng, dày cứng, nhị tua dài tím ngát, tuyệt đẹp. Cũng giống như ở đất liền, nồi bánh chưng là linh hồn ngày té. Năm nào cũng vậy, các đảo đều tổ chức thi gói bánh, trang hoàng doanh trại. Trung sĩ Lê Hoàng Duy, quê Thanh Hóa, tiểu đội đạt giải gói bánh chưng đẹp nhất đảo Sơn Ca, đùa: ngón nghè này là “vốn quý” để chinh phục mẹ vợ tương lai.

Thư quê chung đọc, ngọt bùi chung chia

Thời gian chuẩn bị cho đón té cũng là lúc xong việc tổng kết các phong trào thi đua luyện tập sẵn sàng chiến đấu, xây dựng đảo xanh, sạch, đẹp... Tất cả các chỉ tiêu đều đạt và vượt mức, như một dấu cộng vui cho ngày xuân. Bây giờ chỉ còn một điều, đó là trông chờ thư nhà. Nước, rau, là thứ quý hiếm, nay đã đủ dùng; chỉ có thư là... bao nhiêu cũng ít, cũng thiêu. Để có những cánh thư xuân, người thân của lính đảo phải viết từ tháng 11 dương lịch. Những lá thư đến đây, trở thành tài sản tinh thần chung của lính đảo.

Thư đến đảo bao giờ cũng tạo ra những hoạt cảnh vui tươi. Cán bộ đọc thư một mình, cánh lính trẻ chụm nhau. Một phút cho riêng tư, rồi tất cả như vỡ oà, cánh thư được chuyền tay nhau như vật quý. Đại úy Đinh Văn Phan, quê Quảng Ninh, đọc thư vợ xong trao thư cho đồng đội kèm theo câu bình: Thằng cu hơi bị hay; tiếp tục đạt học sinh xuất sắc.

Có lẽ không có nơi nào, nỗi nhớ nhà lại trọn vẹn như ở đảo. Phải nói chắc một điều rằng nỗi nhớ đất liền, nhớ nhà, yêu thương những người thân của lính đảo là không bờ bến. Huyện đảo Trường Sa, nơi không có chợ, không phố xá, không có bóng dáng phụ nữ, không có karaoke, không tiêu tiền... Nơi mà tình cảm con người trong sáng nhất; không thể tư túi, không thể làm và lo cho riêng mình. Nơi mà thư quê chung đọc, ngọt bùi chung chia; nơi mà những hòn đảo vẫn vững vàng giữa biển cả, nhưng nỗi nhớ thì nghiêng về một bên - phía đất liền...

Những chuyến tàu con thoi

Sẽ là không đầy đủ khi kể về tết ở Trường Sa mà không nói đến những con tàu vượt biển, mang tình cảm, hơi ấm của mùa xuân từ đất liền ra với các cán bộ chiến sĩ biển đảo. Bắt đầu từ giữa tháng 12, là thời gian chuẩn bị cho chuyến hải hành kéo dài gần một tháng. Con tàu vào dịp này nặng trĩu bởi mang trên mình đủ thứ hàng hóa, chắt chiu từ đất liền: thư nhà, bánh mứt kẹo, lá dong, dưa hành, gạo nếp, sách, báo, lịch... và cả giềng, sả, lá mơ lông (để làm gia vị cho món mộc tòn). Thông thường, đây là cuộc hành quân đầy gian khổ, tàu đi trong sóng to gió lớn. Có năm, ngay cả đến thuyền lão luyện và thuyền trưởng dày dạn kinh nghiệm cũng bị say sóng.

Thiếu tá Hà Văn Khuynh, thuyền trưởng tàu HQ 936 - một trong những con tàu từng hàng chục lần chở hàng tết ra đảo, nhớ lại: Năm 2002, tàu thả neo ở đảo Sinh Tồn Đông giữa lúc sóng lớn. Đại úy, máy 1, Nguyễn Quang Văn Tâm cùng các chiến sĩ, vòng ra, vòng vào gần nửa ngày nhưng vẫn không thể đưa được xuồng cập đảo. Cuối cùng, anh em đành phải quăng dây, bọc hàng vào nilon, thả xuống biển, để bộ đội trên đảo kéo vào. Con tàu phải tiếp tục cuộc hải trình đến những đảo khác, nên đành "bám bụng" kéo còi chào tạm biệt. Nhìn đồng đội - những chấm nhỏ khi ẩn, khi hiện - ngụp lặn trong sóng biển, giữa mênh mang trời nước để kéo những kiện hàng vào bờ, ai nấy đều rung rung nước mắt.

Năm nào cũng vài lần ra đảo, trong đó là những chuyến đi chở hàng tết. Vậy mà tình cảm của họ vẫn nguyên vẹn như những ngày đầu: Lính đảo dõi theo tàu nhớ đất liền đau đớn, thủy thủ trên tàu nhìn đảo xa dần mà lòng rung rung. Không cảm động sao được khi trên những hòn đảo xanh tươi kia là cột mốc chủ quyền - một cây nêu ngày tết - với lá cờ Tổ quốc vươn cao, tươi tắn, kiêu hãnh và trường tồn.

- An Bình Minh (*NLD*)

Text 4: Tet festival celebrating at Truong Sa – Spratley archipelago

Truong Sa (Spratley archipelago), an island district, did not have markets, shopping, or women. For these reasons, Truong Sa had special characteristics unlike elsewhere. Island soldiers brought a spring atmosphere back to the island with an inmost feeling and two hands.

At the end of the twelfth (or 12th) month of the lunar calendar, the weather in Truong Sa began to change a little. The sky was clear and the sunlight was bright but it was a little cold in the evening. And there was the north-easterly wind of the beginning of spring. It seemed to be that, this weather blended with the sea mixing the waves and the wind from the mainland, and created a very good feeling. It was nearly spring time.

There was *banh chung* (square glutinous rice cake), fatty meat and pickle

It was 30 years after Vietnamese soldiers gained a victory here. They spilled sweat and blood to build and protect these islands. This Tet festival is surely the most enjoyable. There was no need for people to limit water use to only four liters per day anymore. Two or three years ago, many islands had a stored water system. There was enough water throughout the year. At Da Tay Island, visitors saw two strange things. Along the pier, there were two rows of basins with clear water and white handkerchiefs for visitors to wash their hands. The island was the green with coconut trees, Malabar almond trees were covered with the red leaves. Flocks of pigeons flew up and down.

The time of rattan soup and swamp morning glory soup has long passed. Now each person eats about 150 kilograms of vegetables on average each year. Besides swamp morning glory which was the main vegetable, all islands have received other kinds of vegetables and cultivated more. Most of vegetables were the *sam* vegetables. It were not known that vegetables from mainland could grow on the island, and it were useful. Nguyen Van Don, non-commissioned military officer, Truong Sa Dong Island suggested that “*Sam* vegetables has medicinal qualities. They have sour taste, as cooling and a very good laxative.”

A long time ago, fresh food on the island was not severed during Tet festival. Tens years ago, the animal feeding project became successful. Besides pork for *banh chung* (square glutinous rice cake) stuffing, there was dog meat and chicken. Dog meat on the island was the most delicious in the country. Dogs here had enough food and always played together. When it was hot, dogs dug into the sand or jumped into the sea. That is why their meat is tender, red and sweet-smelling.

On Tet festival days, the military camp is splendidly colorful with artificial bunches of flowers which made from sea shells. Peach blossoms and apricot blossoms were made from paper. The most beautiful flowers on island might be the Malabar almond trees. Malabar almond trees are as strong as pine trees. Butterfly flowers are white with thick petals, long and purple stems, it is very beautiful. Like on the mainland, the *banh chung* (square glutinous rice cake) pot represents the spirit of Tet festival. Every year is the same, all islands arrange *banh chung* (square glutinous rice cake) wrapping contest, and military camp decorations. Sergeant Le Hoang Duy from Thanh Hoa province who won an award reward for the most beautiful *banh chung* (square glutinous rice cake) wrapping on Son Ca Island joked that his effort was aimed at winning the heart of the mother of his future wife.

Letters from home were reading together, happiness was shared together

Preparing time for the Tet festival welcome was also the time for completing all the fighting training programs, greening, cleaning and beautifying the island. Everything was successful beyond expectations. It was a good sign for the Tet festival. Now remained one thing, that was, waiting for the letter from home. Water and vegetables were highly valued things and there was enough. Only letters were insufficient. To get Tet festival letters sent to the soldiers on the island, the soldiers' families had to write by November. Many letters arrived and became shared property in the minds of the soldiers on the island.

When letters arrived on the island, it was an enjoyable event. The military officers read their letters alone, young soldiers read their letters together. They could read their letters in private for only one minute, and then all letters were exchanged and read together like something really valuable. Captain Dinh Van Phan from Quang Ninh

province, read the letter from his wife first, and then sent it to his friends. He said that his lovely son had received a consistently excellent student distinction.

Maybe, there is no place for homesickness quite like on the island. Certainly there is no end to think of the mainland, home and loved ones for island soldiers. Truong Sa district does not have a market, town, women, karaoke and shopping. Here, a person's mind was pure, they can not cheat and think selfishly. Here, the letters from home are read together. The islands exist in the great sea. Their homesickness is for the mainland.

Ship trips

You can not talk about Troung Sa district without telling the story of the ships that bring the warm feeling of spring from the mainland to island soldiers. Beginning from the middle of the twelfth month, is the preparation time for the long sea trips which took about one month. On this occasion, the ships carried a heavy burden because they had to carry all goods from mainland such as letters, sweets, phrynum leaves, pickles, sticky rice, books, newspaper, calendars, galingales, lemongrass, *mo long* leaves (it was the ingredient for dog meat dishes.). Normally, this was a very difficult trip, because there were storms at sea. In some years, although the sailors were skilled and the captain had experience, they still got seasick.

Major Ha Van Khuynh, was captain of HQ 936 ship, a ship used to carry goods many times. In 2002, this ship anchored at Sinh Ton Island during a storm. Nguyen Quang Van Tam, captain of the ship number 1 and soldiers tried for haft a day but they still could not moor the ship to the island pier. Finally, they had to cover the goods with nylon and drop them into the sea, for soldiers on the island to pull ashore. The ships had to go to other islands so they blew the ship's whistle to say "Good bye". The soldiers on the island saw their friends on the ship as a small spot on the sea beneath an open sky. When they pulled goods ashore, their eyes were full of tears.

Every year, many ships went to the islands. On these trips, there were many ships which carried goods for Tet festival. Nevertheless, their feelings were the same as in earlier days. The island soldiers saw the ships and missed the mainland. The sailors on

the ships saw the island far away and tears welled up in their eyes. They were overwhelmed because the green islands carried the pillar of national unity which also was the pillar of the Tet day. That is, the strong, radiant, and majestic national flag which will exist forever.

Text 5: Tết về làng "siêu khó khăn" ở Gia Lai

Được Rơ Châm Húi thông báo là Tết này cả ba đứa con ông đều được nhận quà thì ông ngó ra, phải hỏi lại cho rõ. Hiểu rồi, ông nói: "Tôi mừng. Quà chỉ một phần thôi. Mừng vì những đứa tật nguyền ở tận xó rùng mà cũng không ai quên chúng...".

Có thể nói chưa tết nào đồng bào Gia Lai lại nhận được sự giúp đỡ, sẻ chia nhiệt tình như Tết Ất dậu. Điều này chúng tôi đã mục kích tại xã Ia M'nông - một địa phương được liệt vào hạng khó khăn điển hình của tỉnh... Trong chiến tranh chống Mỹ, Ia M'nông là căn cứ Cách mạng. Người dân ở đây đã phải hứng chịu sự chà xát khốc liệt của bom đạn Mỹ. Tháng 10 năm 2003 Ia M'nông được Nhà nước tuyên dương danh hiệu Anh hùng LLVT nhân dân...

Năm nay nắng hạn, Ia M'nông bị mất mùa. Đặc biệt là ba làng Doch I, Doch II và Dip gần như mất trắng. Tết còn xa nhưng cái đói đã ập vào mỗi bếp. Anh Chánh - Chánh văn phòng UBND xã cho biết: riêng ba làng đã phải tổ chức cứu đói đợt II. Do đó lo Tết cho bà con là nhiệm vụ hàng đầu của xã đã suốt cả hơn tháng nay rồi...

Hiểu được ý nghĩa của những hoạt động này, anh Chánh đã giao nhiệm vụ cho Rơ Châm Húi - trưởng ban LĐ - TB của xã là phải tìm cách thông báo đến các đối tượng được tặng quà Tết để họ phấn khởi. Theo Rơ Châm Húi, chúng tôi đã đến thăm một số gia đình có con em roi vào hoàn cảnh bất hạnh ở các làng thuộc xã Ia M'nông.

Có người đã đưa rằng phải liệt làng Dip vào hàng "siêu đặc biệt khó khăn" thì mới đúng. Không một tấc ruộng nước, sông dựa hoàn toàn vào cây lúa rẫy, không kể năm mất mùa như năm nay, thường làng cũng chỉ làm đũ ăn chừng ba - bốn tháng. Thời gian còn lại phải dựa vào sự cứu đói của Nhà nước.

Trong cái làng "siêu đặc biệt khó khăn" này có lẽ gia đình ông Rơ Châm Noi phải hạ xuồng một cấp nữa... Noi đi bộ đội, ông bị nhiễm chất độc da cam nên sức rất yếu. Có 5 đứa con thì hai đứa cũng bị nhiễm chất độc da cam là con Ra và thằng Veng. Ra năm nay 14 tuổi, Veng 12 tuổi nhưng chúng chỉ "biết nói lung tung". Chân tay thì lành lặn đầy nhưng "bị mất thần kinh" nên chỉ biết ăn.

Nhà 5 người (hai đứa đầu đã bắt vợ, ở riêng) mọi gánh nặng xem như là dồn lên vai vợ ông. Cái đích của vợ chồng ông là năm nay có gắng sắm cho mỗi đứa một bộ quần áo mới mà nghe cũng khó... Được Rơ Châm Húi thông báo là khỏi lo, Tết này cả ba đứa con ông đều được nhận quà thì ông ngó ra, phải hỏi lại cho rõ. Hiểu rồi ông nói: "tôi mừng. Quà chỉ một phần thôi. Mừng vì những đứa tật nguyền ở tận xó rùng mà cũng không ai quên chúng...".

Khi chúng tôi trở về làng Kep II thì đã trưa, dù vậy riêng nhà Rơ Châm Vơ vẫn đóng im im. Một cậu bé đang ngồi trước hiên nhà. Thấy người lạ, cậu bật dậy vung chân vung tay về giận dữ. Húi bấm khẽ vào tay tôi "nó đấy". "Nó" là Rơ Châm Vư - một trong ba con của Rơ Châm Vơ bị nhiễm chất độc da cam.

Húi cho biết là cậu bị thần kinh như vậy từ bé. Thêm nữa chân lại bị thot, chỉ đi lại được trong nhà. Quà tặng là chiếc xe lăn của trong dịp Tết này sẽ vô cùng ý nghĩa với gia đình cậu... Không có ai để thông báo, Húi đành về. Ra đến ngõ, quay lại tôi vẫn thấy cậu bé đứng vung chân vung tay lia lịa trên hiên nhà, cứ như một diễn viên kịch câm...

Trong 9 làng thuộc xã Ia M'nông, làng Kép II được coi là khá bõi có ruộng nước, đất đai tốt. Thế nhưng vẫn có 23 hộ thuộc diện đói nghèo. Những hộ này do không biết cách làm ăn nhưng chủ yếu là vẫn nặng thói quen được chǎng hay chó cố hưu. Nhà Rơ Châm Bêh có thể coi là điển hình của sự có hưu đó...

Giữa khu đất rộng mênh mông là một cái lều lợp ngói. Thoạt đầu tôi cứ nghĩ là nơi ở tạm để đi làm nương, nhưng đến khi bước vào rồi mới thấy còn thua cả vậy. Một cái sập đơn bằng nứa kéo dài đến hết lều. Trên cái sập đó là bếp, là chỗ ăn ngủ... và nói chung là tất cả... "Không kể đất rẫy, nhà có hai sào ruộng nước.

Như người ta thì đủ ăn, nhưng đây 2 tháng đã hết ăn rồi - Húi kể giọng bực bội. Chồng thì nhác, cứ đi câu cá chơi miết miết. Có ba đứa con, đứa đầu học đến mẫu giáo thì bỏ. Thằng Pul đang học lớp 1, không biết rồi nó có cho đi học tiếp không... Có 6 đứa con thì một đứa bị điên, 5 đứa còn lại chǎng đứa nào chịu đi học cả. Không cần chữ cũng sống được mà (!).

Thấy cán bộ xã lại đến cứu đói, tặng quà, Rơ Châm Bêh nhìn xuống đất vẻ ngượng ngùng. Húi quay sang nói với ông Hanh - ông chú của Rơ Châm Bêh bằng tiếng Jrai , giọng dịu đi”gặp đây tôi thông báo luôn là các con ông đều được tặng quà đấy. Cho chúng nó ra nhận để chúng nó phấn khởi, như thế biết đâu chúng nó sẽ đòi ông cho đi học đấy”...

... Xέ trưa, cái mùi nǎng hanh heo đã dậy lên. Không thể theo Rơ Châm Húi nỗi nữa, chúng tôi dành ra về. Tạm biệt chúng tôi bằng một nụ cười rất tươi, Húi lại tiếp tục đi đến các làng. Không gì ngăn được con ngựa sắt của Húi lúc này. Anh đang vui lây niềm vui của mọi gia đình về một cái tết đầy ắp tình người mà chưa bao giờ buôn làng anh có được...

- Ngọc Tân

Text 5: Tet came back to the super - poor village at Gia Lai

He received the letter from Ro Cham Hui which informed him that his three children would receive gifts during the Tet festival this year. He was very surprised and had to ask again to be sure. When he understood fully, he said "I am glad". Receiving gifts was only one reason. But he was glad because his disabled children, living in the jungle, had not been forgotten.

It could be said that there was no Tet festival in any year in which Gia Lai people received such welcomed help as in "*Tết Ất dâu* (Tet in year of chicken)". We realized this in la M'nong district. This district was categorized as the prominent "super - poor village" in the province. During the Vietnam War, la M'nong was the revolution base. The la M'nong suffered from America's bombings. In the 10th month, 2003, la M'nông was praised by the government as "The hero of people fighting army".

This year there was drought. La M'nông could not harvest. In particular, three villages: Doch I, Doch II and Dip were almost lost. Tet festival had not yet arrived. But every family was hungry (trouble). Mr. Chanh, administration head of People Committee remarked that these three villages, in particular had to organize a hunger-reduction fair twice. So for the people here the Tet festival preparation was the important work about one month earlier.

When they understood the importance of these activities, Mr. Chanh assigned Mr. Ro Cham Hui, disabled soldiers labor unit head of the district to promote gifts for the target groups, that they will receive gifts. This project will make them happy. We followed Ro Cham Hui to visit one family in la M'nong district in which the children got into trouble a lot.

Someone joked that it had to rank Dip village as the "super troubled village". There were no rice fields for rice. In particular, this year there was no harvest. Normally, this village could survive for only three or four months, and the other months they relied on government help.

In these "super troubled villages", Ro Cham Noi's family might be more worse off than super troubled. Mr. Noi was a soldier and was affected by toxic Agent Orange the

bombs which the US. army dropped during the Vietnam War) so his health was very poor. He had five children, two children; Ra and Veng were also affected. This year, Ra was 14 years old and Veng was 12 years old but they only knew to speak in a muddled way. Their arms and legs were normal but they had a nervous disorder. So only knew how to eat.

Of five children, the two elder children were married and lived separately, so the husband and wife were very busy. The dream of this couple was to try to buy new clothes for each child for Tet festival occasion. But it was difficult for them. They received word from Ro Cham Hui that they did not have to worry anymore. Because of their three children would receive gifts. It surprised Mr. Noi he had to check he understood clearly. When he was sure, he said "I am glad". Receiving gifts was only one reason. He was glad because his disabled children, living in the jungle, had not been forgotten.

It was noon, when we returned to Kep II village. However Ro Cham Vo house was quiet. One child was sitting in front of the house. When he saw strangers, he stood up immediately, raised his legs and arms angrily. Mr.Hui pinched my arm and said "That was him". That child was Ro Cham Vu, one of Ro Cham Vo's three children and he was affected by Agent Orange.

Hui informed him that he had had a nervous disorder since he was child. In addition, his legs were disabled and he could only get around the house. The wheel chair was a gift for him for the Tet festival this year. It was valuable for his family. Nobody lived in the house to tell about this good news so Mr.Hui had to go back. When we left, I could still see that child standing on a verandah, swinging his arms non-stop like a pantomime actors.

Of the nine villages in la M'nong district, Kep II village was better off because it had rice fields and good soil. However, there were 23 families which were ranked as poor status. These families did not have a means of work. They lived casually (did not have any work skills) like in the past. The Ro Cham Beh family was a good example of a family living in the traditional way.

There was a hut in a big field. At first, I thought it was a temporary house for people who worked in the field. But when I stepped inside the house, I saw that it was worse. There was a bamboo mat spread out on the floor of the hut. There was a stove on a bamboo mat. This bamboo mat was a place for eating and sleeping. Besides the hut, there was a garden and rice field.

Like other people, this family usually had enough food. But for two months now they had not had food. Mr.Hui said fretfully that the husband was lazy, only fishing for fun. They had three children. The eldest child only finished kindergarten. Another child, Pul, studied to first year of primary school. Mr.Hui did not know whether Pul's further studies or not. There were three children, one child was mad and other children did not go to study. Did not need go to study, we also survived!

When Ro Cham Beh saw the district authorities who came to give the gifts, he looked at the floor ashamed. Mr.Hui sat beside Mr.Hanh, Ro Cham Beh's young brother, and talked to him in Jrai language. Mr.Hui said more softly "I would like to inform you that your children will receive gifts. "We told them to receive the gifts, and they would be happy. After getting gifts like this, the children might ask their father to let them go to school.

It was late noon; the smell of dry sunshine was wake up. We could not go with Mr.Ro Cham Hui anymore because we had to go back. Mr.Hui said good bye to us with a bright smile. He was continuing on to other villages. There was nothing to stop him and his motorcycle this time. He was happy with every family on the occasion of the Tet festival which was full of humanism and had never happened in these villages like this before.

Text 6: Đêm 30, nghe đồng hồ điểm giao thừa bên hồ Hoàn Kiếm

Không rộn rã như tiếng pháo hoa, không dõng dạc như âm thanh của chiêng, trống, khánh, chuông... từ các chùa chiền, đền, miếu... nhưng 12 tiếng chuông đồng hồ nhỏ nhẹ trên nóc Bưu điện Hà Nội vẫn được cư dân thành phố nín thở đón đợi trong phút chờ xuân sang.

Giao thừa năm nay, cụ ông Phan Xuân Thúy (87 tuổi) - chủ hiệu ảnh Quốc tế (11, Hàng Khay) lại ngồi chờ chuông đồng hồ Bưu điện điểm. Với ông, không âm thanh nào linh thiêng hơn những tiếng chuông giản dị này.

Từ năm đầu tiên Hà Nội có chiếc đồng hồ (Xuân Mậu Ngọ, 1978), ông đã lặng lẽ mong chờ, lắng nghe và dễ dàng nhận ra chúng trong ngàn vạn âm thanh sôi động phút giao thừa: những hồi chuông, trống dài của các nhà thờ, đền chùa, miếu mạo, nhạc hiệu mừng năm mới trên đài, TV, tiếng reo vang dội của rùng người theo những chùm pháo hoa tỏa sáng trên bầu trời hồ Hoàn Kiếm, tiếng chúc năm mới hồ hởi của nhà nhà, tiếng ríu rít reo mừng của con trẻ.

Mỗi lần nghe chuông đồng hồ Bưu điện điểm giao thừa, ông Thúy lại rưng rưng nhớ người vợ hiền đã khuất. Cả đời, bà sống trong chiến tranh, chỉ đón giao thừa theo tiếng còi ủ. Đêm 30 cuối cùng (năm Mậu thân, 1968), bà náu một thùng nước nụ vối lớn, bảo ông đặt trước cửa phục vụ bà con đi xem pháo hoa quanh hồ; chẳng bao giờ được đón giao thừa trong tiếng chuông đồng hồ thư thái thời bình.

Với những thế hệ lớn lên trong hòa bình, tiếng chuông giao thừa từ nóc Bưu điện Hà Nội tuy không thiêng liêng đến vậy, nhưng cũng là âm thanh không thể thiếu trong những phút giây này. Đỗ Đình Quang (29 tuổi, số 4B Hồ Hoàn Kiếm, kỹ sư Sở Xây dựng Hà Nội) cho biết: "Nhà tôi có cả một bộ sưu tập gần hai chục chiếc đồng hồ quả lắc, nhưng năm nào cũng chỉ tính giao thừa theo chuông đồng hồ Bưu điện. Từ bé, tôi đã cùng bố mẹ chờ chuông điểm, nay không tưởng tượng nổi giao thừa nào đó thiếu những âm thanh quen thuộc này".

Theo cảm nhận của Quang, "chuông đồng hồ Bưu điện không vang bằng chuông nhà thờ, không kéo dài, đồ hồi náo nức như chuông từ chùa, miếu, cũng chẳng du

dương như nhạc hiệu mừng năm mới, nhưng trong phút chờ xuân sang, những tiếng chuông đều đều giản dị này lại được cả rừng người quanh hồ đón đợi. Với những cư dân sống quanh hồ, quen nghe chuông gõ từ sáng đến đêm, nỗi mong chờ còn lớn hơn rất nhiều".

Không biết chiếc đồng hồ trầm mặc có cảm nhận được niềm mong đợi của người dân Hà Nội không, chỉ biết trong đêm giao thừa, tiếng chuông nghe trong, trang trọng hơn khiến lòng người thêm hồi hộp, bâng khuâng theo từng nhịp đêm thời gian của nó.

Cũ ngắm mới

Để chiếc đồng hồ bền bỉ gõ nhịp thời gian suốt 27 năm, giống chuông không sai một tích tắc 27 giao thừa, một bộ phận được gọi là Tô Đồng hồ của Bưu điện Hà Nội đã làm việc không kể ngày đêm. Bà Lê Thị Yến (54 tuổi), nữ nhân viên gắn bó với chiếc đồng hồ từ những vòng kim đầu tiên (2/9/1978) bảo: "Chúng tôi hiểu nỗi bồi hồi chờ đợi thời khắc sang năm mới của người dân Hà Nội, nên luôn chăm sóc cho chiếc đồng hồ giống chuông giao thừa không sai một khắc".

Gắn gũi, gắn bó với chiếc đồng hồ là thế, nhưng không giao thừa nào bà Yến không thấy tim mình run rẩy theo từng nhịp gõ của chiếc đồng hồ. Tiếng chuông trong thời khắc chuyển giao của đất trời năm nào cũng sâu lắng, linh thiêng.

Năm nào cũng vậy, trong tiếng chuông ngân, bà Yến nhớ một thời Tết nghèo chua xà, khi chiếc đồng hồ vừa được đặt lên nóc Bưu điện Hà Nội, mỗi người dân Thủ đô chỉ ăn Tết với cân gạo, lạng thịt, ít đồ, gói trà phân phôi theo tem, phiếu cũng đã thấy tràn trề hạnh phúc. Đêm 30 ấy, dân Hà Nội vẫn còn thưa lầm; người ta ung dung đi phố, tay trong tay dạo quanh hồ chờ bắn pháo hoa. Riêng bà Yến, ngồi trực trong phòng điều hành, hồi hộp đón chờ chuông điểm, nhớ nồi bánh chưng nghi ngút khói và đêm tết trái cây, xào mứt của dâu con trong nhà.

Bà Yến cùng chiếc đồng hồ lặng lẽ chứng kiến 27 đêm 30. Cùng với sự đi lên từng ngày của đất nước, Hà Nội to đẹp hơn; những con phố quanh hồ lộng lẫy dần mỗi giao thừa. Hoa, đèn màu và bóng bay mỗi năm một nhiều lên, rực rỡ hơn. Mặt đường sạch

bóng. Người lại qua cũng ngày càng đông đúc, đẹp, no đủ và sang trọng hơn trong quần áo mới, nước hoa thơm lừng; lao vun vút trên những chiếc xe máy không một hạt bụi.

Ngay cơ quan đưa chiếc đồng hồ về đặt lên nóc trụ sở, Bưu điện Hà Nội, cũng chuyển mình mạnh mẽ. Năm 1990, mạng thông tin viba số đi vào hoạt động. Năm 1993, lần đầu tiên Bưu điện Hà Nội vận hành thử nghiệm mạng điện thoại di động (khái niệm còn quá mới mẻ với khách hàng cả nước). Tháng 12/1997, dịch vụ Internet ra đời. Đây là chưa kể hàng loạt dịch vụ tiện dụng và mới mẻ như mạng di động nội vùng Citiphone, chuyển phát nhanh, điện hoa, phát trong ngày... không ngừng đáp ứng nhu cầu đa dạng của người dân Thủ đô và du khách.

Mỗi giao thừa qua đi, bà Yến và chiếc đồng hồ lại thoảng buồn. Người người vội vã trở về nhà, hòa mình vào niềm hạnh phúc mừng xuân mới, để lại chiếc đồng hồ cũ kỹ, trầm mặc và những dãy phố mệt mỏi. Có năm cả dãy phượng ven hồ tan hoang; nam thanh nữ tú thi nhau bẻ cành về lấy may. Khi không còn phong trào bẻ cành cây lấy lộc nữa, người ta tập nập mua lộc (mía cây, hoa hồng lộc, cành táo, khế...) được bày bán la liệt ven hồ, xả rác ngập đường ngay trong những giờ đầu tiên của năm mới.

Suốt đêm Trừ tịch, chỉ còn các công nhân vệ sinh môi trường và những cư dân cao tuổi quanh hồ còn thao thức ngóng chờ tiếng chuông.

Gần 240.000 lần ngân tiếng, 2 vạn vòng quay... để được ngóng trông chỉ 27 giao thừa

Kim đồng hồ nhích dần đến số 12, không gian như trầm xuống, ông Thúy bung mâm cúng cẩn thận đặt lên bàn trước cửa, dưới bầu trời đêm. Trên sân nhà 3 anh con trai bên cạnh, các mâm cúng cũng nghi ngút khói hương, đỏ thắm xôi gà, giò chả, bánh mứt, hoa trái. Bà con hàng phố quanh hồ cũng đang thắp thóm ngóng chờ tiếng chuông Bưu điện để khấn lễ giao thừa.

"Coong!" - chuông đồng hồ ngân lên, cả rừng người quanh hồ ồ lên trong niềm hạnh

phúc đón chào năm mới. 11 tiếng chuông sau nhỏ dần, lẫn trong âm thanh tung bừng của pháo hoa, chuông, trống, nhạc, nhưng vẫn ngân trong bản đồng ca vang vọng đất trời và lòng người Hà Nội. Dưới ánh sáng pháo hoa rực rỡ trên bầu trời đêm, ông Thúy Kính cẩn vái lạy trời đất, miệng thì thầm lời cảm tạ và cầu xin an lành, may mắn cho cả đại gia đình suốt năm.

Sau 15 phút bắn pháo hoa, đường phố quanh hồ lại náo nhiệt, người người tạm quên đi sự hiện diện của chiếc đồng hồ, náo nức hưởng tiết xuân trong, rũ bỏ mọi bon chen, buồn khổ năm qua, ước mong an lành năm mới. Từ trên cao, ngay từ những giờ đầu tiên của năm mới, chiếc đồng hồ cũ kỹ lại càn mẫn đêm thời gian. Đèn đèn mùa xuân sau, lại được người người nín thở chờ nghe chuông điểm, ngóng phút giao thừa...

- Quảng Hạnh

Text 6: Night 30th, listen to a clock sound on countdown beside the Hoan Kiem lake

It was not noisy like the sound of fireworks. It was not loud like the sounds of gongs, drums, brass gongs, and bells from all temples, communal houses and shrines. But the people in the city were waiting for the 12 chimes of the clock on Hanoi post office building during the countdown time.

In the countdown time of this year, Mr. Phan Xuan Thuy (87 years old), the owner of Quoc te (national) photo shop at 11 Hang Khay street, was sitting and waiting for the twelve chime of the clock on Hanoi post office building. For Mr. Phan Xuan Thuy, there was no more blessed sound which blessed more than the simple sounds of this clock.

From the first year that Hanoi had this clock (the horse year, 1978), Mr. Thuy was waited quietly to listen and feel the sound of the clock amidst the loud sounds in the countdown: the resonant sounds of gongs, the long sounds of bells from churches, temples, and small shrines, the sounds of Happy New Year blessing from radios and televisions, the echoing cheers of the people following the firework sounds which brightened up the sky of Hoan Kiem lake, the enjoyable Happy New Year blessing sounds for all families, the noisy Happy New Year blessing sounds of the children.

Each time the clock sounded at countdown time, Mr. Thuy was overwhelmed and missed his wife who had passed away. All her life was war, she only welcomed the countdown time to the sound of sirens. On the 30th night (the monkey year, 1968), she boiled one kerosene can of Lid Eugenia flower water. She told her husband arrange the area in front of the house for sprinkling Lid Eugenia flower water on the people who came to see the firework around the lake. But she never welcomed the countdown time to the peaceful clock sounds when the war was over. For the generation who grew up in peace, although the countdown sounds of the clock on Hanoi post office were not blessed, it was sound which could not be missed during these seconds.

Do Dinh Quang, an engineer of the government construction department , 29 years old, who lived at 4B, Hoan Kiem lake, remarked that “My family had collections of nearly 20 pendulum clocks. But every year I welcomed the countdown following the clock chimes of the post office.” My parents and I waited for the clock sounds I was familiar with since I was a child. I could not imagine a coutdown time without these familiar sounds.

According to the feeling of Mr.Quang, the clock sounds on the post office building were not resonant like the bell sounds of churches, it was not resonant, rich and vibrant like the bells from temples and shrines and it was not as melodious as Happy New Year songs. But the people around the lake were still waiting for these smooth and simple clock ringing sounds when the countdown arrived. The people living around the lake, used to listen to the clock sounds from the morning to evening. But still they waited for the clock at countdown.

We did not know whether or not the all-powerful clock was aware that Hanoi people were waiting? But we just felt that the clock sounds at countdown was clearer and more respected. It made people’s hearts more excited following its chimes.

Old looked new

The clock control and maintainance was the duty of the clock bureau of Hanoi post office which had worked all day and night for 27 years already. Mrs. Le This Yen (54 years old), female officer who was bound with this clock from the 2nd, September, 1978 (Vietnam national day), remarked that “We understood the excitement and anticipation of Hanoi people during countdown. So we made sure the clock would ring at the right time for countdown.”

Although Mrs.Yen kept in touch and bound with the clock like this, but there was no countdown for which her heart did not beat fast following each chime of clock. The countdown sounds every year are always stable and blessed.

Every year, when the clock rang, Mrs.Yen remembered Tet time when people were poor, like it was yesterday. When the clock was set up on the post office building, the people in the capital just celebrated Tet festival with kilos of milled rice, grams of pork, a little of beans and tea packs which were distributed by coupon. But they were very happy. The 30th night at that time, Hanoi was not crowded, people went sightseeing, walked hand in hand around the lake to wait for the firework. In particular, Mrs.Yen sat waiting in the office, excited to welcome the clock's bells during the countdown. She thought of *banh chung* (square glutinous rice cake) steamy pot, the night of fruit carving and the sugar preserved fruit of her daughter-in-law.

Mrs.Yen and silent clock passed the 30th night for 27 years. After national development, Hanoi was more beautiful, streets around the lake were more beautiful during countdown year by year. Flowers, color lights and balloons brightened it up. Streets were clean. It was crowded, people were beautiful, full of contentment and smart in new clothes, perfumes were fragrant, clean motorcycles ran along the street. When the post office set the clock on the building, Hanoi changed a lot. In 1990, Viba digital communication network was established. In 1993, it was the first year that Hanoi post office tested the mobile network, at that time this knowledge was a new thing for the customers in Vietnam. In December, 1997, there was internet service. There were other new convenient services such as Citiphone mobile network, express transportation, buying products by telephone, sending mail in one day. The post office did not cease to provide other services for serving the people in the capital and tourists.

When each countdown passed, Mrs.Yen and clock were a little lonely. Everybody hurried to go back home happily in the New Year, leaving the old clock and streets behind. There were some years when all Peacock flower trees around the lake were almost destroyed, because people broke tree branches and brought them back to home for luck in New Year. Besides plucking twigs for luck, people bought many things for luck such as sugarcane trees, roses, jujube branches and carambola (or star fruit) branches etc. which were bought all around the lake. They dumped garbage all over the streets in the first minutes of New Year.

Throughout the lunar calendar watch-night, there were only cleaners and old people living around lake did not sleep, but waited for the sound of the clock.

Nearly 240,000 sounds and twenty thousands rounds of 27 years of waiting countdown

The hand of the clock moved slowly to number 12, the atmosphere seemed to quieten down, Mr.Thuy put up a worship tray on the table, in front of the house, under the night sky. In the front yard to the house, there were three brothers, worship tray was covered with joss sticks smoke, intense red sticky rice and chicken, boiled pork paste, fried pork paste, sugar preserved fruit and fruit. People living around lake paid attention to wait for the sounds of the clock on the post office building and prayed for the New Year.

"Coong!" the clock rang, and people around the lake cheered to welcome in the New Year. The following eleven sounds slowed down, mixed with the rhapsodic sounds of firework, bells, drums and songs but it was still echoing in the earth, sky and the heart of Hanoi people. The light of the firework brightened up the night sky, and Mr.Thuy worshipped respectfully to the sky and earth, his mouth uttered thank you words and wished for happiness for all family members out the year.

15 minutes after the fireworks went off, the streets around the lake were hectic, and everybody forgot the clock for a while, excited, welcoming in the brand New Year, leaving behind jealousy, sadness, troubles from last year and wished for happiness in the New Year.

In the first minutes of the New Year, the old clock kept on counting time. Just prior to the arrival of the New Year, people held their breath, and waited for the sounds of the clock at countdown.

- Quảng Hạnh

Text 7: Rạo rực âm thanh đêm giao thừa

Trong thời khắc giao thừa, hãy lắng tai nghe, bạn sẽ thấy những âm thanh giản dị và thiêng liêng của cuộc sống. Từ khi văng tiếng pháo, những âm thanh quá đỗi quen thuộc này được nhiều người để ý hơn.

Tiếng gà gáy giữa Hà Nội

"Ô ó o...." - âm thanh lọt qua ngôi nhà bê tông, gõ cửa những căn phòng trong khu phố nhỏ, khiến mọi người thấy là lạ, ngò ngô và... quen quen. Tiếng gà gáy giữa phố sá cuối năm như đánh thức trong người ta nỗi nhớ quê và ký ức tuổi thơ.

Chú gà trống theo người thân ở quê ra chúc Tết gia đình cô bé con ở phố đem đến cho người ta những cảm xúc mới mẻ. Và đánh thức cha mẹ cô bé rằng: Tết cổ truyền đã đến. Không gian như âm áp lại. Hình như cô bé chỉ nghe thấy tiếng gà gáy mỗi dịp Tết về bởi khi đó mẹ của bé mới mua gà cúng và chú gà đó cũng chỉ có thời gian khoảng 1 ngày để gáy.

Một năm vội vã, tất bật lo toan đã kết thúc. Tết đến rồi. "Ô ó o..." khi không gian đêm bỗng choáng sáng bởi đèn, bởi pháo hoa và rộn rã bởi những dòng người đi trẩy hội, chú gà trống lại cất tiếng gáy. Bỗng thấy nôn nao như thể vẫn là cô bé con chờ tiếng gà gáy sáng mồng một Tết để mong được mừng tuổi. (Nguyễn Lương Diệu An)

Tiếng chuông đồng hồ trên nóc Bưu điện Hà Nội

Kim đồng hồ nhích dần đến số 12, không gian như trầm xuống, ông Thúy bung mâm cúng cẩn thận đặt lên bàn trước cửa, dưới bầu trời đêm. Trên sân nhà 3 anh con trai bên cạnh, các mâm cúng cũng nghi ngút khói hương, đồ thắm xôi gà, giò chả, bánh mứt, hoa trái. Bà con hàng phố quanh hồ cũng đang thấp thỏm ngóng chuông Bưu điện để khấn lễ giao thừa.

"Coong!" - chuông đồng hồ ngân lên, cả rừng người quanh hồ ò lên trong niềm hạnh phúc đón chào năm mới. 11 tiếng chuông sau nhỏ dần, lẫn trong âm thanh tưng bừng

của pháo hoa, chuông, trống, nhạc, nhưng vẫn ngân trong bản đồng ca vang vọng đất trời và lòng người Hà Nội. Dưới ánh sáng pháo hoa rực rỡ trên bầu trời đêm, ông Thúy Kính cẩn vái lạy trời đất, miệng thì thầm lời cảm tạ và cầu xin an lành, may mắn cho cả đại gia đình suốt năm.

Sau 15 phút bắn pháo hoa, đường phố quanh hồ lại náo nhiệt, người người tạm quên đi sự hiện diện của chiếc đồng hồ, náo nức hưởng tiết xuân trong, rũ bỏ mọi bon chen, buồn khổ năm qua, ước mong an lành năm mới. Từ trên cao, ngay từ những giờ đầu tiên của năm mới, chiếc đồng hồ cũ kỹ lại cần mẫn đếm thời gian. Đèn đèn mùa xuân sau, lại được người người nín thở chờ nghe chuông điểm, ngóng phút giao thừa.

- Quảng Hạn

Hà Nội: Tiếng còi tàu chào tạm biệt năm cũ

Đúng 23h đêm 30 Tết, đoàn tàu E1 mang số hiệu D19E-907, chuyến tàu cuối cùng của năm Giáp Thân kéo 3 hồi còi hụ âm vang, dài hơn thường lệ, chào tạm biệt năm cũ, chuyến bánh rời ga Hà Nội. Đêm 30 Tết, chuyến tàu cuối cùng trong năm vắng khách.

Rất nhiều toa không có một bóng hành khách nào. Đa phần khách đi tàu đêm nay chỉ là người nước ngoài đi du lịch vào Nam, hoặc những người nhỡ nhàng những chuyến tàu trước, hoặc vì lý do công tác phải về muộn. Nhưng vẫn chuyến bánh theo kế hoạch đã định trước.

Trời Hà Nội vào đêm trở lạnh. Mưa xuân lất phất bay. Những quán chè chén quen thuộc trước cổng ga thường chờ khách đi tàu hằng đêm đã vắng hơn ngày thường. Chỉ còn vài ngọn đèn dầu leo lét bán muộn.

Mưa xuân rắc bụi nước lên những đường ray im lìm. Những tiếng chào tạm biệt cũng trở nên nghèn ngào. Trời như rái bụi nước xuống những ô cửa kính đoàn tàu, khiến không gian trở nên mờ ảo.

23h đêm, trưởng tàu 907 Bùi Văn Minh kéo 3 hồi còi vang vọng, xua tan không khí tĩnh lặng của sân ga trước giờ giao thừa điểm chuyền bánh. Tiếng còi vang vọng, kéo dài, âm vang, hoà cùng cùng tiếng bánh sắt xình xịch lăn đầu trên đường ray, kéo mãi vào không gian thiêng liêng của một năm cũ sắp qua, một năm mới gần về. Chỉ còn 1 giờ đồng hồ nữa.

Anh Minh năm nay đã 51 tuổi, có 29 năm phục vụ trong ngành đường sắt, bắt đầu từ năm 1976. Anh không nhớ rõ bao nhiêu năm mình đã lái những chuyến tàu xuyên dọc đất nước vào đêm Giao thừa như thế này.

"Ai không có phút chạnh lòng khi đêm sum họp gia đình thì mình phải xa nhà. Nhưng đặc thù công việc, tàu phải chuyền bánh, và người lái tàu phải đưa những hành khách cần chuyền tàu cuối cùng trở về nhà để sum họp gia đình vào đầu năm mới", anh Minh nói.

Hạnh phúc của những người lái chuyến tàu đêm là như vậy. Tổ lái chuyến tàu E1 khởi hành từ Hà Nội vào Nam, đón giao thừa trên hơn 1.700km đường trường, đón Tết xuyên qua mọi miền đất nước đêm nay có 6 người.

Anh Minh kể: Cánh lái tàu đêm giao thừa thường phá lệ. Ngoài tiếng còi tàu báo hiệu an toàn quen thuộc, khi qua mỗi miền đất mới trong đêm nay, vẫn thường kéo những hồi còi dài âm vang chúc mừng năm mới an lành đến những người địa phương mà đoàn tàu đang chuyền bánh qua.

Chuyến tàu cuối cùng trong năm đưa những người khách muộn xuôi Nam kéo còi nghe vang vọng trong không gian tĩnh mịch của Hà Nội những ngày yên bình cuối năm chờ năm mới đến. Tiếng còi tàu âm như xua đi những tịch mịch, lạnh giá đang về. Tiếng còi tàu chào tạm biệt năm cũ Giáp Thân, nghe như, còn kéo dài vắt sang chào năm mới Ất Dậu.

- Hà Trường.

Hải Phòng đón xuân trong tiếng còi tàu...

Ngay sau bữa cơm tất niên sum họp gia đình sau một năm tất tả học tập, làm việc, hàng trăm nghìn người dân đất Cảng đổ ra đường chờ đón giây phút giao thừa...

2 chợ hoa xuân phục vụ bà con mua sắm. Đào và quất năm nay đẹp và nhiều hơn năm ngoái. Chỉ vài chục nghìn đồng là gia đình có cành đào hay cây quất khá đẹp đón xuân...

Câu truyền hình của Đài PT-TH Hải Phòng được đặt 3 điểm, các giao lưu, biểu diễn ca nhạc ngoài trời ở dải trung tâm thành phố làm đêm giao thừa càng trở nên đông vui hơn. Người dân Hải Phòng càng vui hơn khi năm 2004, thành phố thu thuế được gần 9.000 tỷ đồng Kim đồng hồ càng nhích gần 0 giờ, người dân ở khu vực trung tâm TP lại tập trung ngày càng đông ở khu vực Đài Liệt sỹ TP trên đường Lạch Tray chờ xem bắn pháo hoa...

Đồng hồ điểm 0 giờ, bên cạnh một vùng trời rực rỡ pháo hoa thì tất cả các con tàu đang đỗ ở cảng Hải Phòng kéo những hồi còi giục giã đón chào Xuân ất Dậu. Tiếng còi tàu như tăng thêm sức mạnh và niềm hy vọng một năm mới thành phố Cảng có nhiều khởi sắc...

- Minh Luận

Nghe tiếng sóng biển ở Phan Thiết

Khi mọi người đang nô nức xem bắn pháo hoa tại nhà hát ngoài trời (nằm trên đường Nguyễn Tất Thành, TP Phan Thiết) tôi tìm đường ra biển Đồi Dương.

Đón giao thừa ở Phan Thiết thì phải ra tận biển. Ở đây, gió vẫn thổi mạnh. Tiếng sóng biển vỗ àm àm vào bờ như muốn xé tan sự yên tĩnh của đêm 30. Giữa biển khơi bao la, mênh mông, mới thấy con người thật nhỏ bé.

Tôi nhớ rất rõ sóng của từng đêm giao thừa trước đây. Năm thì sóng ào ạt, năm lại ầm ỉ, năm rì rào và có những năm trời yên bể lặng.

Xa tận ngoài khơi, còn sót lại ánh đèn của các ghe thuyền đánh bắt cá xa bờ, chắc là nhiều ngư dân không kịp vào bờ cùng đón thời khắc quan trọng của năm mới.

Năm nay, Bình Thuận có hai nơi tổ chức bắn pháo hoa. Ngoài địa điểm quen thuộc tại nhà hát ngoài trời như mọi năm, lần đầu tiên huyện Tuy Phong tổ chức bắn pháo hoa. Sự mới lạ này làm cho không khí ở huyện nhỏ sôi động hẳn lên.

Ngay từ 23 giờ, đình làng Vạn Thuỷ Tú đã mở cửa cho ngư dân sống trong Vạn đênh thấp nén hương thành kính cho “ông” trong đêm giao thừa, cầu cho “trời yên, biển lặng”. Ông” chính là Cá Voi, vị thần bảo trợ cho cư dân sinh sống bằng nghề biển Đức Nghĩa.

- Trần Duy

Tiếng còi hú chào năm mới ở Bãi Trước (Vũng Tàu)

Dưới bờ kè biển bãi Trước, ken dày bởi thuyền đánh cá của ngư dân. Ngày cuối năm, nhiều người cho sơn sửa lại thuyền, treo cờ Tổ Quốc, trung cây kiêng, thấp sáng đèn hiệu. Những con tàu này phần lớn là của ngư dân các tỉnh miền Trung, có người cột thuyền về quê ăn Tết, nhưng cũng không ít người ở lại hưởng các Tết ngay trên thuyền. Tết xa xứ không còn lạ lẫm với người sống bằng nghề biển.

23h30 phút khu Bãi Trước vẫn ồn ào bởi tiếng xe cộ, tiếng người, tiếng nhạc từ những quán cà phê, từ sân khấu nhạc sống “hát với nhau”...24h - thời khắc thiêng liêng - giao thừa đã điểm. Bất ngờ, từ phía biển, từng hồi còi hụ vang lên, lần át tất cả những âm thanh từ phia bờ, đỗ đòn không dứt. Tiếng còi tàu phát ra từ những con thuyền neo trên biển... Từ phía cảng đầu khí Việt - Xô, tiếng còi hụ càng âm vang hơn, kéo dài hơn, vì nó được phát ra từ những chiếc tàu lớn hàng trăm tấn... Năm mới đã tới - năm 2005 - thời khắc chuyển giao cũ - mới được ghi dấu bằng những âm thanh thật tuyệt vời.

Đứng cạnh chúng tôi, anh Lê Văn Cường, 32 tuổi, ngụ tại đường Tiền Cảng, phường 9 cho biết mấy năm gần đây khi tiếng pháo không còn, những âm thanh năm mới chính là tiếng còi tàu ngân dài khi giao thừa...đã thành một dấu ấn rất riêng của vùng đất này: TP biển Vũng Tàu. Nhiều năm, chỉ cần ở nhà anh Cường đã có thể nghe được tiếng còi hụ từ phía cảng Việt – Xô vọng tới, nhưng năm nay, anh quyết định ra Bãi Trước để “thưởng thức” âm thanh năm mới ấy rõ hơn. “Giao thừa, được nghe tiếng còi tàu chuyển giao năm mới, chia sẻ cảm xúc cùng người thân, bạn bè thì có gì vui bằng” – anh Cường thô lộ.

Hơn 5 phút đồng hồ trôi qua, tiếng còi hụ từ phía biển đã dứt. Sau tiếng còi tàu, cửa thiền rộng mở đón những người du xuân. Gần chục ngôi chùa, đèn thờ ở khu Bãi Trước như chùa Từ Quang, Chùa Quan Âm Nam Hải, đèn thờ Đức Thánh Trần, Niết Bàn Tịnh xá...đã đông ngẹt người, mọi người đến đây khấn bái, xin quẻ...tìm sự may mắn đủ đầy trong một năm mới.

- Hoàng Long

Tiếng chuông chùa lúc giao thừa

Đêm 30 Tết, mọi người thảnh thoảng đi chơi giao thừa, đi chơi chùa. Nhưng đối với các vị tu hành, đây lại là lúc bận rộn nhất. Các sư thầy, các chú tiểu phải luôn để ý coi sóc ban thờ, hương hoa. Những nơi phật tử thắp nhiều hương quá phải nhổ bỏ đi để cho đỡ khói, những nơi khách thập phương để nhiều đồ lễ quá, nhà chùa cũng phải sửa sang lại cho chỉnh tề.

11 giờ đêm 30, tất cả các sư tăng trong chùa cử hành khoá lễ giao thừa. Trong khi mọi người cầu mong phước lộc cho bản thân và gia đình, thì các vị tăng ni thành tâm cầu nguyện Đức Phật ban cho nhà nhà, người người đều được yên vui an lành.

Đúng giao thừa, 108 tiếng chuông trù tịch vang lên, báo hiệu thời khắc thiêng liêng chuyển giao giữa năm cũ và năm mới.

Tiếng chuông âm vang trong không trung bàng bạc mưa xuân xen lẫn với hương trầm man mác kéo con người khỏi hiện tại để tới một cõi hư vô huyền bí nào đó. Vâng lên bên tai hai câu kệ với âm điệu lạ lùng:

Lắng lòng nghe, lắng lòng nghe, Tiếng chuông huyền diệu đưa về nhất tâm

Và từ giờ phút Giao thừa trở đi, nhà chùa không lúc nào được ngơi nghỉ. Cổng chùa luôn luôn rộng mở cả ngày lẫn đêm để đón các thiện nan tín nữ vào chùa lễ bái, vãn cảnh.

- Hương Giang

Text 7: Excitement from the sounds of the countdown to the New Year

At the time of countdown, let's intend to listen, you would listen to many simple and blessed sounds of life. When the sound of firecrackers had finished, many people could notice other familiar sounds.

Cock crowing in the middle of Hanoi

"O ó o...." the sound of the cock crowing permeated concrete houses, they knocked apartment doors in the little city area, and they made everybody feel strange, funny and familiar. The sound of the cock crowing in the middle of the city at the end of the year reminded people of their hometowns and the feeling when they were children.

The cock came with relatives from the village to bless Tet for a girl's family in the city, it made the people felt alive . And it reminded the girl's parents that the traditional Tet festival had arrived. The atmosphere seemed to warm again. The girl seemed to listen to the cock crowing only during the Tet festival. At this time her mother would buy a cock for worshipping. The cock had only one day to crow. A busy year had passed, they had finished all their work already. Tet festival had arrived.

"Ò ó o..." a cock crowed in the night which was lit up suddenly with lights, firework and boisterous people who broke off tree twigs for luck. A cock crowed again.

Their minds had wandered like when they were children and waited for the sound of the cock crowing in the morning of the 1st day of Tet festival, and waited for lucky money.

- Nguyễn Lương Diệu An

Clock sounds on Hanoi post office building

The hand of the clock moved slowly to number 12, the atmosphere seemed to quieten down, Mr.Thuy put up a worship tray on the table, in front of the house, under the

night sky. In the front yard to the house, there were three brothers, worship tray was covered with joss sticks smoke, intense red sticky rice and chicken, boiled pork paste, fried pork paste, sugar preserved fruit and fruit. People living around lake paid attention to wait for the sounds of the clock on the post office building and prayed for the New Year.

"Coong!" the clock rang, and people around the lake cheered to welcome in the New Year. The following eleven sounds slowed down, mixed with the rhapsodic sounds of firework, bells, drums and songs but it was still echoing in the earth, sky and the heart of Hanoi people. The light of the firework brightened up the night sky, and Mr.Thuy worshipped respectfully to the sky and earth, his mouth uttered thank you words and wished for happiness for all family members out the year.

15 minutes after the fireworks went off, the streets around the lake were hectic, and everybody forgot the clock for a while, excited, welcoming in the brand New Year, leaving behind jealousy, sadness, troubles from last year and wished for happiness in the New Year.

In to the first minutes of the New Year, the old clock kept on counting time. Before arrive the next New Year, people held their breath, and waited for the sounds of the clock at countdown.

- Quảng Hạnh

Hanoi: train's whistle sounds said good bye the old year

11pm. on the 30th of Tet festival, train E1 number D19E-907, the last train of the monkey year in the lunar calendar, made three long and resonant sounds more than normal to say good bye to the old year, and left from Hanoi train station. The night of 30th of Tet festival, the last train was empty. Many railway carriages did not have any passengers. The only passengers going by train this night were foreign tourists traveling to the southern part of Vietnam, or people who had missed trains earlier, or had business reasons for going back home late. But this train had to move according to

scheldule. The weather at night in Hanoi was cold. There was drizzling rain of spring season. Many familiar tea kiosks at the front gate of the train station often waited for customers every night, and these tea kiosks began to empty of customers earlier than normal. There were only two or three oil lamps which were burning dimly until late at night. Drizzle fell silently on the railway tracks.

Good bye sounds became stifled sounds. Rain beat down on the train's glass windows, and made the atmosphere misty.

23 pm., Bui Van minh, head of train 907, made three echoing sounds, breaking the quiet of the train station before the countdown and departure time. The train's whistle blew long and hard blending with the grinding sound of iron wheels as it moved out of the station. It was nearly the blessed time of coutdown. There remained only one hour to the New Year.

This year, Mr.Minh was 51 years old; he had worked for the rail authority for 29 years, since 1976. He could not remember clearly for how many years he had driven trains through country on countdown night.

“Who did not hurt on the night of family reunion? but I was far from home. But because of the particular character of train work, trains had to move, and train drivers had to bring travelers who wanted to travel on the last train back home to meet family at the beginning of the year”, said Mr. Minh.

Train drivers were happying on a night like this. There were six train drivers of train E1 which left Hanoi for the south, who welcomed countdown on the 1,700 kilometre road, through all regions of the country, on this Tet night.

Mr.Minh said that train drivers often broke the rules on countdown night. Besides the familiar and safe train whistle, when they passed each region on this night, they often blew the train whistle long and hard to welcome in the New Year for local people as the train passed by.

The last train of the year which brought travelers to the south, sounded the train whistle in the quiet and deserted atmosphere of Hanoi. The tranquil days of the end of the year waited for the New Year to arrive.

The train whistle seemed to get rid of the quiet, desert like atmosphere, and cold weather. The train whistle said good bye to the old year -the monkey year of the lunar calendar, their sounds seemed to pass through to greet the New Year – the chicken year of lunar calendar.

- Hà Trưởng

Hai Phong, welcoming Tet in the ship's whistle

One year of busy study and work finished. When they finished their family meal, thousands of people of the port city went straight out on to the road, to welcome the New Year.

Two fresh flower markets were ready for business. This year, peach blossoms and tangerines were beautiful and more plentiful than last year. Each family had only 20,000-30,000 dong (Vietnam currency rate) but they could buy beautiful peach branches or tangerines trees for the Tet festival.

The live broadcast for Hai Phong television broadcasting was set up at three broadcasting points. There was on open-air music performance in the center of the city, which made the people enjoy it more. Hai Phong people could enjoy it more since year 2004 when the city could collect nearly 9,000 million dong (Vietnam currency rate) in taxes. The hand of the clock moved slowly nearly midnight and people in the city center gathered at the war veteran monument, Lach Tray street, to wait for the fireworks.

When the clock hit midnight, the sky lit up with fireworks, and all ships moored at Hai Phong port blew their whistle to greet the chicken year of the lunar calendar. The ship whistle seemed to increase the strength and the hope of people of the colorful port city in the New Year.

- Minh Luận

Listen to the sounds of sea waves at Phan Thiet

When everybody went to watch the firework at the open-air stage (set up on Nguyen Tat Thanh, Phan Thiet city), I found my way to Doi Duong beach. Welcoming New Year at Phan Thiet one had to go out to the beach. Here, the wind was strong. The sound of the waves hit the beach, as if to get break the silence of the 30th night. In the middle of the big sea, you feel that humans are very small.

I remembered clearly the sound of the waves during the countdown night earlier. Some years, the sound of the waves was frequent, some years it was deep, some years soft and many years there were no waves at all.

Far from the coast out at sea, could be seen lamp lights of small and big ships which were fishing far from the shore. Certainly, there were many fishermen who did not go back to shore in time, to welcome in the important time of the New Year. This year Binh Thuan had two places for firework. Besides the usual place, there was an open-air stage (the first place which Tuy Phong district arranged firework) as every year. This new place had an atmosphere of a small busy district. Immediately after 23pm., the shrine of Van Thuy village opened the door for the fishermen living in the Van area to come to pay respects on the countdown night. They wished for “clear sky and calm sea”. The god was a whale which villagers believed protected villagers living in and working as fisher-folk in the Duc Nghia (Tran Duy) area.

Ship whistles greeting New Year at Bai Truoc beach, Vung Tau

At Bai Truoc beach, there were fishing boats anchored along the coast. On many days at the end of the year, people painted and repaired the boats, raised the national flag, displayed bonsai trees, and lit up the sign lights. Almost all of these boats belonged to fishermen from the provinces of the central region of Vietnam. Some tied the boat to shore and went back to celebrate Tet at home. But there were many people who stayed

and celebrated many days of the Tet festival on the boats. Celebrating Tet far from home was not unusual for the people who lived from the sea.

On 23.30 pm., at Bai Truoc beach, it was noisy with vehicles, people, music from coffee kiosks, and from the live music stage. At midnight, the celebrated time of countdown arrived. Immediately from sea, there came long, loud sounds which drowned out the noise from shore. The sound of ship whistles came from ships anchored at shore. From the petroleum and gas complex port of Viet-Xo company, the ship whistles were louder, and echoed long because they came from many ships which weighed hundreds of tons. The New Year, 2005 had arrived, and the transition from the old year to the New Year was recorded by a real chorus of sounds. Mr. Le Van Cuong, 32 years old, who lived on Tien Cang Street, village 9, stood beside us, and remarked that since there was no firecracker sounds for many years, many of the sounds of the New Year celebrations came from ship whistles. They became the peculiar symbol of Vung Tau port city. Many years ago, Mr. Guong would stay at home but he could hear ship whistles from Viet-Xo company port. But this year, he decided to go to Bai Truoc beach to listen to those New Year sounds more clearly. “At midnight, I listened to the ship whistles, and shared feelings with relatives and friends. It was very enjoyable.” said Mr. Guong.

More than 5 minutes after midnight the loud ship whistles from the sea, ended. After the ship whistles sounded, temples gates were opened to welcome the Tet visitors. Nearly 10 temples and shrines were located along Bai Truoc beach such as Tu Quang temple, Quan Am Nam Hai temple, Duc Thanh Tran shrine, and Niet Ban Tinh xa. These places were crowded with people who came to worship and wish for luck in the New Year.

- Hoàng Long

Bell sounds of temples on countdown

On the 30th night of Tet, everybody went to travel on the countdown night. But this was the busiest time for monks. All monks and novices had to monitor and remove

joss-sticks and flowers from the Buddha shelf when it overflowed. Many people lit too many joss-sticks, so they had to remove them because of the smoke. In many places, people offered too many offerings, and monks had to reorganize the shelf for the offerings.

At 11pm. of the 30th day of Tet, all monks in the temples held a ceremony for countdown. All people wished luck for themselves and their families, and all monks and nuns prayed for everyone's happiness.

At midnight, 108 small bells rang out to announce the blessed time of countdown. Bells rang out in the dim atmosphere of spring rain mixed with joss-stick smoke; it seemed to take the people away from the present to a mysterious place. Two chants from Buddhist scriptures with a strange rhythm could be heard loudly.

Let's listen to the blessed bell sounds which brought the people together as one.

After countdown, the monks did not have time to rest. Temple gates were open all day and night to welcome the people who come to worship and visit.

Text 8: Tết Việt online: Mồng 1 của người xa xứ

Khi Việt Nam đã là chiều mồng 1 thì ở California, Mỹ đang là giao thừa, còn ở Bỉ, Ba Lan mới qua giao thừa được vài tiếng. Người Việt ở các nước này đón Tết cũng có bánh chưng xanh, mai, đào và cả... VietNamNet.

Ba Lan: Mời người Ba Lan ăn Tết Việt

Tết Nguyên Đán đối với người xa xứ bao giờ cũng gợi lên nỗi nhớ nhà với những hình ảnh về nồi bánh chưng xanh, cành đào, xác pháo. Nhất là giữa mùa đông lạnh lẽo, cô quạnh ở Châu Âu, người ta càng cảm thấy khát khao, mong mỏi cảm giác ấm cúng về cái Tết Việt. Hiện giờ, nơi đây rất lạnh. Buổi sáng nhiệt độ chỉ -9 độ C. Mọi thứ từ cây cối, mái nhà, lòng đường đều mang sắc băng bạc vì sương giá. Mồng 1 Tết ở Ba Lan đến chậm hơn Hà Nội 6 tiếng.

Các công ty của người Việt đã tổ chức tiệc tất niên cho nhân viên từ một vài ngày trước. Đó không chỉ là Tết dành riêng cho người Việt, mà những người Ba Lan cùng làm việc trong công ty cũng có dịp để làm quen với văn hóa truyền thống Việt Nam. Chùm ảnh đón Tết của công ty Margot sẽ cho bạn đọc thấy được phần nào không khí. Tuy không có hoa đào nhưng vẫn có bánh chưng, nồi canh măng các anh các chị tự chuẩn bị từ mấy hôm trước. Thậm chí còn có cả con lợn sữa quay được đặt từ nhà hàng trên Warszawa. Các cô gái Ba Lan thì tự nướng bánh mang đến. Trong bếp cả người Việt và Tây cùng chuẩn bị cho buổi tiệc. Có một điều rất hay là một vài cô Ba Lan còn mặc áo dài Việt Nam cách điệu như mặc váy (mặc với quần tất mỏng và đi bốt), hay diện đồ lụa, gấm Á đông trông rất vui mẻ.

Ở những công ty của người Việt hay những gia đình có vợ, hoặc chồng Tây luôn mong muốn để mọi thành viên cùng ý thức về giới thiệu Tết Việt. Công ty Tân Việt tổ chức gói bánh chưng cho nhân viên. Gạo, đỗ, lá bánh được đặt từ trên Wars. Cũng tài làm sao là các anh gói được bánh chưng chỉ bằng hai chiếc lá. Thế vẫn là sung túc lắm vì bánh chưng ở đây thường chỉ được gói bằng một chiếc lá nhỏ để tạo màu xanh, còn bên ngoài được bọc bằng giấy bạc. Nồi bánh chưng to được đặt lên bếp ga trong nhà thay vì nồi lửa giữa trời vì thời tiết quá lạnh. Người lớn, trẻ con chạy ra, chạy vào quanh nồi bánh chưng. Thỉnh thoảng bọn trẻ con được người lớn nhắc lên nhòm vào

nồi bánh, líu ríu tiếng Ba Lan hỏi chừng nào bánh chín. Chỉ riêng cảm giác chờ đợi đã đủ thấy áp lực, thiêng liêng.

Bỉ: Đón Tết cùng... VietNamNet và VTV4

Giao thừa của Namur, Bỉ diễn ra vào sáng mồng 1 của Hà Nội. Còn lúc những người ở Việt đón giao thừa thì những người Việt ở Bỉ lại đang làm việc, họ chỉ trở về nhà vào khoảng 8h tối. Trời lạnh dưới 5 độ C, chỉ cảm nhận được chút không khí Tết khi vào siêu thị nơi người ta có thể mua đồ châu Á (chủ yếu là đồ Tàu nhưng cũng có đồ VN), tất cả đều có màu đỏ đặc trưng của Tết Việt.

Điều đặc biệt là có nhiều thức ăn Tàu và Việt Nam bày bán ở các siêu thị Tây, có vẻ như nhiều *hợp đồng làm ăn mới* được ký kết với châu Âu. Nhiều người dân ở đây gọi Tết của châu Á là "Tết Trung Quốc" (Chinese New Year). Nhưng tâm trạng của mọi người Việt Nam cũng vui hơn, nhẹ nhàng hơn, sẵn sàng mở lòng tươi cười và khoe với các bạn Bỉ "Sắp đến giao thừa Việt Nam rồi". Người VN dành tự tổ chức Tết tại gia đình, dù buồn nhớ nhà nhưng lòng cũng phần nào áp lực. Chúc người quay quần xem VTV4 hay VietNamNet Tết online cũng sống lại được những cảm xúc của Tết quê nhà. Chẳng lẽ lại bảo "Ở Namur, không có người Việt, không có không khí Tết".

California, Mỹ: Chợ Việt vui nhộn...Tết

Khi Việt Nam đã là chiều 1 Tết thì Cali mới đến giao thừa. Tết vào giữa tuần nên không được nghỉ, ai cũng mong hết giờ làm - giờ học để về nhà. Nhiều người còn xin nghỉ phép để được thật sự "đón Tết" – sum họp với gia đình. Westminter là nơi tập trung đông người Việt Nam ở hải ngoại nhất. Nơi đây có khu Garden Asian Mall (tên tiếng Việt là Phúc Lộc Thọ), được biết đến như Sài Gòn nhỏ mà bất cứ người Việt nào ở nước ngoài đều biết đến.

Chỉ ở đây mới có không khí thật sự của Tết Việt. Phía ngoài "Sài Gòn nhỏ" là chợ hoa lớn với đủ loại mà nhiều nhất là lan với hàng chục màu sắc khác nhau, giá từ 7\$ đến 180\$. Cạnh những gian lan, mai, đào là những gian hàng Tết với đủ loại mứt, hoa quả, câu đố liên, bao lì xì và cả pháo. Những khoanh pháo dài, lớn, đỏ rực treo trước các

gian hàng. Bánh chưng, bánh nếp được gói rất đẹp mắt, được bày bán khắp nơi khiến người xem không muộn rời bước. Người đi xem, đi mua đến từ nhiều tiểu bang khác nhau, vào chợ vui và háo hức như được sống trong không khí của quê hương.

Không khí giao thừa trên đất Mỹ rất náo nhiệt. Càng gần đến thời khắc thiêng liêng, tiếng pháo nổ giòn càng nhiều. Nhiều gia đình đã lên chùa thắp hương cầu nguyện cho một năm mới tốt lành, hạnh phúc cho mình và những người đồng hương trên khắp thế giới.

Singapore: Nhu ăn Tết ở nhà

Người Singapore gốc Tàu đón năm mới rất giống Việt Nam. Cũng dọn dẹp, tân trang nhà cửa – xe cộ, cũng mua hoa và cây cảnh trang trí nhà, cũng chuẩn bị tiền mới và phong bì đỏ để lì xì cho trẻ con, cũng ... tích trữ rất nhiều đồ ăn cho mấy ngày Tết. Đi chợ Tết ở Chinatown (dù phải chen lấn toát mồ hôi) là một thú vui của người Việt Nam, vì “chẳng khác mấy so với nhà mình”: cũng bánh mứt, hạt dưa hạt bí, lạp xưởng, thịt quay, thịt muối, các đồ trang trí bằng giấy màu đỏ tươi rói như lồng đèn, tranh ông Phúc Lộc Thọ, và những loại cây và hoa được tin sẽ mang đến may mắn cho năm mới như cúc, đào, phát tài ... sự quen thuộc khiến người VN đỡ nhớ nhà hơn. Tuy vậy, hoa ở đây không nhiều chủng loại và bài trí cũng không đẹp bằng hoa kiểng nhà mình.

Đêm giao thừa ăn tất niên với một gia đình người Singapore, càng thấy đầm ấm, thân quen như không khí “sum họp” ở nhà. Món quà Tết quen thuộc là một hộp quýt đúng 8 quả vì theo phong tục Trung Quốc, cả quýt và số 8 đều tượng trưng cho sự may mắn. Các món ăn trên bàn đều được làm từ ít nhất một nguyên liệu có phiên âm đồng nghĩa với may mắn hoặc phát tài. Đón giao thừa với tiếng pháo giòn giã, những chùm pháo hoa rực rỡ ở Chinatown, đúng là “điềm lành” cho năm mới. Ngày mùng 1 Tết, mọi người trở lại với công việc, mang trong lòng niềm vui, niềm tin. Không khí Tết sẽ còn trong mấy ngày tới, dù xa quê hương.

- Việt Nga - Khánh Linh - Hồng Hạnh - Phương Mai

Text 8: Tet Viet online: 1st day of Vietnamese people living away

In Vietnam it was the afternoon of the 1st day. In California, USA, it was the countdown to the New Year, and in Belgium and Poland it had just passed the countdown to the New Year a few hours earlier. Vietnamese people in those countries also welcomed the Tet festival with *banh chung* (square glutinous rice cake), apricot blossoms, peach blossoms and even VietNamNet.

Poland: Invite Poles to enjoy Vietnamese Tet festival

Tet Nguyen Dan for people living far from Vietnam also brought on homesickness with many memories about green *banh chung* (square glutinous rice cake) pot, peach blossoms, strings of firecrackers. In particular, during the lonely winter in Europe, people hoped and waited for the fun Tet festival even more. Now it was very cold. In the morning the temperature was -9 Celsius. Everything, the trees, houses, roads, were covered by a cold, silver fog. The 1st day of the Tet festival in Poland was 6 hours later than in Ha Noi.

All Vietnamese companies had already celebrated the end of the year with a party for the officers, a few days ago. That party was not only for Vietnamese people but Poles working in the company also had a chance to acquaint themselves with traditional Vietnamese culture. The welcoming Tet festival pictures from Margot company will help the reader feel some of the atmosphere. Although there were no peach blossoms they still had *banh chung* (square glutinous rice cake), bamboo sprout soup which brothers and sisters had prepared by themselves a few days earlier. Also there was even roasted-suckling pig ordered from a shop in Warsaw. The Polish women brought toast. In the kitchen, both Vietnamese and others prepared the dinner together. It was great that a few of the Polish women wore *the ao dai* (traditional Vietnamese flowing tunic), worn like skirt with stockings, and boots), or Asian silk dresses which looked funny.

Many Vietnamese companies or families with foreign spouses usually want everyone to know about the Vietnamese Tet festival. Tan Viet company arranged *banh chung* (square glutinous rice cake) wrapping for its employees. Milled rice, beans, leaves

were ordered from Warsaw. It was also interesting as to how all brothers could wrap *banh chung* (square glutinous rice cake) using only two leaves. This method is very extravagant because *banh chung* (square glutinous rice cake) here is usually wrapped using one small leaf to create the green color, and the outside is covered with silver foil. The big *banh chung* (square glutinous rice cake) pot was set up on the gas stove inside the house instead of on a fire in the open-air because the weather was too cold. The adults and children ran around the *banh chung* pot. Sometimes the children were lifted up by adults to look into the cake pot and excitedly asked in Polish when the *banh chung* would be ready. They just waited but felt warm and blessed.

Belgium: Welcomed Tet festival together with VietNamNet and VTV4

The countdown time to the New Year in Namur, Belgium occurred when it was already morning of the 1st day in Ha Noi. While the people in Vietnam welcomed the countdown to the New Year, many Vietnamese in Belgium were working and they only got back home about 8pm. The weather was cold, less than 5 Celsius, and they only felt a little of the Tet festival atmosphere when they went to the department stores where people could buy Asian products (especially Chinese but also Vietnamese), all of which were particularly in the red color of Vietnam.

The special thing was that there was Chinese and Vietnamese food arranged for sale at all western department stores, and this way was because many new contracts had been signed with Europe. Many citizens here called Asian Tet festival “Chinese Tet” (Chinese New Year). But every Vietnamese person felt good and excited, keen to show off to their Belgian friends that “the countdown time for the New Year of Vietnam had nearly arrived”. Vietnamese people arranged for the Tet festival at home and although they felt a bit sad and homesick, their hearts were warm. Ten people clustered around to watch VTV4 or VietNamNet, Tet festival online live to feel the atmosphere of the Tet festival at home. No one could say that in Namur, there were no Vietnamese people and no Tet festival atmosphere.

California, USA: Vietnamese market enjoyed like...Tet festival

When it was the afternoon of the 1st day of Tet festival in Vietnam, in California the countdown time to the New Year was just starting. Tet festival ran into the middle of the week so the people could not rest, since they had to finish work or study and then go back home. Many people also asked for a day off to “welcome Tet festival” and meet with family. Westminster was crowded with Vietnamese mostly from overseas. This place had the Asian Garden Mall area (in Vietnamese, Phuc Loc Tho), known as little Sai Gon which overseas Vietnamese also knew.

Only here was there a real Tet festival atmosphere. Outside “Little Sai Gon” was a big flower market with many kinds of flowers but mostly orchids with tens of different colors, and a price of 7 to 180 dollars. Besides the many orchids, apricot blossoms, and peach blossom shops, there was a Tet shop selling sugar preserved fruit, pairs saying motto signs, lucky envelopes and firecrackers. Many big long and red firecracker coils were hung in the front of the shop. *Banh chung* (square glutinous rice cake) and *banh nep* (cylindrical glutinous rice cake) were wrapped, pleasing to the eye, and arranged for sale everywhere to attract customers. People went to look and buy and they came from many different states to visit the market for a feeling of joy and to relive the atmosphere of their hometown.”

The atmosphere of the lead up to the countdown to the New Year in USA was lively. The closer it got to the magic hour the more firecrackers went off. Many families went early to the temple, burned joss-sticks and prayed for well-being and happiness in the New Year for themselves and others in the world.

Singapore: Like celebrating Tet festival at home

Singaporeans of Chinese descent welcomed New Year much like in Vietnam. They also cleaned, decorated the house and car, and bought flowers and ornamental trees to decorate the house. They also prepared lucky money in red envelopes for the children, as well as stocking up on food for Tet festival days. Going to Tet market in Chinatown, though exhausting with the crowds, but enjoyable for Vietnamese people because “it was no different from home”. There were sugar preserved fruits, water-

melon seeds, pumpkin seeds, Chinese sausages, roasted meat, salt meat, all kinds of decorations made from bright red paper such as lanterns, Phuc Loc Tho pictures and many kinds of trees and flowers such as chrysanthemums, peach blossoms, etc. which people believed would bring good luck in the New Year. The familiar things made Vietnamese homesick although the flowers and decorations were not as beautiful as the ornamental flowers back home.

Participating in the end of the year party with one Singaporean family on countdown night felt warm, similar to the “meeting” atmosphere back home. Familiar Tet food included a box of eight tangerines because, according to Chinese custom, tangerines and the number eight number are symbols of good luck. All food on the table was cooked with at least one ingredient considered to be lucky or good for prosperity. Welcoming the countdown time to the New Year with a salvo of exploding firecrackers in Chinatown, was a “lucky sign” for the New Year. On the 1st day of Tet festival everybody returned to work, filled with joy and confidence. The Tet festival atmosphere would remain with them for a few more days, although they were far from home.

- Viet Nga - Khanh Linh - Hong Hanh - Phuong Mai

Text 9: Bệnh viện không có Tết

Sáng 1 Tết, Khoa Hô hấp của Bệnh viện Nhi Trung ương vẫn tấp nập người ra vào. Khu khám bệnh người ngồi đợi nhập viện mỗi lúc một đông.

Cả nhà ăn Tết trong viện

"Tết này cả nhà đón xuân tại bệnh viện chứ về làm sao được", anh Nguyễn Trí Dũng ở Ninh Bình đang ôm đứa con trong lòng ngồi đợi ở phòng khám nói với chúng tôi.

Chiều 30 Tết trong khi mọi nhà đang chuẩn bị đón Tết thì gia đình anh phải đưa con từ Ninh Bình vào BV Nhi Trung ương cấp cứu. Đứa con trai mới hơn 1 tuổi của vợ chồng anh mây mây nay khò khè khó thở, cả nhà tưởng cháu chỉ bị ôm sơ sơ nên cho uống thuốc như mọi khi. Nhưng uống thuốc vẫn không thấy đỡ đến khi đi khám BV tinh thì cháu đã khá nặng phải chuyển gấp lên BV Trung ương. "Các bác sĩ nghi cháu bị tràn dịch màng phổi phải mổ. Cả nhà tập trung lên đây hết, giờ thì còn Tết nhất gì nữa", giọng anh Dũng lo lắng.

May mắn hơn gia đình anh Dũng, chiều 30 Tết chị Đinh Lê Thu ở Hà Nội đã làm xong thủ tục ra viện cho con gái. "Cháu năm viện đã 5 tuần rồi cô ạ. Cả nhà cháu chuẩn bị về nhà mình đây", chị Thu vừa nụng đứa con, vừa nói. Cô con gái chị Thu cũng bị tràn dịch màng phổi phải mổ nội soi. Suốt hơn tháng qua cả nhà "đánh vật" với cháu trong viện.

Với căn phòng hơn gần 20m² với 4 giường bệnh nhưng mỗi giường ghép 2-3 bệnh nhân. Nằm viện cả tháng mà phải chen chúc như thế sợ cháu không chịu nổi, chị Thu đã cho con nằm ở phòng dịch vụ với giá 120.000đồng/ngày.

Những ngày cuối của năm cũ đã qua đi nhưng dường như tại bệnh viện, ngày Tết chẳng có ý nghĩa gì. Bởi bệnh nhân vào viện đâu có phụ thuộc vào ngày lễ Tết. Ngoài dường mọi người cứ nô nức đi chơi Tết còn trong bệnh viện mọi hoạt động vẫn diễn ra như bình thường. Nhưng để cho bệnh nhân được vui đón Tết cũng là làm xua đi bao lo lắng vì bệnh tật, năm nay BV Nhi Trung ương sẽ có những món quà gửi tặng những người bệnh phải đón Tết trong viện.

Bác sĩ Nguyễn Văn Lộc, GĐ Bệnh viện Nhi Trung ương cho hay: "Những bệnh nhân phải đón Tết trong viện có chế độ riêng. Vào 3 ngày Tết: 30, mồng 1 và mồng 2 bệnh viện phát bánh chưng và giò đến tận tay người bệnh. Ngoài ra, các khoa sẽ tự trang trí bằng quất, đào".

Bên cạnh những phần quà của bệnh viện, những ngày giáp Tết, đại diện các tổ chức xã hội, các tổ chức quốc tế cũng đã đến Bệnh viện Nhi Trung ương trao tận tay bệnh nhân đang điều trị tại viện những món quà nhỏ để họ ăn Tết. Dù chỉ là chiếc bánh chưng, túi hoa quả cũng làm những gia đình phải ăn Tết trong viện phần nào vơi đi nỗi buồn.

Đón Tết với bệnh nhân

"Bệnh viện thì làm gì có Tết. Ngày nào cũng như ngày nào, bệnh nhân đến thì bác sĩ phải phục vụ, không được từ chối", bác sĩ Nghiêm Thị Tuyết, tay phát thuốc, tay gạch sổ nói với chúng tôi.

Chiều 30 và sáng 1 Tết, chỉ đúng tại Khoa Hô hấp của Bệnh viện Nhi Trung ương cũng cảm thấy mệt mỏi chưa nói gì tới việc phải phục vụ bệnh nhân. Người ra vào, đứng chờ đông kín hành lang.

"Ăn Tết trong viện cùng với bệnh nhân là chuyện bình thường. Đến ca trực là phải làm thôi chứ không phụ thuộc đây là ngày lễ Tết. Những ngày Tết, y bác sĩ thay nhau trực nhưng bệnh nhân đông vẫn phải đi làm như ngày thường không thể nghỉ được. Còn việc sắm Tết thì tranh thủ lúc rảnh rỗi đi mua mỗi ngày một ít", bác sĩ Tuyết nói.

Bác sĩ Nguyễn Văn Lộc cho hay: "Đảm bảo phục vụ bệnh nhân được chu đáo, Bệnh viện Nhi Trung ương đã phân công 70 y, bác sĩ trực/ngày. Những ca trực tập trung ở khoa cấp cứu, phòng khám, nội trú... chưa kể đến hậu cần và an ninh. Thuốc men sẽ được phục vụ đầy đủ không để người bệnh thiếu thuốc".

Các y bác sĩ bệnh viện Phụ sản cũng khá vất vả. Họ sẽ là người đón những bé chào đời vào thời khắc chuyển giao năm cũ và năm mới. Đây lại là "mùa sinh nở" nên theo dự tính của Bệnh viện Phụ sản Trung ương có khoảng 40-45 ca đẻ/ngày chưa kể số bệnh nhân đang nằm điều trị tại viện... Chỉ riêng ngày 30 Tết, Bệnh viện Phụ sản Trung ương đã đón 30 bé chào đời.

Ngày Tết cũng sẽ là ngày bận rộn với các khoa cấp cứu bởi việc tăng số ca cấp cứu do tai nạn giao thông. Theo số liệu hàng năm của BV Việt Đức, trong những ngày đầu năm bệnh viện phải tiếp nhận 350-400 bệnh nhân.

Còn các bác sĩ của Viện Y học lâm sàng các Bệnh nhiệt đới (BV Bạch Mai), Tết này sẽ lại phải "chiến đấu" với con virus H5N1. BS Nguyễn Hồng Hà, Trưởng khoa Cấp cứu, Viện Y học lâm sàng các Bệnh nhiệt đới cho hay: " Năm nay, chúng ta đã có kinh nghiệm trong việc điều trị bệnh nhân nhiễm virus cúm A/H5N1 nên từ khi dịch tái phát viện đã cứu sống được 5/7 bệnh nhân. Cả 5 bệnh nhân này đều xuất viện trước Tết. Tại viện không còn bệnh nhân nào nhiễm H5N1 phải điều trị. Tuy nhiên, các y bác sĩ vẫn phải trực 24/24 để cấp cứu người bệnh kịp thời và tiếp tục điều trị những bệnh nhân bị nghi nhiễm cúm A/H5N1 cũng như những bệnh khác".

- Lê Hà

Text 9: Hospital did not have Tet festival

On the morning of 1st of Tet day, the respiratory department of Nhi Trung uong hospital was crowded with the people. At the disease examination department, there were more people everyday waiting to be hospitalized.

All family members celebrated Tet festival at the hospital

“This year, all people of my family celebrated Tet festival at the hospital so we could not go back home.” Mr.Nguyen Tri Dung from Ninh Binh province, was embracing his child while waiting at examination room, as he talked to us.

In the afternoon of 30th of the festival, when all families were preparing for the Tet festival his family had to bring his child from Ninh Binh province to Nhi Trung uong emergency hospital. His son was about one year old, and had had difficulty breathing for 2-3 days. His family was rather worried about his sickness and gave him some medicine as usual. But he did not get better. When he arrived at the hospital, he was seriously sick and had to go to Nhi Trung uong hospital immediately. “Doctors said that he had pneumonia and had to have an operation, so the family gathered here, and did not celebrate Tet anymore.” Mr. Dung said worriedly. Mrs.Dinh Le Thu, lived in Hanoi, and was luckier than Mr.Dung because she had just paid for the cost of examination for her daughter and would go back home today. “My daughter was cured in the hospital after five weeks and my family has prepared to go back home today.” Mrs.Thu. said while comforting her daughter. Mrs.Dinh’s daughter was sick of pneumonia and had to be operation. More than one month earlier, Mrs.Dinh family was busy taking care of her daughter in the hospital.

In the 20m² rooms, there were 4 beds for patients but 2-3 patients had to share a bed together. If her daughter had to stay in a crowded room like this, she was afraid that her daughter could not survive. So she let her daughter stay in the service room for which she had to pay 120,000 dong per day.

The days toward the end of year passed, but it seemed to have no meaning of Tet days at the hospital. Because patients came to the hospital normally, it was not up to special

occasions. Outside, the people went to travel for the Tet festival but in the hospital, all activities were as usual. But to entertain the patients for Tet festival and to reduce the worry about sickness, this year Nhi Trung uong hospital gave gifts to patients to welcome the Tet festival in the hospital.

Doctor Nguyen Van Loc, the director of Nhi Trung uong hospital remarked that “The hospital had a particular plan for the patients who had to welcome Tet in the hospital. On the 1st, 2nd and 3rd days of Tet festival, the hospital distributed *banh chung* (square glutinous rice cake) and pork paste to the patients. Moreover, all departments were decorated with tangerines and peach blossoms.

Beside gifts from the hospital, on the days leading to Tet festival, representatives for all social organizations and national organizations came to give the gifts to the patients who had been cured at the hospital. These little gifts were Tet celebrations for them.

Although there were only *banh chung* (square glutinous rice cake) and fruit packs, many families were happy to celebrate Tet in the hospital, and could forget their problems for a while.

Welcoming Tet festival with the patients

“How did the hospital celebrate Tet celebration?” Everyday was the same. Patients came, the doctors had to care further and could not refuse. Doctor Nghiem Thi Tuyet said during distribuiting medicines and checking the number.

In the afternoon and the morning of the 1st day of Tet festival, they just stood for distributing medicines at the respiratory department of Nhi Trung uong hospital but they were tired. They did not talk about looking after the patients. It was crowded with people in all the corridors.

Celebrating Tet festival with the patients was normal. When they arrived for duty, they had to work, regardless of Tet festival or not. Many days of Tet festival, the doctors took turns on duty but it was crowded and they had to work as usual and could not stop. As for Tet shopping, they used their break time to shop for a few things each day, Dr. Tuyet said.

Doctor Nguyen Van Loc remarked that “we confirmed that we could examine. Nhi Trung uong hospital arranged 70 nurses and doctors on standby each day. Authorities were on duty in turn at the emergency department, normal examination room, foodstuffs department and security. There was enough medicine, so we did not let the patients miss out.”

All nurses and doctors of Phu san (meaning obstetrics and gynecology) hospital had trouble. They were the ones who welcomed new born children at the time between the old year and the new year. This was “Birth season”, according to the expectation of Phu san Trung uong hospital, and there were about 40-45 new born children per day, apart from the sick patients at the hospital. In fact, on the 30th of Tet festival, Phu san Trung uong hospital welcomed 30 new born.

Tet days were busy days of all emergency departments, because there were more road accidents. According to Viet Duc hospital information during the first days of the New Year, they received 350-400 patients.

As for doctors of the Tropical Medicine institute of Bach Mai hospital, on Tet days of this year, they had to fight the virus H5N1. Doctor Nguyen Hong Ha, head of emergency department, Tropical Medicine institute remarked “This year, we gained experience in curing patients affected by A/H5N1disease. So when this disease occurred again, the hospital could cure 5 out of 7 patients.” All 5 patients got well and could go back home before Tet festival. Now there were no more patients affected by H5N1 disease. However, all nurses and doctors were on standby 24 hours to look after the patients immediately and continue to help those affected by A/H5N1disease as with other patients.

- Lê Hà

Text 10: Tết quê ở đồng bằng Bắc bộ

Cây đa - bến nước - mái đình vốn là những hình ảnh quen thuộc của các làng quê vùng đồng bằng Bắc Bộ. Những làng quê ấy ăn tết như thế nào?

Mặc dù vừa qua một đêm thức muộn nhất trong năm để chào đón thời khắc giao thừa nhưng ngay từ sáng sớm, tại ngôi đình lớn của thôn Dương Lôi, xã Tân Hồng, huyện Từ Sơn, tỉnh Bắc Ninh, có tên là đình Sấm đã tấp nập các gia đình đến dâng lễ. Ai cũng muốn là người đầu tiên được gặp thành Hoàng làng và chư vị thần linh trong năm mới.

Theo phong tục, các vị bô lão đức cao vọng trọng được cử ra để đánh những hồi trống và chiêng thật lớn chào đón con cháu trong thôn đến dâng lễ đầu năm tạ ơn thành Hoàng làng là thánh mẫu Phạm Thị Ngà, thân sinh vị vua khởi nguyên của triều Lý - Lý Công Uẩn. Tương truyền ngôi đình đã được dân làng lập ngay từ khi triều Lý còn trị vì và đã ngót nghét hơn nghìn năm tuổi.

Sau khi dâng lễ tại đình làng thì đổi với người dân thôn Dương Lôi, bữa cơm trưa ngày mùng 1 Tết là bữa cơm đặc biệt quan trọng để tưởng nhớ ông bà tổ tiên và sum họp. Vì thế, dù con cháu có đi đâu về đâu thì ngày này cũng phải nhớ về nhà thờ họ tham dự bữa cơm gặp mặt ông bà, anh em trong họ.

Đây cũng là dịp để anh em ôn lại năm qua đã làm được gì và bày tỏ nguyện vọng cũng như bàn bạc công việc - giúp đỡ những ai gặp khó khăn. Tuy nhiên, những buổi gặp mặt mùng 1 Tết của các dòng họ trong thôn đã mỗi năm một vui hơn cùng với sự thay đổi về kinh tế gia đình và bộ mặt địa phương.

Ông Nguyễn Như Toán, trưởng thôn Dương Lôi, xã Tân Hồng, huyện Từ Sơn, tỉnh Bắc Ninh cho biết: "Thực tế là các nghề tạo thu nhập khá cho người dân đã xuất hiện ngày một nhiều trong thôn như nghề mộc, nghề xây dựng... Đời sống của người dân được ngày một được cải thiện...".

Theo thống kê của UBND xã thì cả thôn Dương Lôi có trên 700 hộ gia đình với hơn 3.000 khẩu. Năm nay, cả thôn đã không còn hộ nào bị xếp vào diện nghèo. Cũng có thể vì thế mà đình làng mỗi năm một đông người đến dâng lễ hơn. Bởi người thôn Dương Lôi tin rằng nếu cứ làm ăn cần cù chăm chỉ theo lời dạy của thánh mẫu thành Hoàng thì chắc chắn gia đình mình, thôn mình sẽ còn tiếp tục được cải thiện và phát triển mạnh. Và tất nhiên như thế thì ăn Tết cũng sẽ vui hơn.

- Theo VTV

Text 10: Provincial Tet festival at the northern delta of Vietnam

A banyan tree, a small port and a temple used to be familiar images of all villages in the northern delta area. How did these villages celebrate the Tet festival?

Although the night, when people went to bed late after welcoming the new year, had just passed, early in the morning, at the big communal house named Sam (containing shrine of tutelage deity) of Duong Loi village, Tan Hong town, Tu Son district, Bac Ninh province was crowded with families who had come to worship at the shrine in the big communal house. People wanted to be first to greet Thanh Hoang (the deity of the village) and all the other deities in the New Year.

According to custom, all of the high virtuous and important elders begin the ceremony by hitting the drum and the great gong to welcome descendants of the village who come to worship at the beginning of the year, to thank Thanh Hoang named Pham Thi Nga, who is the mother of the King Ly Cong Uan – the first king of the Ly dynasty. According to village legend, the communal house was established by the villagers from time of the Ly dynasty about 1,000 years ago.

After worshipping at the communal house, for the villagers of Duong Loi village, the lunch of the 1st day of Tet festival was a special and important meal to remember grandparents, ancestors and to be reunited again.

This was a chance for brothers and sisters to review what they had done during the previous year, express their aspirations, discuss work or help those in trouble. Meeting on the 1st day of Tet festival in the village is more enjoyable each year since the economic upturn and improved social conditions.

Mr. Nguyen Nhu Toan, the headman of Duong Loi village (commune), Tan Hong village, Tu Son district, Bac Ninh province remarked: “It was actually that all jobs such as woodwork and construction created better incomes. The lives of the villagers have improved year by year.”

According to statistics from the UBND (People's committee) of the village, Duong Loi village has 700 families and more than 3,000 people. This year, no village had any families classified as poor. It may be for this reason that so many people come to worship at the communal house each year. This is because Duong Loi villagers believe that if they continue to work hard and follow the teachings of the mother deity then it is certain that their village will continue to improve and develop strongly. Because of this, the Tet festival celebration will be much more enjoyable.

Text 11: Tết... quê

Chỉ về với những miền quê mới cảm nhận được hết không khí mùa xuân. Đó là cái lý để tất cả mọi người đều mong muốn trở về quê nhà trong những ngày Tết. “Xuân quê” có những khoảnh khắc rất lạ, nhẹ nhàng nhưng gợi đầy cảm xúc.

Những ngày này Hội An tràn đầy đèn và hoa, một đặc trưng khó quên của phố cổ nhỏ bé, thân thiện này. Thế nhưng, khuất sau những đèn hoa, phố Tây ồn ào, rực rỡ là những nét chân quê, vừa thân quen vừa tươi mới. Cả với người lần đầu tiên đến với Hội An hay “người quen” lâu ngày gặp lại đều dễ có chung cái cảm giác ấy.

Sau những con phố, qua một quãng sông ngắn, dòng ngô xanh rì đang thì trổ bông nhanh chóng đưa Hội An, phố cổ du lịch nổi tiếng, trở về với “bản chất quê mùa” của một thị xã. Con trâu, đàn vịt, gia đình gà, tơ nhện mỏng giăng giăng, chiếc thuyền mộc hay cây cầu tre...những nét “quê mùa” luôn để lại cảm xúc thân thương khó tả với mỗi người Việt

Ở đó, mùa xuân không được hiển hiện bằng mai vàng, dưa hấu đỏ mà là một không gian tươi mát của thiên nhiên hoà vào vạn vật. Đó là khi ngay bên cạnh những khách sạn, resort 4,5 sao, gia đình nhà gà bình yên kiềm mồi giữa đồng lúa xanh ngắt và đàn vịt tắm mát trên dòng sông. Ngay trên dòng dây điện hay trên luống hoa, giăng giăng trăng tinh những mạng nhện mỏng, mịn như tờ...Và khi những người vợ bận rộn với gánh hoa chợ tết, những người chồng lại quang gánh, mái chèo ra đồng ngô...

VietNamNet xin giới thiệu với bạn đọc những khoảnh khắc xuân như thế của một Hội An “quê” bình yên...

- Linh Trúc

Text 11: Provincial Tet festival

Going back to the village felt just like spring. That was the reason why everyone was waiting to go back home during the Tet festival. Spring in the provinces had many very strange moments, but filled with emotion.

For many days, Hoi An was full of lanterns and flowers, one of the specific characteristics of the small, friendly, old streets and difficult to forget. But behind the many lanterns and flowers, lay the noisy but beautiful western street, reminiscent of villages which were familiar and vibrant. Even people visiting Hoi An for the first time or not for a long time felt like this.

Many roads, crossed small streams, green corn fields made the center of famous old town of Hoi An feel like returning to “the essence of the countryside”. A buffalo, a family of ducks, a family of chickens, fine cobwebs, a wooden boat and a bamboo bridge... these countryside images kept alive intimate feelings difficult to describe for each Vietnamese person.

There, spring did not have apricot blossoms and water-melons but this thing were substituted by the fresh atmosphere of nature and many other things. From hotels and four-five star resorts could be seen families of chickens looking for scraps in the vast green paddy field and ducks swimming in the cool river. On the electric lines there were cobwebs which were fine and soft like silk. Many wives were busy shouldering flowers to Tet festival market and many husbands were shouldering oars out to the corn fields.

VietNamNet would like to suggest the readers to feel spring time in a peaceful village like Hoi An.

- Linh Trúc

Text 12: Tết noi cửa Phật

Những ngôi chùa Việt vốn tĩnh tại, nằm ngoài ảnh hưởng của những sự kiện náo nhiệt nơi dòng đời chảy trôi. Tết là một dịp đông vui nhộn nhịp với những người thường nhưng đối với những vị tu hành, Tết có nhiều điều đặc biệt.

Trong tiếng mõ gỗ lộc cốc buổi sớm mai, ngoài sân chùa Phúc Khánh, Hà Nội đã thấy sắc hồng của đào, vàng cam của quất, và trắng tinh khiết của mai. Sân sau, vườn lan trổ một vài nhành khoe sắc. Trong ban thờ chính, giữa khói hương nghi ngút bày mâm ngũ quả bên hộp mứt Tết. Đã nghe phảng phất hương xuân Việt.

Đón năm mới, các ngôi chùa lúc nào cũng đông vui nhộn nhịp khách thập phương đến lễ bái và vãn cảnh. Các nhà sư không được tĩnh tại ngày 3 buổi tụng kinh mà cũng bị cuốn vào chuỗi ngày tất bật với một loạt công việc chuẩn bị đón khách thập phương lên chùa lễ Phật đầu năm.

Đại đức Thích Thanh Quyết, trụ trì chùa Phúc Khánh cho biết việc chuẩn bị Tết trong chùa còn nhộn nhịp hơn ngoài đời bởi vì đây là dịp khách thập phương lên lễ chùa nhiều nhất trong năm.

Lễ Bao sái tượng Phật, khán thờ

Từ 23 trở đi, nhà chùa bắt đầu dọn dẹp, làm sạch các lối đi, trang trí thêm cờ Phật, đèn lồng. Sân trước, mấy chú tiểu đang càn mǎn quét lá. Sân sau, một chú tiểu khác đang tỉ mẩn cắt cành tía lá, xách xô múc nước tưới cây. Trong toà tam bảo, các sư thầy đang tất bật lau phủi ban thờ, thắp đèn cây nến, cắm lọ hoa tươi dâng lên đức Phật. Đây là một thủ tục nhà chùa năm nào cũng làm trước Tết, gọi là lễ Bao sái tượng Phật, khán thờ.

Bí quyết gói bánh chung chay

24 âm lịch, theo phong tục chung, nhà chùa cũng gói bánh chung, nhưng là bánh chung chay. Cũng gạo nếp vo kĩ trắng tinh, đồ xanh xát vỏ đai cẩn thận. Nhưng bí quyết món bánh chung chay của nhà chùa lại nằm ở nhân bánh. Đồ xanh đồ chín tới, vàng tươi trộn với nấm hương được xao tẩm kỹ. Hương thơm của nấm quyện với hương

thơm của đồ bốc lên ngào ngạt. Chính những sợi nấm hương vừa thơm vừa đậm làm cho chiếc bánh chưng không thịt mỡ dưa hành tuy nhã đậm nhưng vẫn có một nét duyên riêng đậm đà hương vị.

Những chiếc bánh chưng chay không to như bánh chưng thường nhưng vuông vức và đều chẵn chẵn. Năm nay, nhà chùa gói gần 1000 chiếc, không phải để ăn mà để phát lộc cho khách thập phương đến lễ chùa. Chính vì vậy, các sư thầy, các bà các cô khi gói đều phải tâm niệm gói sao cho đều tay, bởi Đức Phật đã dạy lộc chùa ban phát cho chúng sinh không thể bênh khinh.

Bận rộn đêm giao thừa

Đêm 30 Tết, mọi người thảnh thơi đi chơi giao thừa, đi chơi chùa. Nhưng đối với các vị tu hành, đây lại là lúc bận rộn nhất. Các sư thầy, các chú tiểu phải luôn để ý coi sóc ban thờ, hương hoa. Những nơi phật tử thắp nhiều hương quá phải nhổ bỏ đi để cho đỡ khói, những nơi khách thập phương để nhiều đồ lễ quá, nhà chùa cũng phải sửa sang lại cho chỉnh tề.

11 giờ đêm 30 Tết, tất cả các sư tăng trong chùa cử hành khoá lễ giao thừa. Trong khi mọi người cầu mong phước lộc cho bản thân và gia đình, thì các vị tăng ni thành tâm cầu nguyện Đức Phật ban cho nhà nhà, người người đều được yên vui an lành.

Đúng giao thừa, 108 tiếng chuông trù tịch vang lên, báo hiệu thời khắc thiêng liêng chuyển giao giữa năm cũ và năm mới. Tiếng chuông âm vang trong không trung bàng bạc mưa xuân xen lẫn với hương trầm man mác kéo con người khỏi hiện tại để tới một cõi hư vô huyền bí nào đó. Vâng lên bên tai hai câu kệ với âm điệu lạ lùng:

Lắng lòng nghe, lắng lòng nghe, Tiếng chuông huyền diệu đưa về nhất tâm

Và từ giờ phút Giao thừa trở đi, nhà chùa không lúc nào được ngơi nghỉ. Công chùa luôn luôn rộng mở cả ngày lẫn đêm để đón các thiện nan tín nữ vào chùa lễ bái, vãn cảnh.

Đại đức Thích Thanh Quyết cho biết “Giờ giao thừa từ trước đến nay chưa bao giờ được ngủ trước 4 giờ sáng bởi vì lúc đó vẫn còn rất nhiều người đến lễ chùa. Và nhà

chùa cũng chỉ dám chọn mảnh một lát bởi khoảng 6 giờ sáng trở đi đã lại phải chuẩn bị đón tiếp phật tử đến lễ đầu năm."

Và những ước nguyện đầu năm

Sớm mùng 1 Tết, trời Hà Nội se lạnh, mưa xuân lát phát bay. Đường phố thưa thớt song các chùa chiền lại rất đông đúc. Những người xa quê, người sinh sống tại địa phương, cả năm bận rộn, hôm nay đã dành những giờ phút đầu xuân vào chùa lễ Phật. Trong tiếng gõ mõ đều đều, mọi người thành tâm cầu nguyện.

Những ngày đầu năm này, nhà chùa luôn bận bịu tiếp chuyện khách thập phương suốt từ sáng đến tối. Đã thành truyền thống, đầu năm người Việt lên chùa không chỉ lễ bái, vãn cảnh mà còn tìm đến các vị cao tăng đắc đạo đàm đạo một đôi câu chuyện, xin một vài lời khuyên nhân dịp xuân mới, hỏi hướng xuất hành, hỏi tuổi xông nhà, hỏi nên làm những việc công đức gì trong năm tới...và coi đó như một điều may mắn đầu năm.

Tối mùng 1, sân chùa vẫn rất đông các thiện nam tín nữ chờ xin sớ. Bên cạnh những chữ Hán nôm ghi điều nguyện ước cho năm mới, các sư thầy, các chú tiểu còn điền vào tên tuổi quê quán của khách, thậm chí giải thích giúp khách những lời ước nguyện ghi trong sớ. Lát nữa, sớ cùng với tiền vàng mã sẽ được hóa, để gửi đến Đức Phật.

Một góc khác của sân, các chú tiểu đang nhanh tay phác lộc cho các phật tử, Một chiếc oán đở, dăm ba quả chuối, hay may mắn hơn là một chiếc bánh chung chay, nhưng khách thập phương đều trân trọng mang về thờ trên ban thờ. Đầu năm đã được lộc của Đức Phật, ắt hẳn cả năm sẽ gặp nhiều may mắn.

Từ mùng 3 trở đi, nhà chùa nhàn đi một chút nhưng lại cũng bắt đầu vào việc chuẩn bị các khoá lễ cầu an cho nhân dân phật tử và đến rằm tháng Giêng sẽ làm lễ đại an, tức là lễ cầu cho quốc thái dân an, cho đất nước hưng thịnh, nhân dân yên vui.

Có thể thấy, bên trong không gian u tịch và cõi kính của cõi Phật, những ngôi chùa Việt vẫn luôn nặng lòng với cuộc sống, với hạnh phúc và hi vọng của nhân dân Phật tử nơi cõi đời.

- Hương Giang

Text 12: Tet festival in a Buddhism temple

Vietnam temples are quiet, because they were not affected by busy noise from outside. Tet festival is an enjoyable occasion for monks. Tet festival has many special things.

To the changing sound of wooden bells in the morning, we saw pink of peach blossoms, orange tangerines and white apricot blossoms in the front yard of Phuc Khanh temple, Hanoi. In the backyard, orchids were in flower in colorful bunches. Surrounded by joss-stick smoke, a fruit tray (which had five kinds of fruit) beside a box of sugar preserved fruit were set on the main shelf (for a statue of the Buddha). This was the atmosphere of Vietnam spring.

Welcoming New Year at the temples is always enjoyable, and there were people from many places who came to worship and sightsee. Monks could not remain undisturbed during the prayer period over three days. They were busy for many days welcoming visitors who came to worship at the end of the year.

Thich Thanh Quyet, abbot of Phuc Khanh remarked that Tet festival preparation in the temple was busier more than outside the temple because this was the occasion when most people came to worship at the temple.

Worshiping and decorating the most important Buddha shelf

From the 23rd day, Buddhist monks began to clean roads and decorate with Buddhist flags and lanterns. In the front yard, novices (in the Buddhist religion) were busy sweeping the floor. In the backyard, a novice was cutting branches, trimming leaves, and watering trees. On the third shelf (the most important shelf), monks were busy cleaning the Buddha shelf, lighting a pair of candles, and placing fresh flowers in the vases, to worship the Buddha statue.

This is the usual custom before Tet called “le Bao sai tuong Phat, khan tho – the Buddha statue and Buddha shelf cleaning worship.”

The secret of vegetarian *banh chung* (square glutinous rice cake) wrap

According to the general tradition, on the 24th day of lunar calendar, all temples wrap *banh chung* (square glutinous rice cake) but it is a vegetarian *banh chung*. There are white sticky rice and green beans which are ground and peeled carefully. But the secret of vegetarian *banh chung* (square glutinous rice cake) of the temples is the stuffing of *banh chung*. The yellow steamy green beans are cooked with shiitake mushrooms. The sweet smell of shiitake mushrooms mixed with green beans permeates the air. This sweet smell of shiitake mushrooms gave the vegetarian *banh chung* the particularly pleasant taste.

Vegetarian *banh chung* are not as big as normal *banh chung* but they have a certain square shape. This year, temples wrapped nearly 1,000 *banh chung*, not for eating but for distributing to visitors who came to worship at the temple. For this reason, monks and female Buddhist devotees wanted to wrap each *banh chung* in equal size. because the Buddha taught temples not to discriminate when distributing to the people.

Busy in the countdown night

On the 30th night of Tet, everybody went to travel on the countdown night. But this was the busiest time for monks. All monks and novices had to monitor and remove joss-sticks and flowers from the Buddha shelf when it overflowed. Many people lit too many joss-sticks, so they had to remove them because of the smoke. In many places, people offered too many offerings, and monks had to reorganize the shelf for the offerings.

At 11pm. of the 30th day of Tet, all monks in the temples held a ceremony for countdown. All people wished luck for themselves and their families, and all monks and nuns prayed for everyone's happiness.

At midnight, 108 small bells rang out to announce the blessed time of countdown. Bells rang out in the dim atmosphere of spring rain mixed with joss-stick smoke; it seemed to take the people away from the present to a mysterious place. Two chants from Buddhist scriptures with a strange rhythm could be heard loudly.

Let's listen to the blessed bell sounds which brought the people together as one.

After countdown, the monks did not have time to rest. Temple gates were open all day and night to welcome the people who come to worship and visit.

Thanh Quyet, a middle-ranking Buddhist monk, remarked that "From the countdown until now, there is no time to rest because there are many people who come to worship. Monks could sleep only briefly because at about 6 am., we had to prepare to welcome the people who came to worship in the beginning of New Year."

Wishes in the beginning of New Year

In the early morning of the 1st of the Tet days, Hanoi's weather was a little cold, and there was drizzling rain. The streets were empty but the temples were crowded. Many people were far from home, lived in the local and busy through the year, they spared a little time at the beginning of the year to go to worship the Buddha at the temples. To the constant clangs of wooden bells, everybody made wishes.

On the days of the beginning of the year, monks were always busy welcoming, talking to the people from morning to evening. It was a tradition, that people who came to the temple, did not only worship and sightsee but also talked and asked questions to the high-ranking monks (who had knowledge) on some topics, such as asking for advice about the best direction (NSEW) to lead first in the New Year, such as the year of birth of the first person who would come to house in the New Year, and lucky things for distributing in the New Year.

In the evening of the 1st day of Tet, in the front yards of temples, there were crowds of people waiting for magic writing. Besides the old Vietnamese alphabet characters (which looked like Chinese) listed for writing down wishes for New Year, monks and novices wrote names, ages, hometowns of the visitors and explained the meaning of wishes which were written in the magic writing. Shortly, these magic writings, silver and golden colored paper, would be burned as offerings to the Buddha. In one corner of the yard, novices were quickly distributing lucky items for the people. These were truncated-cone-shaped cake wrapping in red papers and bananas. But if they were luckier, they would receive vegetarian *banh chung* which the people liked to place on

the Buddha shelf in their houses. If they received blessings from Buddha at the beginning of the year, they would have a very lucky year.

From the 3rd day of Tet, monks were more relaxed but it was the beginning time for preparing many ceremonies for the people. On the full-moon day of the first lunar month, it was the ceremony for wishing prosperity to the nation and happiness to the people. It showed that in the quiet and ancient atmosphere of the Buddhist world, Vietnamese monks always worried about life, happiness and good fortune of the people.

- Hương Giang

Text 13: Canh trộm ngày Tết với thiết bị an ninh không dây

Kế hoạch đi chơi Tết đã được cả nhà hào hứng chuẩn bị chu đáo từ cuối năm, nào thăm ông bà, người thân, bạn bè và cho cả chuyến du ngoạn đây đó. Thế nhưng ai cũng lo vì lúc ấy "Ôsin" sẽ nghỉ làm về quê ăn Tết, nhà cửa không ai trông nom, lỡ khi có trộm, hoả hoạn... "viếng thăm" nhà thì làm thế nào?

Trông nhà từ xa

Đâu chỉ riêng các hộ gia đình mới canh cánh bên lòng nỗi lo an ninh nhà cửa trong các dịp lễ Tết, nhất là các địa bàn dân cư phức tạp. Ngay cả các khách sạn, trung tâm mua sắm... cũng phải công phu đầu tư những trang thiết bị hỗ trợ an ninh. Năm nay, bên cạnh những "cảnh vệ" khá quen thuộc: còi báo cháy, camera quan sát, ổ khoá điện tử... người tiêu dùng còn được làm quen với gương mặt mới: hệ thống bảo vệ an ninh vô tuyến hay còn gọi là máy báo trộm qua điện thoại, máy fax.

Đây là hệ thống bao gồm bộ điều khiển trung tâm nhận tín hiệu đường truyền từ nhiều đầu báo cảm ứng như báo chuyển động (báo khách, trộm), báo cháy và ga. Tuỳ theo tín hiệu nhận được từ đầu cảm ứng nào mà bộ điều khiển có những báo động phù hợp như khách đến thì máy kêu kín kong, trộm thì hú to hoặc nhá đèn. Đặc biệt, hệ thống ánh sáng bởi khả năng kết nối giữa bộ điều khiển với máy điện thoại di động và cố định, máy fax. Điều kiện thuận lợi cho gia đình bạn theo dõi, xử lý phần nào những bất trắc đang xảy ra ở nhà dù đang ở rất xa.

Thông thường hệ thống an ninh được các gia đình quan tâm nhiều nhất là báo trộm và báo cháy nổ. Vì là thiết bị vô tuyến nên việc lắp ráp và đặt để hết sức đơn giản. Kết nối bộ điều khiển trung tâm (sử dụng điện và pin) vào điện thoại cố định theo line cáp ở phía sau, đặt mắt hồng ngoại (dùng pin) theo dõi tại những địa điểm trộm có thể dễ dàng ra vào.

Khi phát hiện có trộm đột nhập, mắt hồng ngoại sẽ nhận biết và truyền dữ liệu về bộ điều khiển. Tại đây, bộ điều khiển sẽ giải mã thông tin. Đầu tiên là chuông báo trộm sẽ kêu vang. Sau ba hồi chuông, máy sẽ tự động quay đến các số điện thoại đã được cài

sẵn trước đó để thông báo. Việc quan trọng còn lại mà bạn không thể quên là nhập các số điện thoại cần thiết vào bộ điều khiển trung tâm.

Bộ điều khiển có thiết kế nhỏ gọn, màn hình hiển thị chế độ nhập dữ liệu rõ ràng. Trong đó chức năng Speaker xử lý tình huống của chủ nhà qua điện thoại có tác dụng cảnh báo rất tốt. Khi điện thoại reo vang, trường hợp không về kịp, bạn có thể nhấn nút # (trên điện thoại di động hoặc cố định) nghe ngóng tình hình. Nếu quả quyết là có trộm, nút * kế tiếp cho phép giọng nói cảnh báo của bạn phát ra trên loa của bộ điều khiển.

Không loại trừ khả năng trộm sẽ phát hiện ra đó chỉ là âm thanh hăm doạ chứ chủ nhân vẫn không có nhà. Nhưng chí ít cũng khiến tên trộm có phần hoang mang, việc trộm cắp sẽ bị chậm lại. Giúp bạn có thời gian thông báo đến nhà hàng xóm và trở về nhà trong thời gian nhanh nhất có thể. Giá thành bộ báo trộm (bộ xử lý trung tâm, mắt quét hồng ngoại và remote) thời điểm hiện nay được đánh giá là khá mềm 208UDS. Bạn cũng có thể không cần mua bộ điều khiển để giảm giá thành thiết bị. Khi ấy thiết bị chỉ có chức năng báo chuông, nhá đèn chứ không kết nối được với điện thoại.

Tự động gọi cấp cứu báo cháy

Vẫn giữ nguyên bộ điều khiển trung tâm, remote điều khiển từ xa, bạn chỉ cần thêm đầu cảm ứng gas, khói là có thể phòng trừ được cháy nổ. Giá của hai đầu cảm ứng này tương đối rẻ 45USD/ đầu nên nhiều khách hàng không ngần ngại chọn thêm. Đặt đầu báo khói, gas tại các địa điểm nhạy cảm trong nhà như bếp, nhà tắm... Nguyên lý hoạt động của các hệ thống báo đều giống nhau. Tuy nhiên vì khoảng cách quan sát của bộ phận cảm ứng cũng như việc nhận và truyền tín hiệu đến bộ phận điều khiển là có giới hạn nên bạn cần nghiên cứu cách đặt bộ điều khiển trung tâm với các đầu cảm ứng sao cho thích hợp nhất.

Bộ điều khiển có thể lưu được đến 8 số điện thoại, trong đó có hai số cuối được cài đặt riêng cho báo cháy nổ. Thế nên bạn cũng không quá lo khi điện thoại di động ngoài vùng phủ sóng hoặc gặp sự cố. Sau khi gọi đến số cài đặt trước không được, máy sẽ liên hệ với 113 hoặc 114, máy chỉ phát tín hiệu reng nên không ai hiểu chuyện gì xảy

ra. Chức năng thu và phát giọng nói của máy giúp khắc phục điểm yếu này. Bạn sẽ thu vào đáy địa chỉ nhà và nội dung cần được giúp đỡ trước vào máy. Nhận được tín hiệu cấp cứu, cơ quan chức năng sẽ dễ dàng tìm được địa chỉ nhà của bạn để có những biện pháp cứu chữa kịp thời.

Một chi tiết nữa ít ai chú ý là tiếng chuông qua loa trên bộ điều khiển. Chuông báo có âm lượng tương đối tốt nhưng chỉ có thể nghe rõ trong nhà và vài nhà lân cận. Nhà quá kín cổng cao tường và có cách âm thì chuông không thể phát huy hết tác dụng là báo động lớn đến hàng xóm xung quanh. Chuông báo động không dây (37USD) và có dây (20USD) khuếch đại âm thanh cũng là giải pháp khá hữu hiệu. Tiếng chuông cực to sẽ giúp báo nhanh trong phạm vi khá rộng khi gia đình bạn thường xuyên vắng nhà hoặc không sử dụng bộ điều khiển trung tâm nối điện thoại.

Với những tên trộm ma mãnh, từng theo dõi và thông thuộc từng ngóc ngách nhà bạn thì không có gì là không thể hoá giải được. Chúng có thể bước vào và rút máy ra khỏi điện thoại nên việc truyền bá khẩn xem như bị vô hiệu hoá. Lúc này biết đâu chuông báo âm thanh to sẽ giúp ích được nhiều hơn bạn nghĩ. Còn bây giờ gia đình bạn có thể yên tâm hơn, thoải mái dạo chơi, nhà đã có "cảnh vệ sô không dây" trung thành còng gì.

Đôi lời nhắn nhủ

Mỗi mắt quét chỉ có thể nhận biết chuyển động khoảng cách 8m, góc quét ngang 90° và góc đứng là 23°. Nếu nhà nhiều tầng và quá rộng, bạn có thể trang bị thêm nhiều đầu quét hơn. Khi thu giọng nói của mình vào bộ điều khiển, cần đọc rõ ràng địa chỉ nhà một cách cụ thể cũng như nội dung cấp cứu, tránh trường hợp cười đùa trong lúc thu. Cơ quan chức năng sẽ không giải quyết những trường hợp như thế.

Máy có thể lưu 8 số điện thoại, nên lưu hai số điện thoại di động, các số còn lại là số cố định của người thân hoặc nơi làm việc của mình.

Text 13: Guard thief in Tet days with security wireless equipments

All families were eager to travel for Tet festival, as they had been waited for this time since the end of the year. Every year they visited their grandparents, relatives and friends, and traveled to many places. But they were worried about their houses because their servants would go back to celebrate Tet festival at their homes. So there was no one to take care the house. If they were robbed or had a fire or fire, how would they do?

Took care of house from long-distance

All families worried about the safety of their houses during Tet, in particular, the people who lived in urban areas (in which there were people with different jobs). Hotels and shopping centers invested in security equipment. This year, security guards were familiar with the fire alarms, security cameras and electronic keys. The customers were acquainted with the new systems, such as the television security system or thief warning machine through telephone and fax.

This machine included the central management system which received signals automatically from burglar, fire and gas alarms. The system working was up to the starting point signal, and it had different signal warning, such as it would ring as 'ging-gong' sounds when there were visitors, it would ring loudly or flash lights when there were thieves. In particular, this impressive system had the potential to connect the management machine with mobile phones, telephones and faxes. It was convenient for connecting families, and managing what was happening in the house, even when the owners were very far from house.

Normally, burglar or fire/explosion alarm were what most people were interested in because they are electronic equipment which are simple to use and set up. They are connected to the central management system (electric or battery) through the telephone by plugging it in behind the plug of telephone, to set up a red light laser (by battery) in areas which were easy for thieves to get in to in the house. When thieves are detected, a red light laser would flash and send information back to the central management system. Then the central management system would decode the

information. Firstly, warning bells would get louder. After three rings, the machine would connect automatically to telephone numbers which were set up earlier to pass on this information. The important thing not to forget is setting up the necessary telephone number with the central management system.

The central management machines are designed small and compact in shape, and their screens show the information clearly. In addition, their loudspeaker is of good quality for control by telephone. So, when telephone ring but nobody can not go back home in time, you can press button # on mobile phone or telephone to listen to the situation at home. If it certain that there are thieves there, you can press button * continuously as a warning and it will send your voice through loudspeaker of the central management machine in your house. Don't worry that thieves would hear as those sounds are just to frighten the thieves. Ultimately, it makes thieves confused and frightened, and stopped. It allows more time to tell your neighbors and return home as fast as you can.

The price of central management machine, red light laser and remote is cheaper now, on average about 208 dollars. To keep costs down, it is not necessary to buy a central management machine, so there is only ring equipment and flashing light (which can not connect to the telephone).

Automatic fire warning in emergency

There is a central management machine and remote but you just add equipment to receive gas and smoke signal which can protect you from fire. The price of two equipments is rather cheap, 45 dollars per machine, so the customers do not hesitate to buy it. Set up smoke and gas warning at places at risk of fire such as kitchen and bath room. The working process of warning system is the same. Because there is limitation of signal connecting between sending and receiving equipments, you should study the manual of central management machine and all signal receiving machines for the most suitable setting.

The central management machine can store 8 telephone numbers, of which; the two last numbers are set up for fire warning. So no need to worry when the mobile phone is out of service because if there is fire and it can not connect to the previous numbers,

it will connect to 113 or 114 (*the emergency calling number in Vietnam*). But if the machine just rings and no one knows what is happening, to solve this problem, there are voice sending and receiving machines. You can record your voice with your address and information which you want into this machine. When the responsible authorities receive the emergency signal, they will find your address easier and solve the problem immediately.

There was one detail which a few people noticed, that is the bell sound through loudspeaker in central management machine. The bell has good sound but it ring loudly and clearly only in the house or two-three nearby houses. Houses were compact with secure fences, and sound protecting systems, and the bell was not loud enough to alert neighbors. A wireless bell was 37 dollars and sound expanding line was 20 dollars, and they are rather good efficient. The best bell volume would help to announce an emergency in a wide area when your family is not at home or you can use the telephone connecting system of central management machine. As for tricky thieves who know your house well, it was no problem. If thieves get inside your house and detect the security machine from the telephone to stop the signal connection. A loud bell might be more useful. So you would be relaxed when you go to travel, because there are honest digital security guards in your house.

Some suggestions

Each laser can detect movement within 8 meters: horizontal line 90° and vertical line 23° . If your house has many stairs and is wide, you should set up more lasers. When recording your voice on the central management machine, you should record clearly your exact addresses with emergency information, and you should avoid laughing during recording. The responsible authorities will not help to solve this problem. The machine can record 8 telephone numbers, so you should record 2 mobile numbers, and other numbers should be telephone numbers of relative's houses or your offices.

Text 14: Hàng ngàn người tham dự Lễ hội bánh tét

Đêm 10/2 (mùng 2 tết) lễ hội bánh tết - lễ hội được nhân dân TP.HCM mong đợi nhất đã diễn ra thật hoành tráng và rộn rã ngay trước nhà hát TP.

Từ 18h, đại lộ Lê Lợi dẫn về Nhà hát thành phố đã đông kín dòng người chờ xem đoàn xe rước bánh tết xuất hành từ công viên văn hóa Đầm Sen diễu hành qua.

Đi trước hai chiếc xe chở cặp bánh tết ông, bánh tết bà là từng đoàn người mặc trang phục dân tộc với cờ lọng, chiêng trống, những thiếu nữ gánh hoa, những chiếc xích lô chở các chiếc bánh tết "con cháu", những chiếc xe kéo đầy sắc hoa, đoàn múa tứ linh với rồng, lân, quy, phụng...

Đúng 19h51 phút, chiếc bánh đầu tiên được cắt ra trong tiếng trống hội tung bừng. Sau nghi lễ cắt bánh là phần biểu diễn múa rồng lửa (còn gọi là rồng nhang), múa tứ linh và biểu diễn văn nghệ mừng xuân.

Cặp bánh tết không lò truyền thống có kích thước và trọng lượng như năm ngoái (đường kính 0,8m; dài 3,5m; nặng 1.750kg). Mỗi đòn bánh sử dụng 700 kg nếp, 120 kg đậu xanh, 100kg nhân thịt và khoảng 300 kg lá chuối + dây buộc, với nhiên liệu gồm khoảng 80m³ củi, 100 m² nước và 30 nhân công.

Thời gian gói bánh và nấu bánh mất 56 giờ (48 giờ nấu bánh). Bánh được nấu chǎn cặp trong một lò nấu tự chế kích thước 1,60mx2,60mx5,50 m và sau khi nấu mỗi bánh có trọng lượng 2 tấn. Điều đặc biệt nhất của cặp bánh tết năm nay là chất lượng bánh ngon hơn hẳn năm ngoái nhờ ban tổ chức (tổng công ty du lịch Sài Gòn và công viên văn hóa Đầm sen) rút kinh nghiệm từ năm trước.

Thưởng thức chiếc "bánh tết Tô" trong tiếng trống hội sôi động giữa những màn múa tứ linh đặc sắc và lễ hội xiếc trên đường phố, đêm nay, người dân thành phố đã được hòa vào một không khí lễ hội thật sự đậm nét văn hóa cổ truyền của Tết Nguyên Đán VN.

Text 14: Thousands people joined *banh tet* - cylindrical glutinous rice cake festival

On the night of the 10th of February (the second day of Tet festival), *banh tet* (cylindrical glutinous rice cake) festival was the most anticipated in Ho Chi Minh city. This festival had its grand and noisy opening in front of the city's main theater.

From 6pm. the Le Loi highway (the way to the theater) was crowded with the people waiting to see the *banh tet* (cylindrical glutinous rice cake) parade. The *banh tet* parade set off from Dam Sen culture park.

In front of two vehicles carrying the *banh tet ong* (male – banh tet) and *banh tet ba* (female – banh tet) were groups of people in ethnic costumes, carrying flags, parasols, gongs and drums. Also, many women carried flowers (in buckets dangling from each end of a shoulder pole), and cyclos loaded with *banh tet con chau* (ancestor – banh tet), wheelbarrows full of colored flowers and teams of dancers representing the four supernatural creatures: dragon, fabulous unicorn, tortoise and phoenix.

At 7.51pm., the first cake was cut to the loud beating of the drums. After the cake cutting ceremony was the performance of the dancing fire dragon (also called burning dragon), the four supernatural creatures dance and a performance to welcome the start of spring.

Last year the two giant traditional *banh tet* were 0.8 meters in diameter, 3.5 meters long, and weighed 1,750 kilos. Each cake was cooked from 700 kilos of ingredients: 120 kilograms of glutinous, green beans, 100 kilograms of meat, 300 kilos of banana leaf and string, 80 m³ of firewood, 100 m² of water and 30 workers.

It took 56 hours to wrap and boil the cakes. The cakes were boiled in a pot 1.60m x 2.60m x 5.50m and after each cake was boiled, it weighed 2 tons. The *banh tet* this year was special, that is, they were more delicious than last year. This was because the organizing committee (Saigon travel company and Dam Sen culture park) had gained experience from last year's effort.

Enjoying the biggest *banh tet* (cylindrical glutinous rice cake) in the festival with the thumping sound of drums accompanied by the outstanding dancing of the four mythical creatures and the circus festival down the road, this night the city people felt something of the real traditional atmosphere of Tet Nguyen Dan festival of Vietnam.

BIOGRAPHY

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