

LINGUISTICS AND VIETNAMESE LINGUISTICS

A CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS OF COHERENCE AND LOGICAL STRUCTURE IN ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE MILITARY MEDICAL RESEARCH ARTICLES

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ABSTRACT: This study examines how thematic structure, cohesion devices, and coherence strategies are realized in English and Vietnamese military medical research articles, using Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) as a framework. Drawing on Halliday and Matthiessen's (2004) model of the textual metafunction, the analysis involved six articles, three in each language, analyzed through manual annotation and corpus tools (AntConc, WordSmith Tools). Findings reveal that while unmarked themes dominate in both languages, English texts favor linear progression and implicit referencing, promoting argumentative clarity. Vietnamese texts rely more on constant progression and additive conjunctions, emphasizing topical continuity and reader inference. These cross-linguistic differences reflect broader rhetorical norms and confirm insights from prior contrastive studies (e.g., Nguyen, Pham, Hyland). The results highlight the value of SFL in contrastive discourse analysis and suggest practical implications for academic writing instruction, particularly for Vietnamese scholars aiming to publish internationally. Future research could explore other genres or bilingual academic contexts.

KEY WORDS: Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL); Textual metafunction; Thematic structure; Cohesion; Coherence; Contrastive discourse analysis.

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1. Introduction

In scientific writing, especially in military medicine, clarity, coherence, and logical flow are essential for effective communication. This study compares the textual functions of coherence and cohesion in military medical research papers written in English and Vietnamese. By examining theme-rheme structure, cohesion devices, and coherence strategies, the research explores how coherence is achieved across both languages. The findings offer insights into how language structure influences the clarity and logical flow in military medical discourse.

The study aims to analyze the thematic structure, cohesion devices, and coherence strategies in military medical research papers written in both English and Vietnamese. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions: (1) How is the theme-rheme structure realized in English and Vietnamese military medical research papers, and how does it affect coherence? (2) What cohesion devices are used in English and Vietnamese papers to contribute to coherence? and (3) How do coherence strategies differ between the two languages? These questions guide the analysis of how linguistic features shape meaning and readability in specialized academic texts.

Scope of the Study This study compares six military medical research papers, three in English and three in Vietnamese, from reputable journals. It focuses on the Abstract, Introduction, and Discussion sections, as these are central to understanding textual coherence.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Framework: Systemic Functional Linguistics and the Textual Metafunction

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), developed by Halliday, views language as a resource for making meaning in social contexts. One of its central components, the textual metafunction, governs the organization of information through theme-rheme structures, cohesion, and coherence (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). Within this framework, the theme functions as the point of departure in a

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clause, while the rheme conveys new information. Cohesive devices such as reference, conjunctions, substitution, ellipsis, and lexical cohesion (Halliday & Hasan, 1976; Eggins, 2004) are essential for linking textual elements and maintaining unity throughout discourse. In military medical writing, where precision and clarity are paramount, effective thematic progression and cohesion play a vital role in conveying complex information clearly and systematically.

In the Vietnamese context, the experiential grammar of the clause, analyzed through the lens of SFL by Hoàng Văn Vân (2005), reveals parallel functional structures. His work emphasizes the adaptations necessary for a tonal, topic-prominent language like Vietnamese, where thematic organization reflects both grammatical function and cultural patterns of information flow.

This theoretical framework forms the foundation for analyzing textual features in the English and Vietnamese military medical research articles examined in this study.

2.2. Previous Research on Coherence and Cohesion in Academic Writing

The study of textual organization in academic discourse has a strong foundation in SFL. Halliday and Hasan (1976) introduced cohesion as a system of semantic ties that bind elements across clauses, while Eggins (2004) emphasized the role of thematic structures in shaping logical flow. Together, these works have informed the analysis of academic coherence from both clause-level and text-level perspectives.

More applied investigations, such as those by Hyland (2009), explored how discourse markers and rhetorical staging contribute to authorial stance and coherence in scholarly texts. Bhatia (1993) extended this to genre analysis, showing that professional writing adheres to discipline-specific patterns and expectations. Coxhead (2000), through her Academic Word List, provided insight into lexical cohesion by identifying core vocabulary that builds both coherence and disciplinary identity.

These foundational studies have been instrumental in shaping the present research, particularly the investigation of thematic structure (Section 4.1), cohesion devices (Section 4.2), and coherence strategies (Section 4.3). For instance, the emphasis on referential links and rhetorical patterns found in Hyland (2009) directly supports the interpretations of paragraph unity and logical signaling in English medical discourse.

2.3. Contrastive Studies of English and Vietnamese Academic Discourse

Research comparing English and Vietnamese academic writing has revealed notable contrasts in textual organization, thematic development, and coherence construction. James (1980) laid the groundwork for contrastive rhetoric, while more recent studies have provided detailed linguistic analyses.

Nguyễn (2019) compared medical case reports and noted that while both languages share structural similarities, English tends to emphasize explicit argumentation, whereas Vietnamese relies on implicit logic and topic continuity. Similarly, Nguyen and Pham (2024) found that English research articles frequently employ thematic chaining and explicit staging, while Vietnamese writing favors topic reintroduction and additive cohesion.

Other studies have examined specific cohesion devices: Trieu (2023) identified connective functions in Vietnamese scientific discourse, and Pham (2023) analyzed discourse markers in subtitles, highlighting their cultural and structural significance. Meanwhile, Nguyen X. B. (2023) offered a comprehensive view of Vietnamese–English contrastive linguistics, and Nguyen T. M. N. (2020) used genre-based approaches to analyze MA thesis abstracts, revealing distinct rhetorical patterns aligned with communicative goals.

These contrastive findings inform the present study's analysis of thematic and cohesive structures, particularly in military medical writing, which has received little attention to date. By situating the current analysis within this body of research, the study affirms and extends existing knowledge, as demonstrated in Section 4 where cross-linguistic coherence patterns and progression types are mapped and interpreted in line with previous literature.

In summary, while much has been done to explore general academic writing across English and Vietnamese, this study addresses a specific gap by applying SFL to examine coherence-building strategies in the specialized genre of military medical research. This contributes to both theoretical discourse analysis and applied pedagogical practices for bilingual academic writers.

3. Methodology

3.1. Data Selection

This study selected six peer-reviewed research articles, three in English and three in Vietnamese, from reputable military medical journals. The English-language articles, all published in *Military Medical Research*, address topics in neurology, hepatology, and global epidemiology. The Vietnamese articles, drawn from *Tạp chí Y Dược học Quân sự*, cover cardiology, nephrology, and pulmonary function. These selections ensure topical diversity and reflect authentic disciplinary discourse within military medical science.

Each article ranged between 2,000 and 4,000 words in length. To ensure comparability and focus on sections most critical to coherence and rhetorical staging, the Abstract, Introduction, and Discussion sections were analyzed. Together, these sections account for approximately 35-50% of each article and contain the primary argumentative and explanatory content.

3.2. Analytical Framework

The analysis followed Halliday and Matthiessen's (2004) model of the textual metafunction, focusing on three core components: (1) thematic structure (theme–rheme patterns and progression types); (2) cohesion devices (reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunctions, and lexical cohesion); and (3) coherence strategies (rhetorical staging, paragraph unity, and flow of ideas). This framework enables a comprehensive examination of how meaning is structured within and across clauses in academic discourse.

3.3. Procedures and Tools

A dual approach was employed to ensure both depth and reliability. Manual annotation enabled detailed qualitative analysis of thematic organization and coherence patterns. In parallel, corpus-based tools (AntConc and WordSmith Tools) facilitated frequency analysis of cohesive devices and lexical repetition. This integrated methodology ensured a triangulated and systematic comparison of how English and Vietnamese authors construct textual coherence in military medical discourse.

4. Results

This section presents the findings of the comparative analysis based on the textual metafunction framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). Drawing on Halliday and Matthiessen's (2004) model, the study explores how thematic structure, cohesion, and coherence are realized in three English and three Vietnamese military medical research papers. The analysis integrates manual annotation with corpus-based frequency analysis using AntConc and WordSmith Tools, ensuring both qualitative insight and quantitative reliability. The results are presented in direct response to the three research questions that guided the study.

To facilitate smooth transitions and reader orientation, each subsection below addresses a specific research question while drawing connections across linguistic features observed in both corpora and relating them to prior research discussed in Section 2.

4.1. Thematic Structure Analysis

In response to Research Question 1 - How is the theme - rheme structure realized in English and Vietnamese military medical research papers, and how does it affect coherence?, this subsection examines how theme–rheme structures guide the organization of ideas. Both languages prioritize unmarked themes (72% in English, 83% in Vietnamese), reflecting a shared preference for syntactic regularity and clarity. However, English articles exhibited a higher incidence of marked (18%) and interpersonal themes (6.5%) than Vietnamese articles (12% and 2%), indicating stronger rhetorical engagement and greater flexibility in textual organization.

A key divergence lies in thematic progression. English texts favor linear progression, where each new sentence builds on the previous rheme, facilitating forward-moving argumentation. In contrast, Vietnamese texts predominantly employ constant progression, which maintains topical stability by repeating the same theme across clauses.

Example 1:

- English: “*The study found that the use of Endophilin A2 significantly reduced mechanical allodynia.*” → Theme: “The study” → Rheme: new information about findings.

- Vietnamese: “*Độ dày vách liên thất ở nhóm bệnh nhân nghiện rượu mạn tính có sự gia tăng so với nhóm chứng.*” → Theme: consistent, topic-maintaining phrase → Rheme: contrastive result.

Table 1. *Distribution of Theme Types in English and Vietnamese Articles*

Theme Type	English Articles (n=3)	Vietnamese Articles (n=3)
Unmarked Themes	143 (72%)	165 (83%)
Marked Themes	37 (18%)	25 (12%)
Interpersonal Themes	13 (6.5%)	4 (2%)
Textual Themes	6 (3.5%)	5 (3%)

As shown in Table 1, English texts employed a wider range of theme types, suggesting stronger engagement with reader orientation and argumentative flow. This distribution highlights a more diverse thematic repertoire in English texts, which can support flexible rhetorical moves and enhanced reader orientation. In contrast, the predominance of unmarked themes in Vietnamese indicates a tendency toward structural regularity, emphasizing stability over rhetorical nuance.

This confirms findings from Hyland (2009) and Nguyen and Pham (2024), who noted that English academic writing tends to stage information explicitly, often through strategic thematic progression.

To further illustrate these progression patterns, Figure 1 presents a comparative breakdown of thematic progression types across the two languages.

Figure 1. *Thematic Progression Patterns Across Languages*

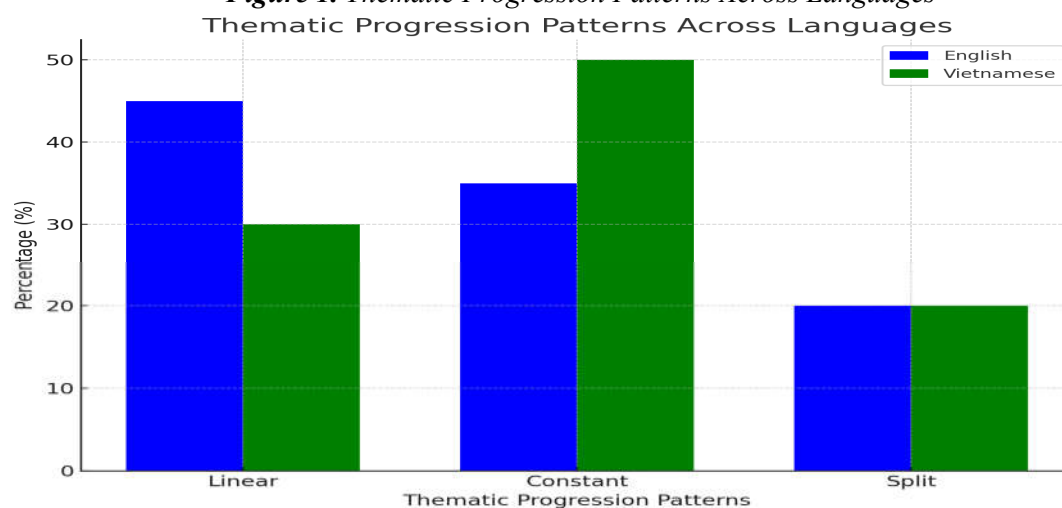


Figure 1 provides a visual summary of the dominant thematic progression patterns in both languages. Thematic chaining in English, where the rheme of one clause becomes the theme of the next, encourages logical flow and argumentative clarity. Vietnamese, in contrast, relies on constant progression, repeating the same theme across clauses, to maintain topical continuity and ensure coherence through reiteration.

This distinction aligns with the contrastive observations of Nguyen (2019) and Nguyen T. M. N. (2020), who noted that Vietnamese academic writing tends to prioritize stability and topic maintenance. The implications for coherence are significant: English supports dynamic and incremental development of ideas, whereas Vietnamese favors coherence built through steady reinforcement of key concepts. These rhetorical tendencies reflect culturally embedded approaches to structuring knowledge and guiding reader comprehension.

4.2. Cohesion Device Analysis

To address Research Question 2 - What cohesion devices are used in English and Vietnamese military medical research papers to contribute to coherence? This section analyzes reference, conjunctions, and lexical cohesion. English texts make greater use of reference (e.g., “this finding”) to implicitly link clauses. Vietnamese texts use conjunctions like “và” (and) to connect propositions explicitly. The use of “và” here enhances the flow of ideas, maintaining coherence in the argument.

Example 2:

- English: “*This finding suggests that further research is necessary.*” → “*This*” links back to the previous idea.

- Vietnamese: “*Các thông số về hình thái như đường kính và thể tích thất trái...*” → “và” connects two related attributes.

Table 2 below summarizes the frequency of various cohesive devices identified in both English and Vietnamese texts using corpus tools.

Table 2. Frequency of Cohesive Devices Identified via AntConc and Manual Annotation

Cohesive Device	English Articles (n=3)	Vietnamese Articles (n=3)
Reference	182	145
Conjunctions	97	132
Lexical Cohesion	201	168
Substitution	12	6
Ellipsis	8	4

The distribution underscores Vietnamese writers’ reliance on conjunctions, particularly additive ones, to link ideas explicitly. English writers, meanwhile, balance reference and lexical cohesion more evenly, suggesting a strategy that minimizes redundancy while maintaining flow. This divergence reflects differing norms of rhetorical economy.

These results extend the earlier work of Halliday and Hasan (1976), who emphasized the role of reference and conjunction in cohesive ties. Notably, Trieu (2023) and Pham (2023) also identified conjunction-heavy cohesion in Vietnamese texts, which aligns with this study's findings. The consistency in these observations strengthens the claim that linguistic cohesion in Vietnamese favors surface-level clarity and reiteration, while English leverages internal referencing to streamline progression.

Additionally, lexical cohesion in both English and Vietnamese relies heavily on repetition of domain-specific terminology. For instance, in the English article, the term “Piezo2” is repeated to maintain thematic continuity: “*The study focuses on the role of Piezo2 in mechanical allodynia. Piezo2 is a key factor in the development of pain sensitivity.*” Similarly, in the Vietnamese article, the term “*tâm thất trái*” (left ventricle) is repeated across sentences to ensure coherence and consistency in the discussion. The repetition of such terms helps anchor the reader in the same semantic domain, especially in highly technical genres.

Table 2 summarizes the most frequently repeated lexical items across the English and Vietnamese medical research articles. These terms, predominantly domain-specific nouns such as “Piezo2,” “kinesin,” and “pain” in English, and “*tâm thất trái*,” “*siêu âm tim*,” and “*chức năng tâm thu*” in Vietnamese, play a crucial role in creating lexical cohesion and semantic continuity. This supports Eggins (2004) and Coxhead’s (2000) emphasis on how disciplinary vocabulary reinforces coherence and helps shape genre-specific identity in academic writing.

To further illustrate the lexical cohesion strategies employed in both English and Vietnamese medical discourse, we extracted frequent domain-specific terms from one representative English article and one Vietnamese article using AntConc in Figure 2.

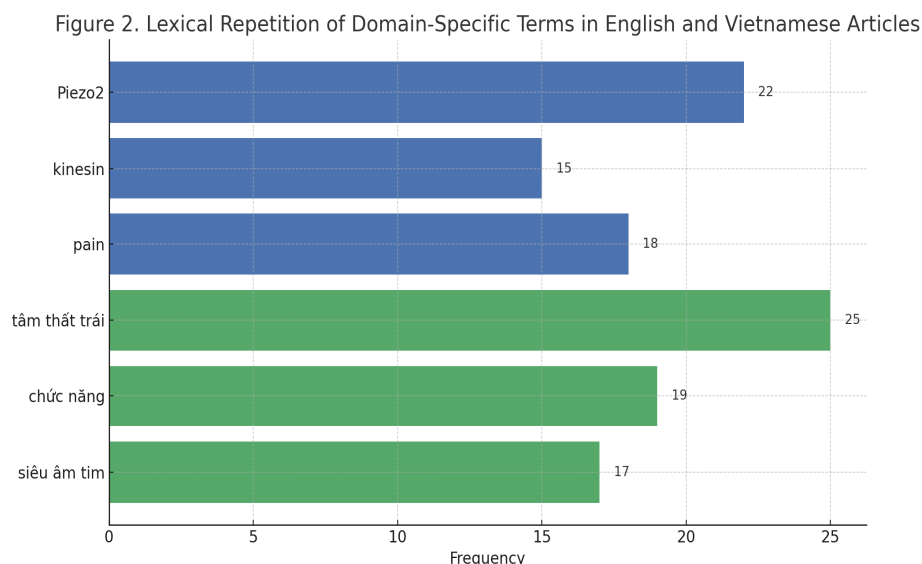


Figure 2. Lexical Repetition Clusters Visualized from AntConc Output

Figure 2 offers compelling visual evidence of how lexical cohesion operates in both English and Vietnamese scientific discourse. The repeated use of specialized terminology functions not only as thematic anchors but also as indicators of semantic focus, particularly in technical fields like military medicine. These lexical chains organize information around key concepts and contribute significantly to intra-textual coherence.

In English, this repetition often occurs within a framework of referential economy, where pronouns and abbreviated expressions are used alongside domain-specific terms to maintain flow without unnecessary redundancy. In Vietnamese, repetition is more overt and frequent, reinforcing topical continuity through lexical consistency. This contrast reflects differing rhetorical preferences: English favors efficiency and structural compactness, while Vietnamese values reiteration and thematic stability to guide reader understanding. Together, these patterns highlight how lexical cohesion serves both linguistic and rhetorical purposes across languages.

4.3. Coherence Strategy Patterns

This subsection responds to Research Question 3 - How do coherence strategies differ between English and Vietnamese military medical research papers? The analysis focuses on three key aspects: rhetorical structuring, use of logical connectors, and paragraph unity. These elements collectively reflect how writers organize ideas and guide readers through complex arguments.

English texts predominantly adopt a writer-responsible style, characterized by systematic use of problem - solution structures, forward and backward referencing, and explicit discourse markers such as “therefore”, “however”, or “in contrast”. Vietnamese texts, on the other hand, align more closely with a reader - responsible approach, favoring cyclical reasoning, frequent topical reiteration, and implicit transitions (e.g., “điều này cho thấy”).

Example 3:

- English (Zi et al., 2024): “The global burden of six urologic diseases presents a significant public health challenge. Urgent international collaboration is essential...”

- Vietnamese (Đỗ Xuân Tĩnh et al., 2023): “Có sự thay đổi hình thái và chức năng tâm thất trái... Điều này cho thấy cần có các biện pháp phát hiện sớm...”

The use of coherence strategies is outlined in Table 3, which compares rhetorical structuring and referencing practices in the Discussion sections.

Table 3. *Coherence Indicators and Rhetorical Moves in Discussion Sections*

Strategy/Move	English (Avg. per paper)	Vietnamese (Avg. per paper)
Problem–Solution Pattern	5	3
Logical Connectors Used	17	14
Paragraph Unity Score	High	Medium
Backward/Forward Referencing	Frequent	Moderate

Table 3 illustrates the clearer rhetorical staging and higher unity in English papers. The data shows that English texts consistently employ problem–solution structures and logical connectors to establish coherence, resulting in more clearly unified paragraphs and explicit discourse flow. Vietnamese texts, while still cohesive, rely more heavily on repetition and implicit linking, which places a greater burden on the reader to interpret relationships between ideas. This difference reveals how coherence is not only a linguistic but also a cultural construct, shaped by audience expectations and disciplinary conventions. These findings align with Bhatia’s (1993) genre analysis and Hyland’s (2009) observations of predictability and signaling as hallmarks of English academic discourse.

These rhetorical strategies are mapped visually in Figure 3, contrasting the discourse flow in English and Vietnamese discussions.

Figure 3. *Coherence Mapping in English vs. Vietnamese Discussions*

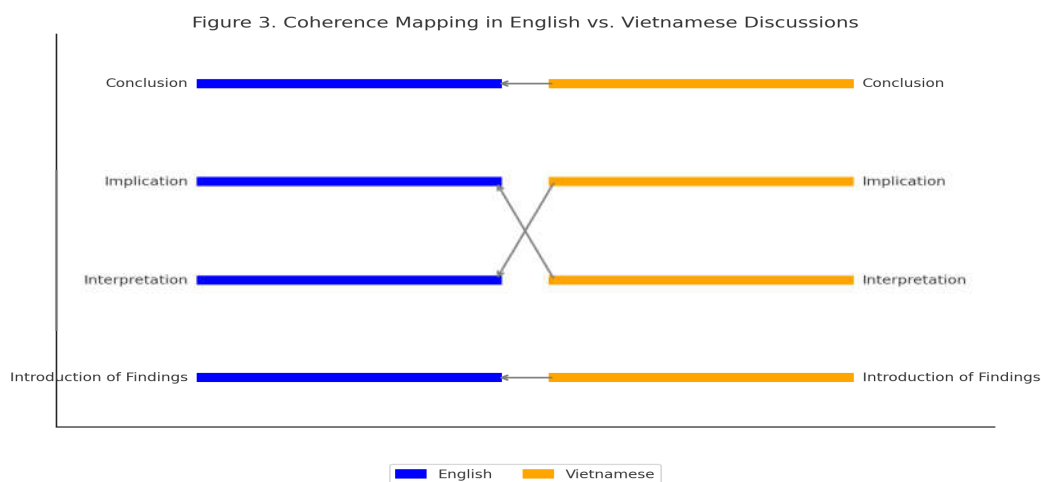


Figure 3 illustrates the contrasting rhetorical paths between English and Vietnamese scientific discussions. English argumentation typically progresses linearly, ensuring coherence through explicit structural markers such as problem–solution patterns and logical transitions. This clear staging facilitates a cumulative, writer-responsible mode of presentation. Conversely, Vietnamese texts often exhibit a cyclical organization, revisiting central ideas and relying on implicit transitions. This approach is aligned with the reader-responsible style discussed by Nguyen (2019) and Nguyen X. B. (2023), where coherence is achieved through contextual accumulation rather than overt signals.

These discourse strategies reflect broader cultural norms in presenting knowledge, favoring explicit logic and progression in English, and thematic continuity and inference in Vietnamese.

Collectively, these findings confirm that English texts prioritize writer-responsible coherence through explicit staging and logical connectors, while Vietnamese texts lean toward reader-responsible coherence grounded in thematic continuity. These results reinforce and extend previous insights (Sections 2.2 and 2.3), underscoring the value of SFL in contrastive discourse analysis. They also affirm that coherence in military medical writing is shaped by culturally situated rhetorical norms: English favors dynamic progression, whereas Vietnamese emphasizes topical stability and contextual inference.

5. Discussion

This study set out to investigate how the textual metafunction of Systemic Functional Linguistics - namely, thematic structure, cohesion devices, and coherence strategies - manifests in English and Vietnamese military medical research papers. Through a combination of manual annotation and corpus-based analysis, the study provides nuanced insights into how meaning is constructed and organized in scientific discourse across the two languages. The findings are discussed below in relation to the three guiding research questions and the overarching objective of understanding how these linguistic resources contribute to clarity and coherence in academic writing.

5.1. Realization of Theme–Rheme Structures and Their Impact on Coherence

In response to the first research question, *How is the theme–rheme structure realized in English and Vietnamese military medical research papers, and how does it affect coherence?*, the study found that both English and Vietnamese texts predominantly employ unmarked themes, which is expected in formal academic discourse where subject–verb alignment enhances clarity. However, a marked difference emerged in the pattern of thematic progression. English texts favored linear progression, whereby the rheme of one clause becomes the theme of the next, fostering a sense of development and argumentative momentum. Vietnamese texts, by contrast, predominantly used constant progression, maintaining the same theme across successive clauses to reinforce topical continuity.

This distinction in progression has important implications for textual coherence. The linear progression common in English scientific writing supports dynamic coherence, whereby new information is introduced and built upon, moving the argument forward. Conversely, the constant progression typical of Vietnamese texts facilitates referential stability, ensuring the reader remains oriented within a consistent topical frame. While both approaches are coherent within their respective rhetorical traditions, the English model aligns more closely with expectations in international academic publishing, which often privileges linear, cumulative reasoning (Hyland, 2005).

These patterns support Halliday and Matthiessen's (2004) assertion that thematic structures organize the flow of discourse, and align with contrastive rhetoric theories (Hinds, 1987), which identify English as a "writer-responsible" language and Vietnamese as "reader-responsible." They also echo findings by Nguyen and Pham (2024) and Nguyen T. M. N. (2020), who emphasized that Vietnamese writers tend to favor thematic stability and topic maintenance over rhetorical innovation.

5.2. Cohesive Devices and Their Role in Building Coherence

The second research question addressed the types and functions of cohesion devices in English and Vietnamese texts. While both corpora utilized a range of cohesive mechanisms, the distribution and preference for specific types varied. English texts showed higher use of reference and lexical cohesion, employing pronouns and domain-specific terminology to maintain coherence across sentences and paragraphs. Vietnamese texts, however, demonstrated a greater reliance on conjunctions, particularly additive connectors such as *và* (and), to link ideas explicitly at the sentence level.

The heavier use of reference in English aligns with its syntactic flexibility and its tendency to compress information through chains of referents. This strategy allows English writers to create

cohesive links without overt repetition, enhancing textual economy while maintaining clarity. In Vietnamese, a more paratactic structure and a preference for repetition ensure that the reader remains anchored to the same conceptual domain, which is crucial in a high-context language where meaning is often inferred from shared understanding rather than syntactic markers.

Moreover, lexical cohesion through repetition of technical terms (e.g., “Piezo2” in English or “tâm thất trái” in Vietnamese) was prominent in both sets of texts. This repetition helps reinforce domain-specific focus and semantic continuity, an essential feature of medical discourse, which demands terminological precision.

These observations are consistent with Halliday and Hasan’s (1976) taxonomy of cohesion and reflect the different rhetorical preferences embedded within the two languages. They also align with Trieu (2023) and Pham (2023), who found that Vietnamese writing heavily relies on conjunctions and repetition to maintain text unity. Importantly, the contrast in cohesion strategies underscores that English coherence often depends on subtle referential cues, while Vietnamese coherence is rooted in visible lexical and connective repetition.

5.3. Cross-Linguistic Differences in Coherence Strategies

The third research question explored how coherence strategies differ across English and Vietnamese medical discourse. The findings reveal that English texts exhibit higher paragraph unity, clearer rhetorical staging, and more frequent use of problem–solution structures, along with both forward and backward referencing. These features help readers anticipate the structure of the argument and locate claims and evidence easily.

In contrast, Vietnamese texts, while still coherent, often lack explicit staging and rely more on implicit transitions and general linking expressions (e.g., “điều này cho thấy”). As illustrated in the Vietnamese article by Đỗ Xuân Tinh et al. (2023), the logical connection between results and implications is present but not overtly signposted. This can lead to looser paragraph unity and greater dependence on the reader to infer rhetorical relationships.

These differences reflect broader discourse norms. English scientific writing tends to emphasize predictability and transparency in rhetorical organization, whereas Vietnamese writing, influenced by oral traditions and collectivist communication styles, often adopts a more cyclical or inductive approach. This observation supports previous studies by Nguyen (2019), who highlighted the implicit nature of coherence in Vietnamese case reports, and Nguyen X. B. (2023), who stressed the importance of shared context in Vietnamese academic communication.

The findings align closely with Bhatia’s (1993) and Hyland’s (2009) work on genre-specific rhetorical strategies, as well as contrastive studies that underline cross-cultural variability in academic discourse conventions. They reinforce the notion that coherence is a culturally conditioned construct, shaped by the epistemological and communicative assumptions of each discourse community.

5.4. Implications for Research Writing and Instruction

The findings of this study have practical implications for academic writing pedagogy and cross-cultural communication. For Vietnamese researchers seeking publication in international journals, developing familiarity with linear thematic progression, reference chains, and explicit coherence markers can improve the clarity and persuasiveness of English academic writing. Meanwhile, reviewers and editors should remain mindful that rhetorical structures in Vietnamese texts may reflect different - but equally valid - conventions of coherence.

From a pedagogical perspective, these insights support the integration of genre-based instruction and SFL-informed writing curricula that address not only grammar and vocabulary but also discourse-level features such as thematic progression and rhetorical staging. These implications echo Nguyen T. M. N. (2020)’s findings on genre-based approaches to abstract writing and contribute to the development of contrastive academic literacy. Moreover, the study demonstrates the value of

Systemic Functional Linguistics as a tool for contrastive discourse analysis, offering both theoretical and applied benefits.

Additionally, by applying and extending frameworks outlined by Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), Eggins (2004), and Halliday and Hasan (1976), this research affirms the importance of linguistic metafunctions in cross-cultural analysis. It further validates and builds upon the insights of previous studies by Nguyen and Pham (2024), Trieu (2023), and Pham (2023), highlighting how cultural and disciplinary contexts shape the realization of coherence in scientific texts.

6. Conclusion

This study investigated how thematic structure, cohesion devices, and coherence strategies are realized in English and Vietnamese military medical research articles, using the textual metafunction framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). While unmarked themes dominated both languages, English texts employed more marked and interpersonal themes and favored linear progression for dynamic rhetorical development. Vietnamese texts, in contrast, emphasized constant progression and additive conjunctions to maintain topical continuity.

A key contribution of this study is its application of SFL to the underexplored genre of military medical research, and its integration of theme–rheme structure, cohesion, and rhetorical coherence in a bilingual corpus. This dual-language, multi-dimensional approach is rare in existing research and sheds new light on how coherence is constructed across cultures.

Findings confirm that English texts tend toward writer-responsible coherence through explicit logical staging, while Vietnamese texts favor reader-responsible coherence grounded in topic maintenance. These insights align with contrastive rhetoric theory and provide a practical foundation for bilingual academic writing instruction.

For Vietnamese scholars aiming to publish internationally, the study suggests focusing on thematic chaining, reference use, and rhetorical clarity. Pedagogically, it supports genre-based, SFL-informed instruction that emphasizes discourse-level strategies.

In sum, the research validates SFL as a tool for cross-linguistic discourse analysis and offers practical implications for enhancing coherence in academic writing across languages and disciplines.

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Phân tích đối chiếu tính mạch lạc và logic trong các bài báo y học quân sự Anh-Việt

Tóm tắt: Nghiên cứu này khảo sát cách thức cấu trúc chủ đề-vị, phương tiện liên kết và chiến lược mạch lạc được hiện thực hóa trong các bài báo nghiên cứu y học quân sự bằng tiếng Anh và tiếng Việt dưới góc nhìn Ngữ pháp Chức năng hệ thống (SFL). Dựa trên mô hình chức năng văn bản của Halliday và Matthiessen (2004), sáu bài báo (ba tiếng Anh và ba tiếng Việt) đã được phân tích bằng cách kết hợp chú giải thủ công và công cụ ngôn ngữ học máy tính (AntConc, WordSmith Tools). Kết quả cho thấy, mặc dù cả hai ngôn ngữ đều ưu tiên chủ đề không đánh dấu, tiếng Anh thiên về tiến trình tuyến tính và liên kết tham chiếu ngầm nhằm thúc đẩy lập luận, trong khi tiếng Việt ưu tiên tiến trình không đối và liên từ bổ sung để giữ mạch chủ đề. Những khác biệt này phản ánh chiến lược mạch lạc mang tính văn hóa, đồng thời gợi ý những hướng đi thiết thực cho việc dạy viết học thuật và nghiên cứu đối chiếu trong ngữ cảnh đa ngôn ngữ.

Từ khóa: Ngôn ngữ học chức năng hệ thống (SFL); chức năng siêu ngôn bản; cấu trúc chủ đề; liên kết; mạch lạc; phân tích diễn ngôn đối chiếu.