

Vietnamese Personal Terms of Address Reflecting Family Cultures and Relationships Based on Halliday's Interpersonal Metafunction

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Abstract—The article analyzes the role of terms of address in Vietnamese family relationships through three basic elements of the interpersonal metafunction according to M.A.K Halliday's theory of Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG): (1) personal expression, (2) social distance, and (3) relative social status. Terms of address not only reflect feelings and mental states but also express social and cultural positions in the family. The paper uses descriptive and discourse analysis methodologies to clarify the communicative functions and cultural significance of the terms of address' system in the relationships between husband and wife, grandparents and grandchildren, parents and children, and siblings. These terms assist in maintaining family cohesion and affirm cultural values such as affection, respect, and family responsibilities. The preservation and adaptation of these pronouns in traditional ways can contribute to maintaining harmony and sustainability in Vietnamese family relationships.

Index Terms—personal expression, social distance, relative social status, terms of address, communication culture

I. INTRODUCTION

In social communication, terms of address have played a vital role in connecting individuals, creating and maintaining unity in the community. Not only serving as addressing terms, terms of address also clearly reflect the cultural characteristics and typical behavior of each society in daily communication. In literature, terms of address have become even more expressive when they establish the relationships among the members in a family (husband - wife, grandparents - grandchildren, parents - children, brothers - sisters). In addition to that, they deeply depict feelings, mental state as well as their positions in conversations.

This paper focuses on clarifying how terms of address reflect the interaction and communication atmosphere among subjects, via three basic elements of the interpersonal metafunction according to the theory of Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG). These elements include:

- (1) The speaker's personal expression (combining modal elements, allowing the language user to express personal emotions, attitudes and opinions);
- (2) Social distance (reflecting the level of intimacy - intimacy, closeness - distance among the parties participating in the communication);
- (3) Relative social status (determining the equality or difference in power, age or position between the parties).

Thanks to these three elements, terms of address have become a tool to express interpersonal relationships, as well as a means to reflect profound cultural and social values in our mother tongue.

From that theoretical foundation, the article is going to examine the role of terms of address in family relationships, based on the three elements of the interpersonal metafunction mentioned above. The examination is based on Vietnamese literary works, aiming to clarify the communication characteristics and cultural significance of the pronouns' system in our language. Through that, the paper is expected to contribute to enriching the understanding of how the Vietnamese language expresses interpersonal relationships in a socio-cultural context. Simultaneously, the paper suggests further research on the application of SFG theory in Vietnamese language.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A. *The Interpersonal Metafunction in the Theory of Systemic Functional Grammar*

According to M. A. K. Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar, languages actualize three key metafunctions: experiential (conveying content), interpersonal (establishing and maintaining social relations, expressing attitudes and positions), as well as textual (organizing messages). Each utterance conveys information and aims to achieve specific purposes in communication, as follows:

- Establishing and maintaining social relations
- Influencing the interlocutor's attitudes and behaviors

- Revealing personal perspectives on the world
- Encouraging or changing the listener's views
- Requesting information or actions from the interlocutor

All these above actions show that languages have played important roles in connecting people, promoting mutual understanding, and maintaining social harmony.

In the process of communication, interactivity is a key factor to achieve the purpose. Grammar, together with its constituent elements, contributes significantly to forming the interpersonal metafunction. According to M. A. K. Halliday, this metafunction is associated with the concept of “Atmosphere” (tenor) of discourse, also known as the interactivity among participants. Atmosphere is interpreted through three major elements: the personal expression of the speaker/writer, social distance, as well as relative social status (Halliday, 1985).

These three main elements are used to analyze how language constructs interpersonal relationships, as well as to clarify how Vietnamese pronouns reflect cultural values, such as the hierarchy in Vietnamese families. In literary works, these elements are used to portray characters, internal conflicts, attitudes, emotions and interpersonal relationships between the speaker, the listener, or the object being mentioned. The article specifically shows the elements in the metafunction through the following diagram:

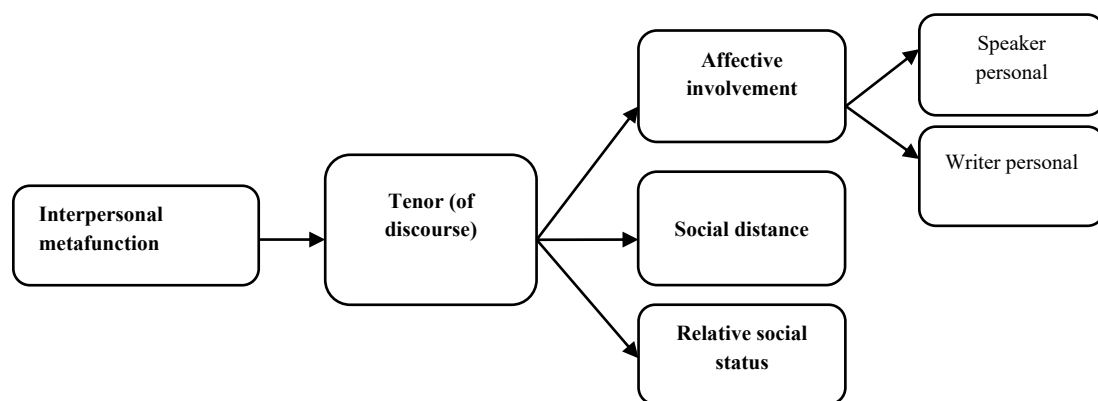


Figure 1. The Theory of Interpersonal Metafunction

B. Terms of Address, Tenor, Cultures: Concepts and Illustrations From Literary Works

To clarify the role of terms of address in expressing interpersonal relationships and communication cultures, the following concepts are built on the theory of Systemic Functional Grammar and applied to Vietnamese.

(a). Terms of address

According to Do Huu Chau, “Terms of address are not only a tool for the speaker to perform the unavoidable act of inserting themselves and their interlocutor into the discourse, but also a tool whereby the speaker constrains (or binds) themselves and the other into a specific type of interpersonal relationship” (Chau, 2003). Therefore, terms of address represent the type of interpersonal relationships among communicative objects.

It can be seen that terms of address are a linguistic means that the speaker (first person) uses to express themselves and refers to the listener (second person) in communication activities. These words include proper personal pronouns (I, you...), common nouns for people (kinship terminologies, proper names, words referring to positions, occupations...) or temporary word combinations in address (demonstrative pronouns, nominalized adjectives...) to emphasize the direct relationship between two communicative objects.

The terms of address used to refer to the speaker and the listener have played a vital role in the interpersonal metafunction of Systemic Functional Grammar. In Vietnamese, terms of address not only perform the function of determining communication status but also reflect cultural and social values, especially in the literary context.

(b). Communicative Atmosphere (Tenor)

The communicative atmosphere (tenor) is a core concept within the interpersonal metafunction of Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG). It refers to the social context of interaction as it is shaped by linguistic choices, with terms of address playing a particularly important role. According to M.A.K. Halliday, tenor is analyzed through three main components that clarify how these terms express interpersonal relationships and communication culture.

Specifically, according to M.A.K. Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (Van, 2005), the interpersonal metafunction expressed through tenor includes these three components:

- Personal expression: this reflects self-image, emotions, and attitudes through grammatical features like modality, polarity, and appraisal (e.g., the pronoun “em” conveys humility, while “anh-em” conveys intimacy);
- Social distance: this indicates the degree of intimacy or distance between participants, revealed through address forms (e.g., “anh-em” creates closeness; “thầy nó - mẹ nó” emphasizes connection through their children, reflecting cultural shifts in literature);

- Relative social status (difference in power/role, through respectful forms of address such as “cha-con”, changing according to life stages and regions, maintaining flexible hierarchy).

These factors structure family relationships, serving as a means to reflect Vietnamese culture through address forms and contributing to the creation of social harmony.

(c). Communication Culture

The concepts of culture and communication can be defined as follows: "Culture is the sum of material and spiritual values created by humans throughout history" (Hoang Phe, 2014, p. 1421). According to Berge (1994), "Communication is the process of exchanging information between at least two objects, taking place in a specific context and situation" (Ban, 2012, p. 18).

These two concepts are closely related: culture defines patterns, and communication is where those patterns operate in social life and education.

Communication culture is a system of norms, rules and values that govern the use of terms of address in Vietnamese, particularly within literature. In Vietnamese culture, terms of address are not merely a communicative tool; they are symbolic expressions which reflect core cultural values.

These values are evident through three basic elements:

(1) Respect for Hierarchy (Respect Order): This is shown through the use of kinship terms (e.g., ông, bà, chú, cô...) to indicate status and power distance.

(2) Stratification of Formality: This involves using honorifics and familiar language (e.g., thưa, dạ or mày, tao...) to adjust the level of formality and intimacy based on the relationship and context.

(3) Emphasis on Community (Communitarity): Vietnamese terms of address highlight communal ties, especially in family relationships. In artistic (literary) texts, the shift between address levels frequently accompanies changes in the relationships and the psychological state of the characters.

III. METHODOLOGY

This article uses the descriptive method and discourse analysis to explore how terms of address in Vietnamese families express family relationships and culture, as defined by M.A.K. Halliday's interpersonal metafunctional theory.

- Descriptive method: Based on the data collected from literary works and language researches, the descriptive method is employed to categorize and present in detail the phenomena of pronoun usage across various family relationships: husband-wife, grandparents-grandchildren, parents-children, and siblings. This method helps clarify the role and function of terms of address in communication, while also highlighting the influence of cultural and social factors on their use. This approach serves as the primary analytical framework throughout the research, offering an overview of the expression and communicative function of this word class within the texts.

- Discourse analysis method: This method is applied to interpret the function of words and forms of address as they are used in specific utterances. The choice of forms of address is analyzed in relation to factors including personal expression, social distance, relative social status, and communication culture. This approach helps to clarify the relationship between language and social factors, thereby enabling an understanding of how address forms reflect power, emotions, and roles within Vietnamese family relationships.

These two methods, combined with M.A.K. Halliday's interpersonal metafunctional theory, are used to analyze factors such as participation, emotions, and power inherent in the forms of address, thereby clarifying social and cultural relationships within the family.

To identify and analyze address terms within the framework of M.A.K. Halliday's interpersonal metafunctional theory, the article followed the steps outlined below:

- Selecting data from Vietnamese literary works containing family dialogues, ensuring diversity across communicative relationships (husband-wife, grandparent-grandchild, parent-child, and sibling) and a reasonable level of representativeness of family interaction.

- Identifying and extracting utterances containing address terms in the interactions between characters.

- Classifying and analyzing the address terms based on interpersonal parameters, including personal stance, social distance, and relative social status.

- Analyzing the findings and drawing conclusions about the role of address terms in constructing interpersonal relations in Vietnamese family communication.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Families have been considered as fundamental units of society, a system that includes parents and children, and can be extended to grandparents, uncles, and siblings, all linked by biological relationships. Family communication often follows hierarchical rules, clearly reflecting biological relationships and the intergenerational bonds. From the perspective of Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG), this article applies three elements of the interpersonal metafunction — the speaker's personal expression, social distance, and relative social status — to explain the role of pronouns in Vietnamese family life.

A. Terms of Address Expressing the Relationship Between Husband and Wife

Terms of address used between husband and wife do more than just define communicative roles; they also convey respect, affection, and mutual responsibility. The specific pairs of address terms are chosen based on regional culture, age, occupation, backgrounds, and popularity. They are also reflected through the three elements of Tenor (Interaction) within the interpersonal metafunction.

(a). Common and Typical Terms of Address

In Vietnamese, the words for "husband" and "wife" are used to refer to a man and a woman in a marital relationship. When communicating with each other, the couple has a variety of address terms to choose from:

For young couples, the pair "anh - em" is the most common, as seen in this example:

(Ex 1). - Em có muốn anh lên đường không?

- Không, em không muốn. Nhưng em biết, nếu anh không đi thì lòng anh sẽ day dứt mãi. Anh cứ đi, em sẽ ở nhà chăm sóc con và lo việc nhà.

- Anh cảm ơn em. Em là hậu phương vững chắc của anh. Anh sẽ sớm trở về với mẹ con em (Thi, 2023).

The interaction in this marital communication is clearly demonstrated through the three elements of the interpersonal metafunction.

First and foremost, the personal expression is revealed through the address forms. The wife uses "em" to convey humility, support, and concern, while the husband uses "anh" to express responsibility and gratitude. Additionally, social distance is significantly reduced by the "anh-em", which reflects the closeness and intimacy inherent in the marriage. This choice creates a natural, barrier-free dialogue and deep understanding between the two parties. Finally, relative social status, despite the division of tasks (the husband as the "breadwinner" and the wife handling "childcare"), still conveys consensus and emotional equality. Thanks to this, the "anh-em" address pair makes the conversation gentle and deeply emotional, clearly showing mutual love and respect.

In different situations, particularly once they become parents, their forms of address may shift to kinship-based pairs like his father and his mother (or variants like his teacher).

(Ex 2). Ông nói gần giọng:

- Mẹ nó không phải lo. Cả thằng U'ông, thằng Ngạc cũng không phải lo, có gì tao sẽ chịu tất.

- Tôi nói thế là lo cho thầy nó, chứ tôi thì... (Truong, 1990).

In this dialogue, personal expression is evident in the wife's clever use of "thầy nó" combined with the pronoun "I" to assert her responsibility and concern. In contrast, the husband's harsh tone combined with "tao" underscores his determination, psychological pressure, and role as the family's main provider. In terms of social distance, the address pair "thầy nó - mẹ nó" links the couple through their shared identity as parents, but the husband's harsh tone simultaneously introduces psychological distance. Regarding relative social status, while "thầy nó" and "mẹ nó" establish equality as co-parents, the husband's use of the pronoun "I" still emphasizes his authority, particularly in moments of stress or dissatisfaction.

When the couple is older, they may use "ông - bà", "ông - tôi", or "bà - tôi" often replacing the titles used earlier ("anh - em" "thầy nó - mẹ nó"). This practice conveys both respect and closeness.

(Ex 3). Rồi ông Ham quay sang bà vợ đang gấp quần áo trên chiếc giường Đức nâu bóng: - Bà xuống rang cho tôi đĩa lạc (Truong, 1990).

In (3), Mr. Ham addresses his wife as "bà" and refers to himself as "tôi," creating a tone that is both respectful and intimate when making his simple request to "roast peanuts." Although the "tôi - bà" reflects the husband's active position in making the request, the relationship remains founded on emotional equality, making the family communication feel warmer and more connected.

Alternatively, the choice of address terms between husband and wife may depend on the profession or task one is currently engaged in.

(Ex 4). Tối Tam Ngải, anh chạy vội về nhà... Vợ anh la:

- Không có đạn đồng chí ơi!

Anh cười:

- Công đồng chí cũng có công tôi chứ. Tuy hai là một, đồng chí à! (Thi, 2023).

The work "Người mẹ cầm súng" reflects the nation's resistance war against the U.S. In this wartime setting, the soldier and his wife address each other as "đồng chí," instantly establishing a unanimous and respectful tone that signifies a close spiritual bond, emphasized by their smiles and the phrase "we two are one." This form of address deliberately blurs personal boundaries, emphasizing the atmosphere of shared hardship and suffering in their common mission. Simultaneously, it asserts their absolute equal position given their shared ideals, responsibilities, and decision-making power in the context of war.

The relationship between husband and wife in Vietnamese family culture is richly expressed through terms of address. These terms are not just a communicative necessity but a reflection of the diversity and depth of feelings and relational dynamics across different life stages (from youth to parenting to old age) and during shared tasks. The careful selection of each address pair fits the specific situation, demonstrating mutual love and respect. Ultimately, the choice of address form strengthens the husband-wife relationship while clearly defining their roles and responsibilities to each other and their family.

(b). Regional Terms of Address between Husband and Wife

In addition to the common address pair “anh – em”, spouses across Vietnam’s three regions also employ region-specific forms that carry distinct nuances: the North (anh–em, mình–mình, mình–tôi, mình–tôi, bố nó/thầy nó – mẹ nó...), the Central region (mình–tôi, ông–bà...), and the South (tôi – anh, tôi – má nó, ba sắp nhỏ – má sắp nhỏ, mình – tôi...). These differences reflect each region’s culture and traditions, and they may shift across communicative situations to reveal attitudes and psychological states.

Northern Families' Contexts

In Northern families, the terms “anh” and “em” are the most frequently used address forms between spouses, signifying respect and mutual affection. However, members in this relationship also employ other pairs, such as “mình – tôi”, “mình – mình” and “bố nó – mẹ nó”, “thầy nó – em,” which generally reflect intimacy, closeness, and emotional equality. However, address forms can change depending on the communication context to express each individual's attitude and mental state.

(Ex 5). - Thầy nó có đói đi ăn cơm thêm? Buổi tối cậu Lưu cho thịt vịt em vẫn để phần đấy.

- Ăn rồi. Sáng mai không được gọi tôi đấy nhé! (Truong, 1990).

In Example (5), regarding social distance, the wife uses “thầy nó” and “em” to express concern and maintain a close, warm atmosphere; the husband’s curt “tôi” creates psychological distance and “tilts” the intimate mood. Regarding relative social status, “thầy nó” evokes the husband’s role as the family’s pillar, whereas “em” indexes the wife’s deference within the traditional Northern family hierarchy.

Another example:

(Ex 6). Chị Hoàng thu dọn đồ đạc, đóng cửa, rồi đem một cây đèn to lại chỗ cây giường chúng tôi,... Anh Hoàng trông thấy, hỏi:

- Mình thấp đèn to đấy à?

- Vâng, tôi đổ thêm dầu đã (Nam Cao, 2017).

(Ex 7). Chị Hoàng chạy lại bếp lấy một quyển sách bìa dày, gáy da, đem lại.

- Mình đọc hay tôi đọc?

- Mình đọc đi (Nam Cao, 2017).

In examples (6) and (7), “mình – tôi” and “mình – mình” are used flexibly: “mình – mình” creates a tender sense of closeness and equality; “mình – tôi” remains intimate yet more formal, fitting the discreet, polite communicative style often associated with an educated couple. Taken together, (5), (6), and (7) show how spousal address terms shift with everyday contexts.

Central Region's Terms of Address

In the Central region, common spousal pairs include “mình – tôi” and “ông – bà”, which sound rustic yet emotionally rich. In disagreement, these pronouns still keep the marital frame, though the interaction can “heat up” through tone.

(Ex 8). - Ông ơi, con nó đã nát như ra rồi!

- Nát như cái gì! Nó nói dối như thế mà bà còn bênh!

- Thì nó còn nhỏ, ông đánh nó đau, tội nghiệp! (Anh, 2008).

In example (8), “ông – bà” conveys both respect and heightened emotion in a tense exchange: the wife addresses “ông” in a pleading tone, while the husband replies “bà” with strong objection. Even as the argument intensifies emotional opposition, the pair still anchors the family relationship. In terms of relative social status, “ông – bà” is relatively symmetrical on the surface, yet the husband’s forceful utterances suggest momentary control over the situation.

Southern Families' Contexts

In the South, address forms tend to be simple and flexible, fostering a friendly communicative environment. Beyond “anh – em”, couples may use “tôi – anh”, “tôi – cô”, “tôi – má nó”, “mình – tôi”, etc. Notably, “tôi” appears frequently as a neutral self-reference.

(Ex 9). Út về nói với chồng:

- Tôi nhứt định lấy cái bát này, nhưng lỡ phải đem cái thân ra cho nó giỡn hót, giày vò anh chịu không.

Anh Tịch nói:

- Em làm sao được cứ làm (Thi, 2023).

In example (9), “tôi – anh” allows the wife to emphasize seriousness and determination while maintaining respect; the husband’s gentle “em” signals trust and support. The addressing sustains connection and also suggests a more equal, independent stance for the wife.

(Ex 10). Ba mập nghiêm trang chìa tay ra trước mặt vợ nói như ra lệnh:

- Tiền tôi đưa má nó hồi hôm đâu?

- Trời ơi! - Chị Ba Mập liếc qua (Truong, 1990).

Here, “tôi” helps maintain respect and a certain formality between spouses, even within intimacy. “Má nó”, used after having children, is both affectionate and role-defining, highlighting the wife as a mother in the family. The combination “tôi – má nó” in Southern culture can signal closeness and equality while still preserving seriousness in interaction.

Or in (Ex 11): Vợ Thủ rón rén lại bên giường gọi nhỏ:

- Thầy em dậy đi, có chú Sửu đến (Truong, 1990).

“Thầy em” in (11) underscores a respectful, more hierarchical nuance than “tôi – anh” in (9): it elevates the husband as the family’s support, while “em” marks the wife’s modesty.

It can be affirmed that terms of address are not only a part of the Vietnamese language but also a highly representative of the culture and communication styles across the three regions: North, Central, and South. The differences in address usage examined by this article, drawn from literary works, only reflect certain aspects of the cultural characteristics of each region. Nevertheless, this analysis helps to illustrate the diversity and richness of the Vietnamese language and culture to some extent.

(c). Terms of Address Used between Husband and Wife in Different Emotional States

In Vietnamese communication culture, terms of address are not merely a means to define the communicative roles of the speaker and listener; they also powerfully reflect their emotional states. This class of words is highly diverse and rich, meaning that choosing and applying the correct and appropriate pairs of terms helps to convey the emotions and attitudes of the communicators deeply across various situations.

Emotional and Humorous Ways to Address Husband and Wife

(Ex 12) Lúc chuẩn bị đánh thấy chồng không nói gì mình, nói:

- Anh tính không cho tôi đi sao?
- Em đi để đi dạo đường à?

Út nói nửa cười, nửa mếu:

- “Đồng chí” đã hại người ta, giờ lại cản nữa (Thị, 2023).

The address pair “đồng chí” – “người ta” in the example (12) conveys a humorous tone, creating a light-hearted and playful dynamic in the conversation. When Út refers to her husband as “đồng chí,” it shows signs of closeness, intimacy, and a touch of teasing. Út’s statement, “đồng chí đã hại người ta, giờ lại cản nữa” might initially suggest irony or conflict due to the juxtaposition of “đồng chí” and “người ta.” However, when considering the conversation as a whole, this choice of address reflects the humor and ease within their marital relationship, effectively reducing tension and fostering a close, affectionate atmosphere.

Terms of Address between Spouses under Different Emotional States

(Ex 13) Người đàn bà bỗng thở dài. Tràng quay lại khẽ hỏi:

- Buồn à?
- Không.
- Gớm sao lúc này nói chuyện dai dẳng, đợi sót cả ruột.

Thị lườm hần không trả lời. Hần xích lại cười cười:

- Thôi khuya rồi đây, ngủ đi. (Kim Lan, 2023).

In this example, Mr. Trang and his wife omit terms of address. This is also a common practice among young couples or couples at the same age to express their feelings.

In the dialogue between Mr. Trang and his wife, the omission of address terms contributes to creating a natural and emotional communication tone. The choice not to use a formal address has become a modal sign, reflecting the comfort and closeness in their newly formed relationship. From the perspective of social distance, this omission conveys a casual, simple atmosphere, erasing all boundaries between two young people with the same background. In terms of relative social status, the lack of need to establish the speaker or listener through a form of address demonstrates absolute equality, ensuring no element of power or seniority exists in this marital relationship.

(Ex 14) Vẫn cái giọng rì rầm, rì rầm thường ngày.

- Đây, thầy nó ạ.

Ông Hai nằm rũ ra ở trên giường không nói gì.

- Thầy nó ngủ rồi à?
- Gì!

Ông lão gắt lên:

- Biết rồi! (Kim Lan, 2017).

In the dialogue between the husband and wife, Mrs. Hai uses “thầy” in a gentle tone, conveying concern and self-sacrifice. However, Mr. Hai’s abrupt responses (“Gì!”, “Biết rồi!”) reveals his frustration and disrupt the intimacy. While “thầy nó” fosters closeness through their shared identity as parents, Mr. Hai’s attitude simultaneously creates psychological distance. In terms of relative social status, “thầy nó” emphasizes the husband’s central role, yet his brief, proactive replies also reveal his inner turmoil.

Addressing Husband and Wife Based on Comradeship

(Ex 15) Út cười nói với chồng:

- Tôi “chia lửa” cho “đồng chí chồng” rút đó, nghen! (Thị, 2023).

The way the character Út addresses her husband using “tôi” and “đồng chí chồng” is delivered in a cheerful, humorous, and affectionate tone. This choice not only expresses pride but also vividly depicts the spirit of unity and solidarity between two individuals who share the same revolutionary ideals. The word “nghen!” at the end of the sentence further emphasizes the intimacy and sincere support in the couple’s life, which is tied to their political missions. In terms of social distance, “đồng chí chồng” is both formal and intimate. It helps dissolve class boundaries, replacing them with a spirit of solidarity and equality among people of the same rank. Regarding relative social status, this form of address affirms absolute equality, as neither gender nor power is distinguished. Instead, they stand on the same fighting ground, sharing responsibility and revolutionary belief.

(d). Terms of Address used when Communicating about a Third Person

Dialogue between spouses typically involves only two participants: the speaker (who addresses) and the listener (who is addressed). When the communication expands to include a third person — who is absent from the immediate conversation — the specific address form chosen depends on the context and the third person's relationship with the speaker or listener.

Communicating with Elders in the Family

(Ex 16) Trảng nhắc mẹ:

- Kia nhà tôi nó chào u.

Thấy mẹ vẫn chưa hiểu, hấn bước lại gần nói tiếp:

- Nhà tôi nó mới về làm bạn với tôi đây u ạ! Chúng tôi phải duyên phải kiếp với nhau... (Kim Lan, 2023).

Trang uses the term “nhà tôi” to refer to his wife when conversing with his mother (whom he addresses as “u”). This form is used to affirm Trang's marital relationship to his family. This address is delivered in a very gentle and casual manner while still conveying deep emotion.

Communicating with Children in the Family

(Ex 17) Thăng bé vừa đứng trước mặt, Ba Mập xoay ngoắc người nó trở lại và vỗ mạnh vào đít:

- Lẹ đi, kêu má ra ba có việc cấp cứu nghe con (Kim Lan, 2023).

When speaking to his child, Ba Mập (the speaker) refers to his wife (the absent character) using the word “mom”. This choice of address demonstrates Ba Mập's respect for his wife and simultaneously affirms her position within the family hierarchy.

Communicating with Older People Outside the Family

(Ex 18) Đến cả chú mà cũng nghĩ như thế à? Ôi giờ đất ơi! Vợ tôi ốm, con tôi đói. Tôi cũng cần phải làm ăn, phải uống như mọi người. Các người có còn muốn cho tôi sống nữa không?... (Tran Đăng Khoa, 2020)

Communicating with Close Friends

(Ex 19) Anh Ba Mập vênh vang hãnh diện, nhận tiền từ tay vợ, cố ý giơ cao tay thả thật thật nhẹ vào cái mũ do một thủy thủ tinh nghịch dâng tận nơi.

- Tính cả tinh thần má sắp nhỏ nhà tôi nghe anh em (Tuan, 2020).

The terms used by the husband to refer to his wife, such as “vợ tôi” (18) or “má sắp nhỏ nhà tôi” (19), serve not only to reference her but also carry a nuance of care and affection (personal expression). They demonstrate respect, love, and attachment, particularly in everyday life. In terms of social distance, they foster a feeling of closeness and intimacy, affirming an informal relationship suitable for Southern communication styles. Regarding relative social status, both terms project balance, showing a respectful attitude from the husband and highlighting the wife's role as a mother without emphasizing his personal power.

In short, terms of address in the husband-wife relationship play a vital role in the interpersonal metafunction according to M.A.K. Halliday. Through personal expression, they reveal attitudes, emotions, and psychological states such as respect, love, teasing, or frustration. Through social distance, they reflect the level of closeness or formality, ranging from absolute intimacy (“mình - mình”) to temporary distance during arguments. Through relative social status, they determine hierarchy and roles, shifting from the husband's dominance in the traditional family to equality in contexts like the resistance movement. Depending on the region and circumstances, terms of address function not only as communication tools but also as powerful expressions of culture, emotion, and family responsibility.

B. Terms of Address Expressing the Relationship Between Grandparents and Grandchildren

Bonds between a husband and wife primarily expresses interpersonal relationships connected by marriage. Within the family structure, however, there are other relationships connected by blood, such as those between parents and children, siblings, or grandparents and grandchildren. The clear and specific expression of these blood relationships relies heavily on terms of address, alongside other linguistic tools. In particular, the terms used between grandparents and grandchildren are crucial for reflecting traditional values, filial piety, and family cohesion.

(a). Common and Typical Terms of Address

The terms of address used for the grandparent-grandchild relationship originated within the feudal family system, where family rank and seniority were the standard for cultural norms.

In Vietnamese, the terms used to address grandparents and grandchildren are exceptionally rich and diverse, often varying based on both gender and family status. The terms “ông” (used for both paternal and maternal grandfathers) and “bà” (used for both paternal and maternal grandmothers) refer to the elders of the family. The term “cháu” refers to all grandchildren, regardless of gender, demonstrating the younger generation's respect for their elders. Thus, these terms are not simply labels but carry the deeper meaning of respect and establishing the proper relationship framework within a multi-generational family.

(Ex 20). Bà hỏi cô cháu: - Cậu đây là người thế nào?

- Cháu phải biết rõ hơn về quá khứ của anh ta và những quan hệ rất phức tạp của anh ta với nhiều hạng người (Tuan, 2020).

In “Xung hô trong gia đình người Việt”, Bui Minh Yen comments on the reciprocal address used by grandparents and grandchildren:

In essence, this way of addressing is reciprocal, which means one addresses oneself using their own role to the addressee, vice versa. In other words, each person refers to themselves and the other party strictly by their respective positions in the reciprocal relationship. (Yen, 1994, pp. 31-40)

In conversations between a grandmother and her grandchild, it highlights the grandmother's care and responsibility, and the grandchild's filial piety and attachment. This pair of terms fosters a close atmosphere, effectively removing emotional barriers within the family. In terms of relative social status, "grandmother" emphasizes the leading role of the elder, and "grandchild" denotes politeness. Yet, the open nature of the dialogue itself demonstrates the sharing and closeness that are key traditional cultural aspects of the grandparent-grandchild relationship.

(b). Regional Variations in Terms of Address

The specific address terms used between grandparents and grandchildren may vary slightly by region, though the core meaning remains consistent. However, based on the corpus surveyed, we noted that these address terms of grandparents-grandchild relationship do not have consistent usage or broad coverage across all three regions, and regional differences are minor.

Northern Region

In the North, the terms "ông" and "bà" are the most common address forms. The grandfather or grandmother refers to themselves as "ông" or "bà" and addresses their grandchildren as "cháu". Conversely, grandchildren refer to themselves as "cháu" or "con" and address their grandparents as "ông" or "bà".

Additionally, Northern Vietnamese also uses terms that specify the paternal or maternal lineage combined with the core titles, such as "ông nội" - "cháu", "bà nội" - "cháu", or "ông bà ngoại" - "cháu".

(Ex 21) "Ông ơi, cháu thích ăn món này." (Kim Lan, 2017)

(Ex 22) "Cháu ơi, rót cho bà miếng nước nhé." (Kim Lan, 2017)

The terms "cháu - ông" and "cháu - bà" are familiar expressions in family communication, signifying the close bond between grandparents and grandchildren. These terms are not only popular in the North but are also widely used across the Central and Southern regions, reflecting the underlying unity in Vietnamese family culture.

Central Region: addressing grandparents and grandchildren in the Central region remains as common as it is in the North. However, in some areas, people may use alternative terms for grandparents, such as "ông" or "bà", while the grandchildren refer to themselves using "cháu" or "con".

(Ex 23) - Cháu của ông ngoan lắm.

- Cháu thích được ngủ cùng với cụ cơ (Tuan, 2020)

Southern Region: in the South, people commonly use "ông/bà nội", "bà/ông ngoại", similar to the North and Central regions. They may also use the simpler pairs "nội - con" and "ngoại - con". Some areas use the construction "grandparent + grandparent's name" to clarify the relationship further. Parental or maternal grandchildren, however, consistently refer to themselves as "cháu", making no distinction from other regions.

(Ex 24) Thấy Phi suốt ngày thui thủi một mình, ngoại biểu đi hàng xóm chơi, Phi lắc đầu, "... Con với ông nước lã, người dưng mà, ngoại?" (Tuan, 2020)

These specific address forms clearly define the roles and positions of grandparents and grandchildren within the family while simultaneously conveying closeness and affection.

It is clear that in Vietnamese culture, the way grandparents and grandchildren address each other primarily emphasizes affection and intergenerational connection. Terms of address ("ông - cháu" across all three regions, "ông - con" in the South, or regional variants) express the care and love of the grandparents and the filial piety of the grandchildren. This dynamic creates an intimate atmosphere, effectively bridging the generation gap. Terms like "ông", "bà", "nội", "ngoại" emphasize the leading role of the adults, while "cháu" and "con" denote the necessary politeness of the younger generation. Even though the variations are not extensive, this form of address remains a crucial linguistic tool, reflecting fundamental Vietnamese family values across all regions.

C. Terms of Address Expressing the Relationship Between Parents and Children

In Vietnamese families, the way parents and children address each other is not merely a way to define communicative roles; it holds multiple layers of meaning, simultaneously reflecting affection, respect, and emotional bonds within the families. The system of address terms used in this relationship is quite diverse in both literary works and daily life.

(a). Common and Typical Terms of Address

- Parents often use terms of address that are loving and affectionate when speaking to their children. However, the most common and typical terms remain "cha", "mẹ", and "con". Other common terms include "con", "bé", "em", "em bé", or simply the child's name, sometimes accompanied by gender modifiers like "con trai" or "con gái".

(Ex 25) - Cha thương con phận đàn bà. Không may lấy phải thằng quỷ dữ cộng sản. Nó theo Việt Minh vào rừng ăn rêu đá, đã mọc đuôi dài, lông lá gớm giếc (Chu Van, 2016).

(Ex 26) - Con ơi, mai mẹ lại đưa con về mẹ con ta phải chết trước mũi chúng nó?

(Ex 27) - Ba ơi! Ba! Con đây.

- Ba đây...Ba thắng lợi trở về đây ha...ha...Em bé đâu? (Tuan, 2020).

In the three examples of "cha - con", "mẹ - con" and "ba - con", Vietnamese families' affection is clearly depicted across diverse contexts. In terms of personal expression, these address pairs carry intimate emotional nuances, conveying anxiety and sorrow (examples 25, 26) or joy and pride (example 27). This reflects the deep thoughts of the parents and

the respect and attachment of the children. Regarding social distance, the use of “cha,” “mẹ,” “ba,” and “con” creates a familiar space, emphasizing empathy and understanding inherent in the biological relationships, whether in times of adversity or reunion. In terms of relative social status, the terms “cha,” “mẹ,” and “ba” affirm the leadership role of the parents, but the sincerity and emotion in the child’s reciprocal use of “con” reduces the hierarchy, fostering closeness.

- Children’s Terms of Address for Parents:

When speaking to their parents, children consistently use respectful and polite terms of address. The words “con” and “cha,” “mẹ” remain the primary terms used by children. Nevertheless, depending on the communication situation and the region, the terms used to address parents can vary widely. Common alternatives include “bố,” “mẹ,” “ba,” “má,” “mạ,” “ông,” “bà,” “thầy,” “u,” “tía,” “bà,” “cha”. This diversity in address terms reflects the richness of the Vietnamese language and highlights regional differences. For instance, in the North, children often call their parents “bố mẹ,” while in the South, the words “ba má” are more commonly used.

(Ex 28) - Bây giờ mẹ tôi lại ở với mấy đứa em gái tôi bên nó, năm nay chúng cũng lớn rồi, bộ đội đâu mà gả, không biết mẹ tôi nghĩ ngợi ra rằng (Tuan, 2020).

(Ex 29) Đường như đứa con gái đang chết, chỉ đôi mắt là rung rúc chớp mở không thôi. Câu đầu tiên nó hỏi:

- Không biết con bị có con không, hả cha? (Tu, 2006).

(Ex 30) Thắng Thành nói:

- Con không đành lòng để tía ở lại một mình (Tu, 2006).

(Ex 31) Con Tùn giận dỗi:

Nếu mẹ không tôn trọng con thì mẹ còn hỏi ý kiến của con làm gì (Anh, 2008).

The three examples of “mạ – tôi,” “cha – con” and “mẹ – con” affirm that terms of address both reflect personal attitudes and preserve traditional biological relationships and hierarchy. In terms of personal expression, the use of “tôi” in “mạ – tôi” is laden with worries and anxieties for the mother and siblings, while “con” in “cha – con” sounds vulnerable, signaling a need for help and protection, thereby creating distinct emotional nuances. Regarding social distance, the “mạ – tôi” pair balances intimacy and formality thanks to the use of the pronoun “tôi,” while “cha – con” removes all barriers when the child is insecure, emphasizing unconditional attachment. In terms of relative social status, “mạ” and “cha” assert their leadership roles, while “tôi” and “con” express politeness. However, the anxious tone in both examples blurs the lines of power, instead demonstrating deep empathy and sharing between generations.

(b). Regional Variations in Terms of Address

In Vietnamese culture, the terms of address used by children for their parents are highly diverse and rich, with clear distinctions across the three regions: North, Central, and South. Each region has a typical way of addressing parents that reflects its local customs, culture, and communicative habits.

Northern Region

In the North, children typically address their parents using “bố” and “mẹ”. These terms are also widely used in daily communication. Additionally, children in this region may call their parents by terms such as “thầy,” “cậu,” “me,” “bu,” “đề,” “mợ” (terms often found in rural areas).

(Ex 32) Ông lão ôm thằng con út lên lòng, vỗ nhẹ vào lưng nó, khẽ hỏi:

– Húc kia! Thầy hỏi con nhé, con là con ai?

– Là con thầy mấy lị con u. (Kim Lan, 2017).

Central Region

In the Central region, the most common pair of words used to address parents is “ba” and “má”. This usage reflects the warmth and closeness characteristics of the people and culture here. Beyond this core pair, local variations include calling mothers “mạ” or “mệ,” “u,” “bà” and sometimes addressing the father as “thầy”.

(Ex 33) Bà Đức quần quai trên đường như muốn chồm dậy mà không dậy nổi, nước mắt đầm đìa trên khoé mắt, miệng ú ớ:

- Nghe má, đừng đi nữa con (Tuan, 2020).

Southern Region

In the South, children often call their fathers “ba,” “tía,” and their mothers “má,” “vú,” or “bà,” among others.

Each Vietnamese region features its own specific variations in address forms: North (“thầy – con,” “u – con”); Central (“má – con,” “mạ – con”); and South (“tía – con,” “ba – con”). All these variations aim to express the three elements of the interpersonal metafunction. First of all, they carry characteristic emotional nuances — from affectionate care to urgent concern — reflecting the speaker’s feelings and responsibilities. Secondly, despite the different terms, all forms create an intimate communicative space, with psychological distance only temporarily appearing when asserting authority through a harsh tone or command. Finally, the words used for parents emphasize their superior position, but the children’s reciprocal address and emotional responses soften the gap, affirming sharing and a flexible hierarchy in Vietnamese families.

(c). Terms of Address Used in Different Emotional States

In typical daily conversations, parents commonly refer to themselves as “ba,” “bố,” or “mẹ” and address their children as “con,” and vice versa. This represents the standard, traditional way of addressing used by most Vietnamese families. Nevertheless, this pattern can shift significantly in situations involving different emotional states.

- When children are young, parents often use affectionate terms like “cúng com” to convey closeness and intimacy. Other personalized terms used for young children often attach their names to personal characteristics or traits for distinction, such as Tùn, Tí sún, Hím, Đực (boy), Bẹp (girl), Hải cò, Tuấn xoắn, etc.

(Ex 34) - Hải cò đâu?

- Dạ ba gọi con (Anh, 2008).

The terms parents use often combine their children's names with specific characteristics or personality traits to create a distinctive and identifying form of address.

- To command attention or express a degree of dissatisfaction, parents might refer to their sons as “thằng”, and their daughters as “con” or “cái”.

(Ex 35) - Thằng Phi đâu?

- Con nó sẽ tới bây giờ đó. Bà đau lắm hả? (Tuan, 2020).

(Ex 36) - Con Tí đâu bố gọi sao không trả lời?

- Dạ, con đây ba (Truong, 1990).

When there are conflicts or disagreements, which typically occurs only when children have grown into adults and disappointed or challenged their parents, parents may use the terms “anh” and “chị” towards their adult children to emphasize authority.

(Ex 37) Ông hỏi Phi: - Chắc anh quan hệ với nhiều phụ nữ? (Tuan, 2020).

Occasionally, parents call their children by name only, omitting any other form of address to signal closeness, intimacy, and a temporary removal of age or status distinctions within the family.

(Ex 38) Ông Hàm lên nhà trên mở toang cửa, rồi gọi với giọng rất sang:

- Nước sôi chưa Hoa?

Một tiếng dạ từ dưới bếp, rồi đứa con gái út hơn mười tuổi bỏ dở bài đang học, xách siêu nước lửa vẫn còn cháy nhấp nháy quanh âm nhôm đi lên (Truong, 1990).

The address pair “tao – mày” is not strictly reserved for peers. In family relationships, the term “tao” appears when parents address their children, reflecting comfort and sincerity in family communication. However, children cannot use “tao” to address their parents, as this violates the family order and the cultural norm of respecting elders.

(Ex 39) Bà lão nói toàn chuyện vui, toàn chuyện sung sướng về sau này:

- Tràng ạ. Khi nào có tiền ta mua lấy đôi gà. Tao tin rằng cái chỗ đầu bếp kia làm cái chuồng gà thì tiện quá....

Bà lão đặt đĩa bát xuống, nhìn hai con vui vẻ:

- Chúng mày đợi u nhá. Tao có cái này hay lắm cơ (Kim Lan, 2023).

(Ex 40) Sáng nay khi nó đang thiếp đi nặng nề, thì bà Son lay lay người, gọi:

- Dậy ăn cơm còn đi học chứ.

- Hôm nay con vẫn đi học hả u?

- Thế mày không đi học thì đi đâu? (Truong, 1990).

Thus, when aiming for intimacy and casualness, parents may refer to their children as “mày” and address themselves as “tao”. However, children must always be respectful and polite when addressing their parents. This embodies the polite principle of “respectful address” inherent in Vietnamese communication culture.

When a rift occurs in the parent-child relationship, sometimes leading to the abandonment of blood relations, the address pair “mày – tao” may be chosen. Notably, the neutral pronoun “tôi” also appears, explicitly signaling a distant and formal attitude.

(Ex 41) Đến lượt mình, Phúc bước ra, mở đầu bằng câu hỏi:

- Địa chủ Đại, mày có biết tao là ai không?

Ông bố đã trả lời thế này:

- Dạ thưa tôi có biết ông, vì tôi đã trót đẻ ra ông! (Truong, 1990).

The “mày – tao” in the excerpt depicts the complete breakdown of the relationship between Phúc and his father, Đại. Phúc’s use of “mày – tao” is highly rude and disrespectful, treating Mr. Đại as a class antagonist rather than his biological father. Conversely, Mr. Đại’s reply using “tôi – ông” conveys deep pain and sorrow. While still confirming the blood relationship the exchange is marked by a sarcastic tone and the loss of father-child affection.

The analysis above demonstrates that the shift in pronouns between parents and children reflects the diverse emotional spectrum within the family. When close, they use “ba-mẹ” or affectionate names like “cúng com” or “Tí sún”. When in conflict or disappointed, they switch to rude forms (“mày – tao”) or distanced formality (“tôi – ông”). However, Vietnamese culture fundamentally maintains the principle of respect, requiring children to always address their parents with deference.

(d). Pronouns Used When Communicating About a Third Person

Addressing a Spouse or Child to a Third Person

When parents speak to each other and mention their children, they use appropriate pronouns depending on the content and context.

(Ex 42) - Con nó sẽ tới bây giờ đó. Bà đau lắm hả?

- Tôi mơ thấy thằng Phi nghe tụi xấu rù lái tàu vượt biên (Tuan, 2020).

In example (42), the parents refer to their child as “con nó” and “thằng Phi” while speaking to each other. This is a common pattern in Vietnamese families. It shows the close relationship between the spouses while potentially expressing dissatisfaction or worry regarding the subject (the child).

When children speak to their father or mother about their parents (often talking about the absent parent), they frequently use common terms of address such as “thầy”, “cha”, “bố”, “má”, “mẹ”, “u” ... They might also use the term “cha mẹ” + “con” to convey respect and affirm the biological relationship. Conversely, when the listener is the parent, the speaker often refers to the other parent using a combination like: thầy (thầy)/cha/bố + mày or má/mẹ/u + mày (referring to the listener as their child).

Communicating with a Third Person Who Is Not the Parent

When addressing a third person who is older or of the same age as themselves, parents often refer to their child as cháu hoặc con tôi, thằng, cái...

(Ex 43) Các đồng chí thông cảm. Nó là con tôi, để tôi nói chuyện riêng với nó (Tuan, 2020).

When children communicate with an older person (whether a relative or an outsider) or even with someone their own age or younger, they must maintain a respectful, polite, and courteous tone. Common terms children use to refer to their parents when speaking to a third person include bố/ mẹ, ba/ mẹ, thầy/ mẹ, thầy/ u, bố/ mẹ + tôi, bố/ mẹ + cháu, bố/ mẹ + em, cụ ông/ cụ bà nhà em, ông bà (when the child is already grown or married, speaking on behalf of their own child).

(Ex 44) - Chẳng ai quan tâm em trên thế giới này, bố mẹ em cũng như thế, cho em tiền và đi, chỉ trở về khi em cần tiền... đơn giản thế... (Gao, 2014).

(Ex 45) - Lúc đi thầy có nói gì với u không?

- Những chuyện riêng của thầy mày có bao giờ tao được biết? - Bà Son nói ầm ừc - Lúc mấy người kia đến, thầy mày còn không cho tao ngồi gần sợ nghe thấy. Chả nhẽ việc như thế ông Thủ lại không biết? (Truong, 1990).

(Ex 46) - Hồi chiều má con không nấu cơm...

- Vậy sao?

- Má con nằm trên giường thờ dài...

- Vậy hả? Thờ ra làm sao? (Tuan, 2020).

Conversely, when a third person is speaking to a child, and the subject is the child's parents, they also use appropriate communicative terms to show respect to the elders and the youngers. However, alongside standard titles like bố, mẹ, má, thầy... they may use terms that frame the parent in relation to the child, often with an expressive nuance, as seen below.

(Ex 47) Chị ngó trần vào cha, rồi dạy qua tôi, chị để rớt từng lời:

- Má cưng ác một, nhưng người cha này của cưng ác tới mười (Tu, 2006).

In example (47), even though the speaker is negatively evaluating the parents of the character “tôi”, they maintain politeness by referring to them as má cưng, cha cưng when speaking to the character. “Cưng” is a term Southern Vietnamese (particularly those in the Western provinces) often use affectionately.

D. Forms of Address Expressing the Relationship Between Siblings

The forms of address used between siblings in Vietnamese families are typically intimate and close. They serve both to establish the hierarchy (anh (older brother), chị (older sister), em (younger sibling)) and to convey closeness, respect, or emotional state. Common pairs of terms include: “chị – em,” “anh – em,” “tao – mày” (I – you), or simply calling the other by their first name, depending on the context and level of intimacy. The following examples illustrate how these address forms express the three elements of the interpersonal metafunction (Personal Expression, Social Distance, and Relative Social Status).

(Ex 48) Đào đang nghĩ cách, thì vừa lúc cái Hoa đi học về: Đào bảo nó như đồ dành: - Chị nấu cơm sắp chín rồi, Hoa sang chị Minh bảo lúc nữa chị ấy ăn cơm xong, sang đây chị nhấc cái này nhá (Truong, 1990).

In Conversation (48), Đào addresses herself as “chị” (older sister) and her younger sister as “Hoa,” using intimate words with a gentle, coaxing tone that shows concern and care. Calling the younger sister by her proper name “Hoa” and the phrase “as if to coax” creates a warm, close communicative atmosphere between the two sisters. The address pair “chị – Hoa” not only signals intimacy but also reflects the social status in the family, with Đào being the eldest sister and playing a leading role. While calling the younger sibling by name still maintains hierarchy, the coaxing tone reduces the status difference, fostering closeness and harmony in the relationship.

(Ex 49) Biết chị về, cái Hoa nằm trong buồng hỏi ra, giọng tỉnh như sáo:

- U chưa về hả chị Đào?

- Ở tao tưởng u sang bá Cả về rồi.

Cái Hoa vực dậy đi ra, mặt mũi:

- Em tưởng chị cũng sang đây.

- Tao đi họp đoàn cơ mà (Truong, 1990).

In the conversation between Đào and Hoa, the mutual addressing of “chị Đào – em” (older sister Đào – younger sibling) and “tao – em” (I – younger sibling) highlights their close sisterly bond. Hoa addresses herself as “em” and uses the title “chị Đào” in a natural, comfortable voice, while Đào responds with the casual “tao” and “em,” creating an intimate, informal atmosphere. However, their shared concern about their mother, expressed through Hoa’s “restless face” and Đào’s reply, emphasizes their strong connection. This pair of addresses both reflects absolute closeness and maintains the family hierarchy: “chị Đào” and “chị” affirm Đào’s position, while “em” shows Hoa’s deference. Yet, the natural and

casual tone blurs the difference in status, creating a feeling of closeness and emotional equality in everyday communication.

In general, in examples (48) and (49), the sisterly relationship between Đào and Hoa is built through address pairs such as “chị – Hoa” and “chị/tao/chị Hoa – em.” These terms demonstrate both the close family bond and respect for the traditional hierarchy. Nevertheless, the use of informal pronouns and the natural tone indicate comfort and closeness in their communication, free from social barriers. This reflects a core tenet of Vietnamese family culture, where members prioritize closeness, mutual care, and respect, creating a warm and harmonious atmosphere in all relationships.

V. CONCLUSION

In summary, drawing on Halliday’s interpersonal metafunction, this article has clarified the role of the Vietnamese address system in constructing and regulating interpersonal relations in family communication, specifically across husband–wife, grandparent–grandchild, parent–child, and sibling relationships. The analysis shows that address forms function not only as mechanisms of calling and responding but also as resources for encoding personal stance, social distance, and relative social status, thereby reflecting and shaping power dynamics, degrees of intimacy, and interactional positioning among family members. At the same time, these forms embody core cultural values such as respect, responsibility, and family cohesion. These findings contribute to extending the interpersonal functional perspective in the study of Vietnamese address terms. However, the study is limited by its reliance primarily on literary data, which may not fully capture naturally occurring interaction. Future research should therefore expand the empirical basis to include authentic conversational data, integrating sociolinguistic and corpus-based approaches, and conduct comparative analyses across broader social domains such as occupational, educational, and religious contexts in order to further elucidate the role of address terms in structuring and negotiating interpersonal relations in contemporary Vietnamese society.

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