Contrasting vietnamese "passive voice" and english passive voice

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Abstract: *This paper tries to clarify some ambiguity in the literature about what a passive is and what constitutes a passive in Vietnamese and English. However, there is no clear agreement among these scholars on how to identify these types of passive buildings. In Vietnamese, there are various perspectives on passive sentences. Some experts suggest that while the Vietnamese language lacks a passive voice as a morphological category, it does have passive sentences as syntactic structures. The purpose of this paper is to compare Vietnamese passive structures to English passive voice. This is accomplished by delving into what has been identified as a passive in Vietnamese, namely phrases containing the morphemes "bị" and "được. This is compared to the English passive voice counterpart.*

Keywords: *Passive voice, Vietnamese, English*

1. Introduction

Although there is a structure known as passive voice, it is still unclear whether there is passive voice in Vietnamese. Some experts suggest that while the Vietnamese language lacks a passive voice as a morphological category, it does have passive sentences as syntactic structures. Contrasts on passive voice structure between English and Vietnamese have been undertaken with the purpose of teaching another language, namely English, which contains passive voice. To put it another way, most instructors take Vietnamese passive voice for granted. As a result, the purpose of this research is to uncover the causes for this and to compare and contrast the similarities and differences between English and Vietnamese passive sentences. This will aid English learners in comprehending English passive voice and accurately building passive sentences.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. Passive voice in English

Morphological forms of verbs are one of the morpho-syntactic strategies used to indicate the passive voice in English (Keenan, 1985; Shibatani, 1994). If we use rigorous morphological criteria to define "passiveness" in English, the passive voice is distinguished not only by the morphological form of the verb, but also by the presence of an auxiliary (be) and the sequence of the words. This is the structure of passive voice in English.

Table 1. The active-passive correspondence in English

Active	NP1 Subject	V predicate	NP2 object
	Her father	built	this house.
Passive	**NP2**	**Aux + P2**	**(By NP1)**
	This house	was build	by her father.

We mostly employ the passive with "get" in colloquial English, and it has a smaller range of applications than "be". The passive with get is used to express action and change rather than a state. It frequently refers to something that occurs by chance, unexpectedly, or without warning.

Passive voice in English does not always need "get/ be". This is the case of causatives. In causatives, no auxiliary is needed, though it still conveys passive meaning.

Table 2. Passive structure without to be/get

Active	NP1	**have**	NP2	**do**	NP3
	I	have	the painter	paint	my house.
Passive	NP1	**have**	NP3	**P2**	**(by NP2)**
	I	have	my house	painted.	

When we wish to talk about something that someone else did for ourselves or for someone else, we employ a causative verb. It indicates that the individual caused the action to occur but did not perform it. They may have paid, requested, or encouraged the other individual to perform the task. We can say, for example, that I painted my house. (This indicates I did the painting myself.). Using a causative verb is analogous to using a passive verb in several ways. What matters is that the house is now spotless. We ignore who cleaned the house. When

we're talking about paying someone to do something for us, we normally say 'have something done.' It is frequently utilized in the service industry. 'Subject + have + object + past participle' is the form. We can also use the phrase "subject + get + object + past participle" to mean "get something done." This is less formal than 'have' but has the same meaning.

2.2. Passive voice in Vietnamese

Several controversies about the existence of passive constructions/sentences in Vietnamese have been raised in the course of this review (Nguyễn Kim Thản, 1977; Nguyễn Tài Cẩn, 1978; Đinh Văn Đức, 1986; Nguyễn Minh Thuyết, 1986; Nguyễn Thị Ảnh, 2000; Cao Xuân Hạo 2001).

Despite the fact that not all active phrases can be converted into passive ones, we believe that, like other languages, Vietnamese passive sentences are syntactically altered from alternative active sentences. The syntactic modifications must, of course, adhere to specific semantic and pragmatic limitations in passive sentences. Formally, the following syntactic criteria could be used to distinguish a prototypical passive sentence from an active sentence in Vietnamese:

- The passive's topic is generated from the alternative active's object. The subject of the passive could be a patient, a recipient, a goal, or an instrument, depending on the sentence (Diệp Quang Ban & Nguyễn Thị Thuận, 2000).

- By inserting an auxiliary "bị" or "được" before the transitive verb, the predicate of the passive is immediately derived from the predicate of the alternative active.

- The subject of the alternative active is used to create the oblique of the passive. In most cases, the oblique is optional (in passive sentences without agentive oblique NP). They could be replaced before the predicate (in passive sentences with an agentive oblique NP) or after the predicate if a preposition bi is added if they are not omitted (in passive sentences with an agentive oblique PP). Vietnamese passive sentences can be structured in one of two ways.

Table 3. Passive structures in Vietnamese

NP2	bị/được	V	(bởi NP1Agentive)(agentive preposition)
NP2	bị/được	NP1 (agentive oblique NP)	V

3. Methodology

The study employs descriptive, comparative, and contrastive methodologies, as well as semantic component analysis, statistics, and categorization. It also uses a combination of interpretive and inductive directions to get at the research findings.

4. Findings

4.1. Similarities in passive sentences between English and Vietnamese

Both have structures and markers. Even if "bị" and "được" play a major grammatical role in predicates, as some experts claim, this does not rule out the possibility of these words serving as passive markers. This is analogous to the passive auxiliaries found in English passive sentences (be). An auxiliary like "be" plays a crucial grammatical role in the predicate of passive sentences, despite having essentially no semantic role in establishing the lexical meaning of a passive state that emerges from the form of the transitive verb (the past participle). The morphological concordance in person and number with the subject of a passive sentence is proof that the auxiliary "be", not the past participle, fulfils this job. As a result, the auxiliary verb be is linguistically equivalent to a main verb in the predicate of active sentences. This does not, however, prevent it from serving as a passive marker. Therefore, the prominent similarity between English and Vietnamese passive sentences is that they both, in most cases, have markers like "to be" or "bị/được".

Sometimes, passive sentences do not have markers. Passive can lack functional word tobe/ bị được in the case of de-transitive sentences NP2 – V. For instance, in Vietnamese, the sentence "Đường ngập rồi". It has the pattern "NP2 – V". In this sentence, NP2 is non-agentive situated at the beginning of the sentence (NP2 is a recipient, patient, etc.) followed by a predicate (V) which has the original meaning of a transitive verb, usually accompanied by an auxiliary (before V) or an adverb (after V). Although the marker "bị" or "được" does not appear in the sentence, the meaning of the sentence is obviously passive. The full form of passive can be reconstructed effortlessly by adding "bị". The full form can be "Đường bị ngập rồi". Similarly, in English, some sentences expressing passive meaning do not have the marker "to be" like "The door broke down".

4.2. Differences in passive sentences between English and Vietnamese

There are several discrepancies between English and Vietnamese passive sentences. First and

foremost, whereas there is passive voice in English grammatical system, in Vietnamese, there is an incongruence about the existence of passive voice among scholars.

Secondly, the formation of passiveness is different between the two languages as they belong to different typological ones. Because of the Vietnamese language's typological qualities as an isolating language, its grammatical categories, in general, and "passiveness," in particular, lack morphological marks. Because the grammatical features of the subject in Vietnamese are more abstract, Dyvik (1984) concluded that if "subject" is acknowledged as a part of a sentence in Vietnamese, it is not as clear as the subject in English. "Passiveness" could only be identified by more "abstract" criteria, just like the subject. In other words, in Vietnamese, both "subject" and "passivity" exist, though not as obviously as in Indo-European languages like English (p.7-12). This is also the reason for the diverse opinions about the so-called "passive voice" in Vietnamese.

Table 4: Comparison of Passive Constructions

	Passive marking means	Examples
English	form of verbs + auxiliary + word order (morpho-syntactic)	Workers built the house The house was built by workers The suit was designed by a famous designer.
Vietnamese	auxiliary + word order (purely syntactic)	Bộ vec được thiết kế bởi một nhà thiết kế nổi tiếng. Ngôi nhà được kiến trúc sư giỏi thiết kế.

The third difference in the form is associated with the position of agentive object in passive voice. In English, agentive objects follow "by" and the past participle verbs, and are called oblique objects. In contrast, in Vietnamese, agentive objects can take two positions, either after "do/bởi" (by in English) or before V. For example, "Em ấy bị phạt." can be turned into "Em ấy bị cô giáo phạt". In this example, the agentive object "cô giáo" can be added before the verb "phạt" while this cannot be done for sentence (7) in English.

Conclusion

The purpose of this research is to look at the similarities and differences of passive sentences between Vietnamese and English. The paper has established that: based on a differentiation of three sorts of passive sentences, which are either solely morphologically, morpho-syntactically, or purely syntactically passive, and based on a variety of evidence: 1. Vietnamese has passive sentences as syntactic constructions, marked by word orders and function words ("bị/được"); 2. There are two types of passive sentences in Vietnamese, both of which can be identified and distinguished from other sentence types by certain syntactic criteria. The similarities related to passive sentences between English and Vietnamese lie in the appearance and the missing of markers. The differences lie in the specific structure used to convey passiveness.

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