

# English and vietnamese adjective phrases.

[Countries](#), [Vietnam](#)



PART A: INTRODUCTION 1. Rationale. Nowadays, English is the most widely used in the world and plays an important role together with the development of society and technologies. English is not only the effective means of communication but also show its progressive effects in many aspects of life. Practically, study on the similarities and differences between the two languages and cultures English and Vietnamese has been one of my concerns. It is clear that there are many differences between the two languages of as those in grammar, lexicology, translation, phonetic and so on.

However there still exist plenty of similarities and differences between English and Vietnamese that can be demonstrated contrastive analysis. When choosing the subject for the assignment, I put much attention to adjective phrases because this field may make me confused. I hope that this study help me as well as other learners will understand adjective phrases in English and Vietnamese thoroughly. 2. Aims of the study. My research aims at. : + Giving theoretical background of English and Vietnamese adjective phrases. Analyzing of the word order in English adjective with Vietnamese equivalence + Presenting some difficulties faced by Vietnamese learners of English in adjective phrases and 3. Scope of the study. During the study process, I have been attracted by adjective phrases. Because of time allowance and knowledge, I cannot cover all its constructions, functions, etc. but only focus on orders, and I introduce some similarities and differences of adjective phrases between English and Vietnamese for the research. PART B: DEVELOPMENT I. Literature Review I. 1.

Definition of Adjective phrase : I. 1. 1. English Adjective phrase According to Quirk et al. (57) and Greenbaum (32), an adjective phrase is a phrase with an adjective such as big or happy as its head. Within the adjective phrase, the adjective may be pre-modified (too careful) or post-modified (afraid of ghost) or both of premodified and post modified (too cold to swim, extremely afraid of ghost). The structure of the typical adjective phrase is shown at the following figure. The parenthesis indicate the optional elements. [pic] Eg. I am tired head The room is full of smoke head postmod. The bus is very slow to set off premod. head postmod. I. 1. 1. Vietnamese Adjective phrase According to Diệp Quang Ban (5) and Nguyễn Tài Cẩn (10), a Vietnamese adjective phrase is a phrase in which there is an adjective as a head. For example: tốt, vụng về, đẹp, xấu, nhanh, chậm, qua. Like English adjectives, Vietnamese adjectives have the ability to combine with modifiers which are divided into two parts: modifiers preceding the head are called premodifiers, whereas those following the head are called postmodifiers.

In Vietnamese adjective phrases, some modifiers can appear both before and after the head. eg. xinh qua, qua xinh, đẹp lắm, đẹp hơn. Like the structure of noun phrases and verb phrases, the full construction of an adjective phrase consists of three components : a head, premodifier, and postmodifier and the short construction may consist of one component (a head) or two components (a head and premodifier or a head and postmodifier). The structure of the typical Vietnamese adjective phrase is in the following figure: premodifier(s) + head + postmodifier(s) I. 2.

Adjective phrases and their orders I. 2. 1. Word order through syntactic functions of English adjective phrases According to Greenbaum (32)

Adjective functions have two main functions: premodifier of a noun (attributive function) and subject predicative(subject predicative function).

Eg. : - premodifier of a noun (attributive function): My cat is a very curious cat. - Subject predicative(subject predicative function). : My sister is very pretty Besides, There are some other functions of adjective phrase: - Object predicative function: They are going to paint their house pink Postmodifier of a pronoun : Shall we go to somewhere cool? - Postmodifier of a noun I don't mean to make my wife sad - Nominal adjective: You should confuse the Chinese and the Japanese - Complement of a preposition he did not come back home till late last night. a. Word order in attribute function: - When they come before nouns, they occur in the following order: a (adjective) + b (noun) Eg. : Barack Obama is a extremely strict president a + b As the example shows, adjective phrases used in premodification are usually either one word phrase. When they come after nouns, they occur in the following order: b (noun) + a (adjective) Eg. : I am thirteen years old b + a Anyone intelligent can apply for the job b + a Barack Obama was the president elect. b + a b. Word order in predicative function In adjective phrase, an adjective not only occurs in attributive position, it can also appear in predicative position as subject complement after linking verbs like be, seem, appear, especially the verbs of sense taste, look, smell, etc. There is a copular relationship between subject and subject complement.

The word order can be formalized as: a (subject) + b (linking verb) + c (adjective) Eg: The cake tastes sweet a + b + c Your perfume smells musky a + b + c Thatmusicounds beautiful a + b + c She seems innocent a + b + c I. 2. 2. Word order through Syntactic functions of Vietnamese Adjective

phrases

a. Word order in Attributive function In Vietnamese adjective phrases, adjective in the attributive function often follow the noun they modify according to the order: a (noun) + b (adjective) (noun) + b (modifier) + c (adjective) a (noun) + c (adjective) + b (modifier) Eg. : Lan da nau c? a co ? y v? n cu? n hut toi = Her brown skin still attracts me Do la bu? i sang mai th? t d? p = That is a very nice early morning M? t chi? c vay l? a Ha Dong th? t d? p a + c + b + d M? t chi? c vay c? a Ha Dong b? ng l? a th? t d? p a + b + c + d M? t chi? c vay l? a th? t d? p c? a Ha Dong a + c + d + b M? t chi? c vay th? t d? p b? ng l? a c? Ha Dong a + d + c + b

b. Word order in Predicative Function In Vietnamese adjective phrases, adjectives can directly function as predicative like verbs and the order can be formalised as : a (subject) + b (adjective) Eg. : B? phim th? t hay = The film was very interesting a + b When Vietnamese adjectives are in the predicative function, they can combine with the criteria of verbs. These are : + aspect-time maker: da, s? , t? ng, con, chua, etc. a (subject) + b (aspect-time maker) + c (head) Eg. : Co ngu? i toc da b? c pho + b + c

II. Contrastive analysis of the word order in English adjective with Vietnamese equivalence It is obvious that both English and Vietnamese are analytical languages but they belong to different linguistic typologies. English is an inflectional and analytical language, whereas Vietnamese is a typical isolating and non-inflectional language. Therefore, apart from the similarities which do not cause difficulties for learners, there are many differences between English and Vietnamese adjective phrases and their orders which can cause a variety of problems (errors and confusion) for learners.

So, I will go deeply into the differences only and I think comparison might be the best way to identify the differences in the word order in English and Vietnamese adjective phrases. The following comparison will focus on the differences in :

1. Word order through syntactic functions of adjective phrases
2. Word order in premodification of adjective phrases
3. Word order through basic degrees of comparison

II. 1. Word order through syntactic functions of adjective phrases

In terms of main syntactic functions, most English and Vietnamese adjectives can be used both attributively and predicatively.

When adjective function attributively, they attribute to a quality or characteristic to what is denoted noun they modify. However, there are differences in the word order in the English and Vietnamese adjective phrases through their syntactic functions.

II. 1. 1. Word order in Attributive function

he is a very generous man	Anh ? y la m? t ngu? i hao phong
Premod. + N	N + postmod.

| English is a rather difficult subject |

Ti? ng Anh la m? t mon h? c kha kho	Premod. + N	N + postmod
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| From the above examples, it can be seen that both English and Vietnamese adjective functions as attribute of nouns, i. e. in attributive function, and they do not vary in form to agree with nouns. However, in the attributive function, English adjectives are used as premodifier of the noun, i. e. they come before the noun and appear between the determiner and the head of the noun phrase, whereas Vietnamese adjectives share the same character in that they often function as postmodifier, i. . they come after the noun. This is an important difference between the two languages.

II. 1. 2 Word order in predicative function

The following examples show the difference in the word

order of adjective phrases in predicative function. Eg. : | Lan is very pretty and intelligent | Lan r? t xinh d? p va thong minh | | intensive V. Adj. + Adj. | Adj. + Adj. | | I don't like living in the house because it is so | Toi khong thich s? ng trong ngoi nha do vi no b? n th? i va t? tam | | dirty and dark | Adj. + Adj. | | intensive V. Adj. + Adj. | | Apart from the attributive function, both English and Vietnamese adjectives can also be used predicatively. However, in English, when adjectives function as predicate they are used after an intensive verb "be". Unlike English adjectives, Vietnamese adjectives play the predicative role directly without the linking verb "be", i. e. in this function, Vietnamese adjectives are used to complete a sentence without any verbs or verb phrase.

On the contrary, English adjectives can never function as verbs. In a sentence, they must follow a verb or a verb phrase. Moreover, when we translate from English into Vietnamese, we often meet a great number of disyllabic adjectives in Vietnamese. For example: xinh – xinh x? n (beautiful) kho – kho khan (difficult) ch? m - ch? m ch? p (slow) g? n - g? n gang (tidy) Generally, these disyllabic adjectives are formed from monosyllabic adjectives. Whether using monosyllabic or disyllabic depends on the habit of the Vietnamese Eg. : It is clear that he is quite slow Ro rang r? ng anh ? y kha ch? ch? p The weather makes me feel tired Th? i ti? t lam cho toi c? m th? y m? t m? i Furthermore, almost all Vietnamese monosyllabic adjectives can be used repeatedly to diminish the characteristics or levels. And these are typical features of Vietnamese adjectives which we do not find in English, for example; I felt cold (Toi c? m th? y lanh l? nh). Unlike English adjectives, in Vietnamese, some adjectives can combine with nouns " adjective + noun"

to form the group of state adjectives to express the state of the characteristics. For example: My mother is a very careful and helpful woman

M? c? a toi la m? t ngu? i ph? n? c? n th? n va nhi? t tinh These group of words have metaphoric meaning and can function as predicate and attribute. Here are some groups of words which are frequently used: nong tinh(hot-tempered), d? tinh(easy-going), t? t b? ng(knid-hearted), sang d? (clever), dung c? m (brave), etc. However, when the order of the groups of words is inverted, the metaphoric meaning disappears. Besides, in Vietnamese, the structure: “ ma + adjectives” is used to strongly express the objection to an opinion, a remark just made by the speaker.

This structure is only applied the peers or inferiors Eg. : Is Nam really friendly? Anh Nam ma than thi? n a? Generally, in languages, the positive sentences have the positive meaning, but in Vietnamese, when “ ma” precedes adjectives in the sentence, the sentence has the negative meaning. The sentence “ Anh Nam ma than thi? n a? ” (Is Nam really friendly? ) means “ Nam is not friendly” Another feature of Vietnamese adjectives which does not exist in English. That is, adjectives that precede “ ra, len, di l? i” to form compound words or the group of words turn into verbs or have the character of verbs.

In Vietnamese, the pattern: “ adjectives + ra/len/ di/l? i” is used to express the development of character, state of things or people. When these words combine with adjectives, they often imply the presupposition and have the opposite content, for example when we say: “ Lan d? o nay trong xinh ra”. It implies that Lan is more beautiful than before. In Vietnamese, the sense of positive uses the pattern: “ adjective + ra/len”. In English, this structure is



expressed by Intensive verb + adjective with the comparative meaning. |  
 The earth is becoming warmer | Trai d? t dang nong d? len | | Vintensive +  
 Adj | Adj + len | II. 1. 3. Word order in premodification of adjective phrases In  
 this section, we will discuss and analyse the differences in the word order in  
 premodification of English and Vietnamese adjective phrases in detail  
 through translation Eg. : | I am very glad to meet you | Toi r? t vui m? ng du?  
 c g? p anh | | Intensi. + Adj | Intensi. Adj | | The tigers are very big and  
 savage | Nh? ng con h? ? y to l? n va hung d? l? m | | Intensi. + Adj + adj |  
 Adj + adj+ Intensi. | | She is very nervous before each exam | Co ? y da qua  
 lo l? ng tru? c m? i k? thi | | Intensifier + Adj | Intensi. + Adj | | I am very  
 remorseful and disappointed | Toi th? an h? n va th? t v? ng qua | | Intensifier  
 + Adj + Adj | Adj + adj+ Intensi | Through the above examples, it should be  
 noted both English and Vietnamese adjectives serve as the head of adjective  
 phrases. Adjective phrases may contain only an adjective as the head, or two  
 components; the head and premodifier or the head and postmodifier. Both  
 English and Vietnamese adjectives are premodified chiefly by adverbs.  
 Generally, premodifiers are intensifiers.

In English, they are very, extremely, rather, a bit, quite, etc. and in  
 Vietnamese, they are r? t, r? t la, qua, th? t, c? c k? , hoi, etc. However, there  
 are some differences in the order of the adverbs denoting degrees in the two  
 languages. In English, these adverbs are followed by adjectives while in  
 Vietnamese, they can occur both before and after adjectives. For instance, in  
 Vietnamese, the adverbs : “ r? t, qua, l? m” are used to indicate the highest  
 degree of the personal or non-personal characteristics and they are the same  
 meaning but different in usage.

All of them can be translated as “very” besides, “qua, l? m” may be translated as “too” and “so” in English. These examples also show that the word order of adverbs of degree “very” in English and “r? t” “r? t la” in Vietnamese is the same, i. e. they occur before adjectives. However, “very” and “r? t” are often used in written language, whereas “r? t la” is often used in spoken language. But when “very” is used as “l? m’ or “qua”, the word order is absolutely different. “L? m” in Vietnamese must be preceded by adjectives and it is often used in spoken language.

Contrary to “l? m”, the word “qua” may occur before or after adjectives in spoken language to express an exclamation. Also “c? c k? , tuy? t, th? t” may occur before or after adjectives. However, the words “qua, c? c k? , tuy? t, th? t” often appear after adjectives, therefore, when they are used before adjectives, they are often used with the meaning of emphasis or assessment. Unlike English adjectives, Vietnamese adjectives can play the predicative role directly, so they can combine with the aspect-time criteria of the verbs such as da, dang, s? , v? n, c? con and it is a typical feature of Vietnamese. This combination expresses the relation between the characteristics and time. These characteristics are based on the sense of native speakers and they exist like the form of the state. In short, modifiers: da, dang, s? , v? n, c? , con not only express grammatical meaning but also the purpose of the statement and the relation between a speaker and reality. In Vietnamese, in certain situations of the sentence, these meanings will be distinguished. Eg. : | They were very successful | H? a r? t thanh cong | | Vintens. + Intensi. + Adj | time-maker + intens. + adj | | Our country is different now | D? t nu? c c? a chung ta da khac xua | | Vintens.. + Adj | time-

maker + adj | | After the wedding, She is very happy | Sau l? cu? i, co ? dang r? t h? nh phuc | | Vintens. + Intensi. + Adj | time-maker + adj | | I hope that you will be comfortable | Toi hy v? ng la b? n s? c? m th? y tho? i mai | | Aux. + Vintens.. + Adj | time-maker + adj | | My wife was still angry | V? toi v? n con gi? | | Vintens.. + Adv + adj | time-maker + adj | From these, we can see a very remarkable structural difference: In English, aspect-time categories are indicated by the forms of the verbs, whereas do not Vietnamese do not have the category of time and the meaning of the time is indicate by supporting words: da, dang, s? , v? n, c? , v? n con. In Vietnamese, the predicative function is expressed by the structures: “ da/dang/s? /v? n/c? con/v? n c? /con c? + adjective”, but in English this function is expressed by different structures “ intensive verb(past) + adjective” “ intensive verb(present) + adjective”, “ auxiliary + present participle+ adjective” “ auxiliary + be + adjective”, “ intensive verb + still + adjective”. II. 1. 4 Word order through basic degree of comparison Most adjectives in English and Vietnamese can take comparison. These are gradable adjectives and they have three degrees of comparison: - same degree - higher degree - lower degree a. The “ same degree” comparison

In both English and Vietnamese, when we say two things or persons are equal, we use the adjective in the same degree. In english, we use the structure : as + adj + as, whereas in Vietnamese, we use some modifiers: “ nhu”, “ b? ng”, “ tuong t? ” after adjectives in the structure: adj + nhu/b? ng/tuong t?. For example: | My wife is not as beautiful as yours | V? toi khong xinh b? ng v? anh | | My house is as small as your office | Nha c? a toi ch? b? ng van phong c? anh thoi | | Nobody can understand me as much as my

mother | Khong ai co th? hi? u toi nhu m? c? | b. The higher degree comparison In order to indicate the difference in the word order in the degrees of comparison. First I would give here some examples and their translation into Vietnamese. | Hanoi is much more beautiful than Hanoi was | Ha N? i ngay nay d? p hon nhi? u Ha N? i tru? c kia | | Health and happiness are more important than money | S? c kho? va h? nh phuc quan tr? ng hon ti? n b? | | One of the worst diseases which mankind have is cancer | M? t trong nh? ng can b? nh nguy hi? m nh? t ma loai ngu? i ph? i ch? u la ung | | | thu | These examples show that in the higher degree of comparison, English adjectives change their forms. They are indicated by the inflection “ er” or the premodifier “ more” in the comparative degrees of comparison. We also add the inflection “ est” or the premodifier “ most” to show the superlative degree.

We have some specific rules when using “ er”, “ est”, “ more” and “ most”. In contrast, in Vietnamese, in both comparative and superlative degrees, modifiers always come after the adjective they modify and adjectives do not change their form in both cases c. The lower degree of comparison When we want to say a person or a thing has less of a quality than the other, we use the comparison of the lower degree. In the lower degree, English adjectives take the modifier “ less..... then? or can be negated from the equality degree and the lowest degree can be denoted by adding the modifier “ the least”.

In the lower degree, on the other hand, Vietnamese adjectives take the modifier ‘ kem hon” or negative words ‘ khong b? ng” “ Khong du? c nhu” and the lowest degree can be expressed by the words “ kem nh? t” “ it nh? t”. For example: | The film was less interesting than I expected | B? phim nay

khong hay nhu toi mong d? i | | less + adj + than | khong + adj nhu | | This city is not as dangerous as others | thanh ph? nay khong nguy hi? nhu cac thanh ph? khac | | not + as + adj + as | | In Vietnamese, the relation between these modifiers is very complicated. For instance, we may consider “ b? ng” opposite to “ kem” and ‘ khong b? ng” may replaced by “ kem”. The word ‘ hon” may have the similar meaning as “ b? ng” when it combines with “ khong” (khong hon). For example: Khong co gi quy hon d? c l? p t? do (Nothing is more precious than independence and freedom) Di? m c? a anh ? y khong hon di? m toi

Due to the complete semantics of these modifiers we do not have grammatical category relating to the meaning of degrees of comparison of Vietnamese adjectives. In short, in this chapter, we have discussed the major issues relating to the differences in the form, the word order through the syntactic function, the word order in premodification and basic degrees of comparison of English and Vietnamese adjectives. We can say the word order in Vietnamese phrases is much more complicated than that in English adjective phrases because in Vietnamese adjective phrases, more modifiers can occur both before and after the head adjective phrases.

The striking difference between the English and Vietnamese adjective phrases is in the word order through the attributive and predicative functions. Moreover, Vietnamese adjectives may appear with the modifiers showing aspect-time criteria of verbs which we do not find in English. Besides, in English, we clearly distinguish parts of speech: adjectives and adverbs with words denoting manner while in Vietnamese we have only one: adjectives. II. 2. Some students’ common mistakes in using adjective phrases

English and Vietnamese are quite different languages, so it is impossible to avoid mistake when learners use adjective phrases.

The following mistakes can be the most common ones: + Learners often put adjectives in the wrong order because of the influence of their mother tongue. As you know both English and Vietnamese adjectives are used to modify nouns, but English adjectives often precede the nouns they modify, whereas Vietnamese adjectives often follow the nouns they modify. That is the reason why Vietnamese learners use adjectives incorrectly. + Vietnamese learners often confuse between adjectives which have the “-ed” and “-ing” : worried/worrying, excited/exciting, etc.

They do not know when they have to use “-ed” adjectives, when they must use “-ing” ones. For example : a boring film” or “ a bored film”

PART C:  
CONCLUSION This study has analysed, compared the word order in English and Vietnamese adjective phrases. It has analysed the similarities and differences in the arrangement of the words in adjective phrases between two languages based on the basic grammatical structures. By examining the description and comparison of the word order in English adjective phrases with Vietnamese equivalents, this study has shown there are both similarities and differences in the two languages.

The most typical similarity is in the structure premodifier + Adj + postmodifier shared by the two languages where the head of the adjective phrases is in the centre of the phrase and around it there may be modifiers: premodifier and postmodifier, but they are optional. The basic differences in the word order in English and Vietnamese adjective phrases are likely to cause many problems in understanding, expressing ideas and translation. So

much attention should be paid to the differences in teaching adjective phrases to Vietnamese learners. -----The end-----

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ADJECTIVE PHRA SE Pre-modifier(s) Adjective Postmodifier (s)