

VIETNAMESE TRINH SOME PROBLEMS IN DISTINGUISHING SPECIAL SIMPLE SENTENCES IN VIETNAMESE

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Abstract: -

The existence of special sentences, elliptical sentences, and subsentences is obvious and common in Vietnamese discourse, including all kinds of conversations in daily life, administration, academia, or other types of literature versions of different linguistic functional styles. By surveying many different discourses, through quantitative and qualitative methods, this article points out some problems in understanding the above-mentioned special simple sentences, and at the same time proposes some points to distinguish special sentences, elliptical sentences, and subsentences in order to create favorable conditions for further study of different aspects of these types of sentences.

Keywords: - *special sentences; elliptical sentences; subsentences; Vietnamese discourse; distinguish*

1. INTRODUCTION

At an early age, sentences have been studied by linguistics in general and grammar with different approaches. Classical grammar and some modern linguistic trends such as structuralism and generative grammar consider the sentence as the most prominent structural unit in the grammatical organization. Accordingly, sentences are viewed from many different perspectives with issues such as grammatical components, types of grammatical structures, grammatical relations in sentences, and semantic aspects... However, up to now, there are still many sentence problems that have not been completely solved, especially those related to sentence types with irregularity structure. In participate, the types of sentences: special sentences, elliptical sentences, and subsentences, are used very commonly in communication activities of Vietnamese people but have not been delineated.

By surveying in many different discourses, through quantitative and qualitative methods, this article points out some problems in understanding those special simple sentences mentioned above, and at the same time proposes some points to distinguish special sentences, elliptical sentences, and subsentences to create favorable conditions for the further study of different aspects of these sentence's types.

2. Research methods:

We use linguistic research methods such as statistics, analysis, description, induction... and we draw the commentaries on the research problem from the theoretical bases combined with the surveyed materials. Moreover, we also apply traditional and functional grammar tricks such as syntactic modification, substitution, addition, insertion... to detect and clarify the nature of the object.

We are interested in semantic orientation, so when describing and explaining problems, we always put formal associations close to semantics and use semantic causes to solve problems to explain them.

3. The problem of identifying and demarcating the boundaries of special simple sentences:

In some Vietnamese grammar textbooks with traditional and functional orientations, the authors have established many different views regarding these three types of specially structured sentences. However, delineating a clear boundary between the three types of sentences encounters many obstacles.

Referring to elliptical sentences, author Nguyen Thi Luong explains: "...in specific communication situations, people using them have omitted one or two main components of a sentence or split a sentence component into a specific sentence to improve communication efficiency." From which the author defines: "An elliptical sentence is composed of two main components: subject and predicate, but in a particular use case, the speaker (writer) has omitted one or both of main components so that listeners (readers) can receive information faster, more concisely or for a certain rhetorical purpose." [5; page196]. To demonstrate, the author has given the following examples:

(1) *The king looked at the beautiful faces and asked again.*

- *Should make peace, or should fight?*

Immediately, there was one word:

- *Fight! Fight! (Le Van)*

(2) *Suddenly, the moon is too bright tonight - transparent, vast, fanciful, comforting. Right by the window, nestled in the shade of a tree. What a fantastic night. (Le Tri Vien)*

(3) *You ask what I want. I just want one thing. Don't set foot in here. (Nguyen Tuan)*

Clearly, none of the three examples given by the author illustrate elliptical sentences. In which example (1) is a special sentence, (2) and (3) is a subsentence.

Or some other authors may resort to the pragmatic coordinates "I - here - now" as the context and center of all utterances in ordinary life, expressing the principle of "self-center" to think that special sentences are also elliptical sentences. It is the situation and the self-center principle that allow for such clarity. For example, when saying "Oh !" the emotional subject is the speaker, not someone else; when saying "Rain!", it means that the speaker tells the place "here" and the time "now" is raining. However, building a pragmatic context into the language itself is highly forced. It is similar to the person who tells a story that is not his own but adds many incorrect details. Thus, the distinction between these three types of sentences has not yet been given due attention. Many authors do not even raise the issue of separating subtypes of special sentences, subsentences, and elliptical sentences, but only dichotomize simple sentences specifically concerning structurally ordinary simple sentences.

The traditional grammar point of view identifies special sentences based on the subject structure of the sentence, which compares the structural differences between ordinary and special simple sentences.

In the book Vietnamese Grammar by Do Thi Kim Lien, she defines: A simple sentence "is a type of sentence with two components: subject and predicate that are closely linked through the grammatical relationship S - P and create a unified whole (we are used to calling it the core)." [4; 118]. From that, Do Thi Kim Lien introduced the concept of a special sentence that is "made up of a word or a phrase." [4; 119]

The first step is to compare structure or function to dichotomize special sentences that cannot identify structural components like other typical sentences in Vietnamese (such as two-component simple sentences, compound sentences, complex sentences...). This comes from the fact that some authors have almost equated three types of sentences: special sentences, elliptical sentences, and subsentences into a special simple sentence, in general, to be dichotomous with ordinary simple sentences. In fact, these are three types of sentences with distinct differences in learning, semantics, and pragmatics.

The second step is to consider the subcategories of special sentences. In general, this issue has been paid attention to and established. However, although the sentence subtypes have been identified in this step, there are still many controversial issues. The criteria for delimiting the boundaries of special simple sentence subtypes are still quite vague.

Therefore, the problem of boundaries between special sentences in Vietnamese was recognized very early. However, one of the problems with defining this boundary is how Vietnamese linguists name these types of sentences as inconsistent callings such as special sentences, omitted sentences with subject or predicate, partial utterances, partial sentences, subordinate clauses, omitted sentences...

According to the overview analysis of research works on sentences and surveys in the text, we believe that, in general, special types of sentences have structural irregularities, and they have all the signs about the sentence on the text in which it appears. The signs are apparent: opening with a capital letter and ending with a Vietnamese-style punctuation mark. Besides, it is necessary to correctly identify 3 types of unusual sentence structure: special, elliptical, and subsentence. As a premise to distinguish the above sentence types, the article will briefly outline each type of sentence below.

4. Proposing a direction to distinguish special sentences, summary sentences, and subsentences

4.1. Overview of the three types of sentences

4.1.1. Special sentence

The special sentence is the type of sentence with the most number and frequency of occurrence, also the most interested by Vietnamese linguists among the sentence's types belonging to the group of structural irregularities.

Diep Quang Ban defines: "Special single sentence is an architecture with a main syntactic center (possibly with additional syntactic centers), which contains or does not imply a second syntactic center related to it is like the relationship between subject and predicate." [2; 153]

In terms of structure, author Diep Quang Ban is almost identical to Do Thi Kim Lien when she says: "A special simple sentence is made up of a word or a phrase (except for the subject-predicate term). Common types of words here are nouns and predicates (verbs, adjectives). [1;152]

From the perspective of functional grammar, Cao Xuan Hao conceives: "Special sentences are sentences without topic-comment structure"[2; 83]. Thus, a special sentence is not a partial sentence; the part displayed on the text is not a topic or comment because it does not represent a topic or comment of any proposition. When analyzing each type of sentence in Vietnamese Syntax, Nguyen Van Hiep stated the common feature of a special sentence that "cannot be analyzed according to the components of the basic syntactic structure (sentence structure, description according subject-predicate) like other common types of sentences. In other words, a special sentence is a sentence that cannot be analyzed into a subject, predicate or complement..." [3;270]

Therefore, a special sentence is composed of a word or a phrase (noun, adjective). Here, the views of Diep Quang Ban, Cao Xuan Hao, and Nguyen Van Hiep all recognize the special sentence in the distinction from the subsentences, or partial sentence, or in other words; the special sentence does not include an elliptical sentence as in the classification of Do Thi Kim Lien [4; 120]). A special sentence is a grammatically complete sentence with relatively independent content, while subsentence is stressed and dependent on the sentences before and after it.

4.1.2. Subsentence

A subsentence is essentially a part of a complete sentence that has been separated for artistic reasons. The subsentence does not exist on its own, it has only artistic value and makes sense to the sentence from which it is derived.

Some authors, such as Tran Ngoc Them did not establish the sentencing status of the subsentence but called it "a dependent phrase of the accompanying sentence," which also comes from its semantic dependence on the sentence before or after it. In his work, the author determines: "The dependent phrase of the accompanying sentence is a structurally incomplete utterance" and emphasizes that "the dependent phrase of the accompanying sentence is not a special sentence"[6; 47]. Here, we classify a subsentence based primarily on its standard features. A subsentence begins with a capital letter and ends with a punctuation mark when appearing in the text. If a subsentence is considered a form of elliptical, perhaps trying to recover the omitted part, the recovered part will become an unnecessary, superfluous assembly and may appear to be a clumsy grammatical construct. So, although a subsentence has a specific dependence on the relevant sentence from a semantic point of view, in terms of form, it is still complete as a type of sentence in the text.

(4) Huan goes to the station. Alone, in the night. (Nguyen Thi Ngoc Tu)

Alone is solitary. *In the night* is desolate. Separated alone, in the night into a sentence to highlight the lonely and desolate nature without having to say more "alone in the deserted night." The punctuation before them is no longer needed with further analysis, and the rhetorical value is lost accordingly. Without such "additional" meanings, the two sentences above would be grammatically incorrect. The above analysis shows that the subsentence is only a part of the preceding sentence separated; without it, the prior sentence is still qualified as a sentence in terms of grammatical structure.

Thus, a subsentence is a part of a sentence split into a separate sentence. Accordingly, the most appropriate way of classifying subsentence is to use its syntactic function with the sentence from which it is separated. There are usually 4 types : subsentence equivalent with complement, subsentence equivalent with adverbial, subsentence equivalent with theme complement, subsentence equivalent with conjunction. Therefore, the subsentence is not a type of sentence classified according to the normal syntactic structure but is a consequence of the process of using language as a tool of human communication.

4.1.3. Elliptical sentence

Elliptical sentences, also known as sentences containing an elliptical composition, result from the phenomenon of elliptical that is quite common in the grammar of many different languages, in which the most common are still non-transforming languages like Vietnamese.

The elliptical is understood as a particular part that should be present in the sentence. Still, it is omitted without affecting the understanding of the sentence's meaning under consideration for some reason. The elliptical phenomenon is used in conversations to make sentences concise and provide information content corresponding to human needs in the shortest possible time.

An elliptical sentence is incomplete with the main components, it may be missing a subject, a predicate, or the whole subject. The omitted elements can be restored or found in the previous sentence. The elliptical sentence is associated with a two-component simple sentence in most cases.

The meaning of the omitted element is only the background meaning, the old information, or the additional information, not the content element that needs to be conveyed to the receiver. However, because one or two main components are omitted, the sentence's overall meaning is incomplete and must be fully understood based on context. Based on the main components missing, it is possible to divide the elliptical sentence into categories such as the sentence omitting the subject, the predicate, and the sentence omitting both the subject and the predicate.

4.2. Distinguish three special types of simple sentences

From the overview of each type of sentence in the above section, there are still three different types of sentences that are not mutually exclusive in language and usage, even though the boundary between the three types of sentences is very blurred.

In Vietnamese Syntax, Nguyen Van Hiep once posed the problem "A special sentence is understood as a sentence with no components according to the basic syntactic structure. However, the first problem will be: these are sentences that cannot be parsed according to the basic syntactic structure, or are sentences that do not have all the basic syntactic structure components, such as having only a subject or a predicate? This question is asked to distinguish authentic special sentences from those in which sentences are elliptical, only the subject, predicate or any other element." [3; 270]

Therefore, based on each sentence's grammatical and semantic features, we put special sentences, elliptical sentences, and subsentences below about each other and with common types of sentences to outline identification criteria. Below, we initially suggest how to distinguish three types of sentences in the 2 couple tables :

4.2.1. Distinguish special sentence with elliptical sentence and subsentence :

Criteria	Special sentence	Elliptical sentence and subsentence
Existence	A type of sentence that exists stably in the language.	A variation of sentences in communication.
Grammatical completeness	Grammatically complete, not necessary or impossible to add to an existing sentence a linguistic expression to turn into a simple two-component sentence of the same meaning. (5) - Mom! (+) - I'm calling mom! (-) - Baby calling mom! (-)	Grammatically incomplete, it is possible to restore the omitted part to become a complete sentence (elliptical sentence) or remove a dot to change the role from a sentence to becoming an element of a relevant sentence (subsentence). + Subsentence: (6)- The rain abated. Then it stopped. (+) - The rain abated, then stopped altogether. (+) - When are you going to Hanoi? + Elliptical sentence: (7)- Next Monday. (+) - Next Monday I am going to Hanoi. (+)
Independence	High independence, little dependence on grammar with sentences of the same context.	Existence is strictly dependent on the sentences before and after it. If separated from the main sentence, the elliptical sentences and subsentences will become false and have no existential value.

4.2.2. Distinguish elliptical sentence and subsentence :

Criteria	Elliptical sentence	Subsentence
Derivation	The result of omitting a certain grammatical element of a normal sentence. (8) The weaver bird asked the leaf: - Leaf! Tell me your life story! - Normal, probably nothing. (*) (Tran Hoai Duong) The sentence (*) has been omitted from the subject "my life."	The result of separating a grammatical element of a previous or subsequent sentence into a separate sentence. (9) But Thieu turned to book trading. Came with a contraband drug shop. (Ngo Tat To) The sentence "Came with a contraband drug shop" is inherently a complement separated from the previous sentence.
Semantic value	The semantic value is equivalent to the content of a normal sentence. (10)- Have you eaten yet? Yes. I have already eaten.	The semantic value is equivalent to a word or phrase. (11) Initially: few, sparse. Suddenly, bugs rush jump jubilantly. Later realized it was hail. The garden is starting to get steamy. Heavy rain. Bugs are jumping more and more fiercely. Full of grass garden. (Vo Phien)
Existence	Exists in relation to the sentence before and after it.	Existence depends on the sentence before or after it. The subsentence will lose its sentence status if the relevant sentence is separated.

5. Conclusion

Firstly, the special simple sentences in Vietnamese, including special sentences, elliptical sentences, and subsentences, have structural irregularities, utterly different from the sentences delimited by common syntactic structure sentences in Vietnamese, such as two-component simple sentences, compound sentences, and complex sentences. The existence of these special simple sentences is apparent, common in the communicative discourse of Vietnamese, including conversations in daily life, administration, academia, or other types of documents in different languages with different functional styles.

Second, all three types of sentences have clear and distinct semantic and pragmatic values.

Third, the article has shown how to distinguish the three types of sentences straightforwardly but effectively through an analysis table with specific criteria. The dichotomous distinction gives optimal efficiency in determining 3 types of sentences. This approach also emphasizes that the special sentence has the status of independent existence, is grammatically and semantically complete, and is most commonly used among these three types of sentences.

In summary, based on studying each type of sentence, the criteria we give are depended on each sentence's structural, semantic, and operational characteristics to distinguish three special types of simple sentences most simply.

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