INTRODUCTION

1. Rationale

In Vietnam, pioneering studies on discourse by such linguists as T.N. Them, D.Q.Ban, P.V.Hoa, N.T.Dan, N.H.Tien, N.X.Thom, N.Hoa, etc. over the past decade have been opening the way for more and more comprehensive analysis. Among those, analysis on news as discourse is no longer a new territory. The Ph.D dissertation by N.Hoa (1998) was focused on discourse analysis of news (on political, economic and social issues), then followed by some other M.A theses: Some discourse features of newspaper headlines and articles in English by B.N.Anh (2004), A study of discourse properties in English brief news headlines by V.T.V.Huong (2004), etc. However, all of those studies examine news in only print newspapers or analyze just small segments of news discourse.

Why is international news on internet newspapers chosen the subject of this study? Firstly, we are living in an era of globalization, in which all nations are closely interrelated. They need to have deep understanding of their counterparts in every issue. International news on the internet meets their information thirst. Secondly, no one can deny the roles of Internet in society, which provides a huge volume of information in the quickest, most effective way with the greatest impact. Thanks to the Internet, all countries of the world can know about each other. All the advantages of other mass media are encompassed in the Internet. The development of the Internet has brought about great revolutions in mass media, among which internet newspapers see their birth. With the overwhelming advantages of the Internet (limiting the time and space distance, updating information anytime and anywhere, combining both audio and visual means, being a huge research stock and an effective means of entertainment, etc…), internet newspapers nowadays attract the largest number of readers all over the world.
With all of the above reasons, the researcher proposes *A contrastive analysis of international news’ discourse properties on English and Vietnamese internet newspapers* as the title of her thesis.

2. **Aims of the study**

- to point out discourse properties of international news on internet newspapers
- to identify similarities and differences between international news on English and Vietnamese internet newspapers terms of discourse properties.
- to help teachers as well as learners of English acquire comprehensive understanding of news discourse.

3. **Research questions**

- What are the generic structure and linguistic features of international news on English internet newspapers?
- What are the generic structure and linguistic features of international news on Vietnamese internet newspapers?
- To what extent are the identified features similar?
- What are the differences between those two subjects in terms of discourse properties?

4. **Research methods and data analysis procedure**

   **4.1 The methods**

Besides descriptive, comparative, deductive, inductive, qualitative and quantitative methods, some other supplementary methods such as personal observation, surveying literature or seeking specialist information about online news and news on print newspapers, etc… have also been referred to in order to accomplish the goals of the study.
4.2 Data analysis procedure

A random collection of about 300 pieces of news (half of which are from English internet newspapers, and the other half 150 are from Vietnamese internet newspapers) will be representatives for the whole population.

The procedure of the analysis experiences four steps:
- Step 1: analyzing discourse properties of international news on English internet newspapers
- Step 2: presenting discourse properties of international news on Vietnamese internet newspapers.
- Step 3: making a comparison between these two types of discourse in terms of generic structures and linguistic features.
- Step 4: generalizing and concluding.

5. Scope of the study

In this study, the writer only desires to focus on the internet news of international affairs (among them are international policies, conflicts, global problems, multilateral relationship, etc.).

The ultimate goal of the study is to identify major similarities and differences in terms of discourse properties between these two groups of subjects. Therefore, instead of supplying full descriptions of generic structures as well as linguistic features relevant to each group, the thesis will just focus on their typical comparable features.

6. Significance of the study

A lot of linguists consider news on the internet as a new genre of discourse. However, the study on discourse properties of this new genre is still limited in
Vietnam. Under this circumstance, the theoretical significance of this study is to provide a supplementary contribution to genre analysis and linguistic research.

Moreover, this is the first research focusing on contrastive analysis of international news in terms of discourse properties between English and Vietnamese internet newspapers. In practice, results of the research are meaningful in providing insights for those interested in news in general and news on internet in particular. As for teaching and learning English, in which news is considered main source of classroom material, this study will be very useful. It also assists readers in better interpreting and understanding information on the Internet, and is beneficial for the integration of Vietnamese internet newspapers into the world press.

7. Design of the study

The study is composed of three parts:

Part 1: INTRODUCTION

Part 2: DEVELOPMENT. This is the main part in the study with 3 chapters:

Chapter 1: provides the theoretical background for the study. Its focus is on introducing fundamental concepts in contrastive analysis, discourse properties, internet newspapers and news on internet newspapers.

Chapter 2: gives the description of discourse properties of the international news on English internet newspapers. The description is based on two main fields:Generic structure and Linguistic features

Chapter 3: discusses discourse properties of the international news on Vietnamese internet newspapers in terms of generic structure and linguistic features and compares the discourse properties of international news on English and Vietnamese internet newspapers.

Part 3: CONCLUSION.
CHAPTER 1: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

1.1. Contrastive analysis

Contrastive linguistics was defined as “a subdiscipline of linguistics concerned with the comparison of two or more languages or subsystems of languages in order to determine both the differences and similarities between them” (Fisiak, 1981: 1).

Contrastive Analysis is a method of analyzing, involving a pair of languages. Focusing on the compatible items of such two languages, the contrastive analysts will be able to find out their differential aspects.

1.2. Discourse properties

This thesis will follow the view of Halliday and Hasan, considering discourse and text the interchangeable terms. According to them, text (discourse): can be defined in the simplest way perhaps by saying that it is language that is functional. [...] So any instance of living language that is playing some part in a context of situation, we shall call a text. It may be either spoken or written or indeed in other medium of expression that we like to think of.

(Halliday and Hasan 1989:10)

1.3. Internet newspapers

Characteristics of internet newspapers

- Hypertextuality:
  
- Multimediality
  
- Interactivity

1.4. International news on internet newspapers
News was traditionally provided by means of newspapers, radio, and television through text, sound, or image. The emergence of the Internet with so many exclusive features, to some extents, has reduced the importance of such traditional news media.

International news refers to news which focuses on international issues, which involve:

- inter-relations among countries: official visits, economic cooperation, political negotiations…
- global issues: climate change, peace, conflict, international security…
- external policies and political opinions towards other countries
CHAPTER 2: DISCOURSE PROPERTIES OF INTERNATIONAL NEWS ON ENGLISH INTERNET NEWSPAPERS (E.I.N.)

2.1. Generic structure

The survey of 150 international news items on E.I.N. reveals the following overall generic structure, which also applies to internet news in general.

![Diagram of overall generic structure of news on E.I.N.]

**Figure 1: Overall generic structure of news on E.I.N.**

2.2. Linguistic features

2.2.1. Lexical choice

Generally speaking, popular words are preferred, which ensures that everyone across the world can read and understand it.

The international news covers all issues on the world: politics, economy, religion, lifestyles, health, education…Hereafter, there appear many term words of certain fields, relying on the main topic of the news. Metaphors and modal auxiliaries are
rarely found partly because these kinds of words, to some extent, can reflect the writer’s personal opinions. One feature of internet newspapers is that, under many circumstances, they are informal. This informality allows reporters to find humorous ways of expressing. However, in the case of international news, puns absolutely do not work.

2.2.2 Tense

The simple present tense is the most popular form of verbs in international news on E.I.N., in spite of the fact that the news may describe something that is happening, something that happens repeatedly, even something that happened already or something that is going to happen in the near future.

2.2.3. Directness and indirectness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direct quotations</th>
<th>Indirect quotations</th>
<th>Partial quotations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>62%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 1: Directness and indirectness on E.I.N.*

2.2.4 Sentence patterns

2.2.4.1. The headline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word Headlines</th>
<th>Phrase Headlines</th>
<th>Fragment Headlines</th>
<th>Sentence Headlines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 2: Types of headlines on E.I.N.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement headlines</th>
<th>Question headlines</th>
<th>Command headlines</th>
<th>Exclamation headlines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>78%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3: Types of sentence headlines on E.I.N.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Simple sentences</th>
<th>Complex sentences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>75%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Simple vs. complex sentences as headlines on E.I.N.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SV</th>
<th>SVO</th>
<th>SVC</th>
<th>SVA</th>
<th>SVOA</th>
<th>SVOC</th>
<th>SVOO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Sentence patterns of headlines on E.I.N.
CHAPTER 3: DISCOURSE PROPERTIES OF INTERNATIONAL NEWS ON VIETNAMESE INTERNET NEWSPAPERS (V.I.N.) IN COMPARISON WITH E.I.N.

3.1. Generic structure

In general, there is no big difference in overall generic structure of international news between V.I.N. and E.I.N., because they are of the same genre. They all have to comply with basic principles of general internet news. Moreover, the readers have the similar reading styles (they just scan internet newspapers for news), reading speed (slower than reading print newspapers) and memorizing process (less information remained in mind after reading on the internet).

Therefore, beside the three most significant elements: headline, lead, and body, international news on V.I.N. also consists of other supplementary factors (the time of releasing the news, the name of writer) and optional elements (the sub-headlines, hyperlinks and non-linguistic features).

However, there is a little change in the order of these news elements, which is shown in the following figure:

*Figure 2: Overall generic structure of news on V.I.N.*
3.2. Linguistic features

3.2.1 Lexical choice

The most striking difference in terms of lexical choice between V.I.N. and E.I.N. is the level of objectiveness and neutral language from the writers. Reporters of E.I.N. always try to avoid expressing their own opinions. On the other hand, we can see a lot ways using rhetorics in international news on V.I.N., which may be inferred as the reporters’ point of view.

3.2.2 Tense

The tenses in Vietnamese are not expressed via the conjugation of verbs like in English. Instead, the using of words such as dâ, đâng, sê and time expression like hôm qua, hôm nay, tuần sau...will help determine the Vietnamese tenses.

3.2.3 Directness and indirectness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quotations</th>
<th>Direct</th>
<th>Indirect</th>
<th>Partial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subjects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.I.N.</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.I.N.</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 6: Directness and indirectness on V.I.N. and E.I.N.*

3.2.4 Sentence patterns

3.2.4.1 The headline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Headlines</th>
<th>Word headlines</th>
<th>Phrase headlines</th>
<th>Fragment headlines</th>
<th>Sentence headlines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subjects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.I.N.</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.I.N.</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: Types of headlines on V.I.N. and E.I.N.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun phrases</th>
<th>Verb phrases</th>
<th>Adjective phrases</th>
<th>Prepositional phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>74%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8: Types of phrase headlines on V.I.N.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Headlines</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Commands</th>
<th>Exclamations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subjects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.I.N.</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.I.N.</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9: Types of sentence headlines on V.I.N. and E.I.N.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Headlines</th>
<th>Simple sentences</th>
<th>Complex sentences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subjects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.I.N.</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.I.N.</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10: Simple vs. complex sentences on V.I.N. and E.I.N. headlines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Patterns</th>
<th>SV</th>
<th>SVO</th>
<th>SVC</th>
<th>SVA</th>
<th>SVOA</th>
<th>SVOC</th>
<th>SVOO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subjects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.I.N.</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.I.N.</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11: Sentence patterns in headlines on V.I.N. and E.I.N.
CONCLUSION

1. Summary of main findings

International news on E.I.N. and V.I.N. has been analyzed in terms of two main fields: generic structure and linguistic features.

As for generic structure, the key elements of news (headline, reporter, date and time of releasing the news, lead, body) as well as other optional factors (sub-headline, hyperlinks or non-linguistic features) have been pointed out.

As far as the linguistic features are concerned, the thesis has been focused on:

- Lexical choice
- Tense
- Directness and indirectness
- Sentence patterns
- Cohesion devices

The thesis is mainly aimed at finding out the similarities and differences between the two subject groups. The ultimate findings show that the two groups of subject share some common characteristics, but they also expose a lot of differences.

1.1 Similarities

1.1.1 In terms of generic structure

- Beside the three crucial segments belonging to the news: the headline, the lead and the body, there are other factors such as the date-time of releasing the news, name of reporter, the sub-headlines, the hyperlinks and non-linguistic features. These news elements perform the same functions on E.I.N. and V.I.N.
- The lead: The lead answer important questions of WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, WHY and HOW. No lead on both E.I.N. and V.I.N. provides answer to only one question. Leads giving answers to 3 key questions are of the most preference.

- The body: The body on both E.I.N. and V.I.N. employs the inverted pyramid structure and gives readers three kinds of information:
  - details of the events
  - comments from people involved
  - background information

Body structure is made up of block paragraphs. In most cases, one-sentence paragraphs are applied.

1.1.2 In terms of linguistic features

- Lexical choice: Popular words are preferred on both E.I.N. and V.I.N. International news covers all issues ranging from politics, economy, religion, lifestyles to health, education…Correspondingly, there appear many term words of certain fields, relying on the main topic of the news.

- Directness and indirectness: international news on E.I.N. and V.I.N. all recruits the use of direct and indirect speech. Indirect quotations are most frequently used, followed by direct quotations and partial quotations are the least prevalent.

- Sentence patterns:
  - The headlines:
    - A headline may be formed from a phrase or a sentence.
    - Sentence headlines are the most pervasive.
    - There is no headline formed from a word
    - Headlines as phrase: mostly noun phrases
- Headlines as sentence: more statement sentences than questions, more simple sentences than complex sentences
- There appear all sentence patterns: SV, SVO, SVC, SVA, SVOA, SVOC, SVOO, among which SV patterns are the least used.
- The lead and the body: All leads and news bodies are complex sentences.

- Cohesion devices: There are transitions to link the sentences within a paragraph and among paragraphs. The mostly used way of cohesion is repeating the key words from the headlines.

### 1.2. Differences

1.2.1. In terms of generic structure

- Sequence of headline, time and source of information:

On **E.I.N.**, headline comes first, then the date of time of releasing the news, followed by name of reporter or source of information. But on **V.I.N.**, it is not fixed whether the headline or the time comes first. Name of reporter or source of information is placed at the end of the news.

- The lead is enclosed with the location on **E.I.N.** but no location is identified at the beginning of the lead on **V.I.N.**

The differences in presence of news elements between **E.I.N.** and **V.I.N.** leads can be indicated in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2 elements</th>
<th>3 elements</th>
<th>4 elements</th>
<th>5 elements</th>
<th>6 elements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>E.I.N.</strong></td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>V.I.N.</strong></td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 12: Differences in the presence of news elements between **E.I.N.** and **V.I.N.** leads*
- The body: Numbers of sentences in a body’s paragraph are different between E.I.N. and V.I.N.

1.3.2. In terms of linguistic features

-Lexical choice: Reporters of E.I.N. always try to avoid manifesting their own opinions. On the other hand, there are many rhetorics in international news on V.I.N., which may be inferred as the reporters’ point of view.

-Tense: In the case of E.I.N., the time of happenings is only clearly claimed in the news body, and present simple tense is applied with headlines regardless of whether it is saying about the past, present or future. However, tenses on V.I.N. are identified very straightforwardly, even in the headlines.

- Sentence patterns: Differences between E.I.N. and V.I.N. in terms of sentence patterns are only shown in the headline:

  • Headlines on E.I.N. are in the forms of phrases, fragments or sentences. But headlines on V.I.N. have only two forms: either phrases or sentences.

  • Headlines as phrases: There is certain number of verb-phrases, adjective phrases and preposition phrases in headlines on V.I.N., while mostly noun phrases are used on E.I.N.

  • Headlines as sentences:
    - All four types of sentences (statement, question, command, exclamation) are used on E.I.N. but there is no command or exclamation sentences in headlines on V.I.N.
    - The ratio of simple and complex sentences in headlines on E.I.N. is 75% vs. 35 %. But that rate changes in headlines on V.I.N. with 80% and 20% respectively.
Sentence patterns: ranging according to the most to the least being used, on **E.I.N.** the order of sentence patterns is: SVOA- SVO- SVA- SVC-SVOC-SVOO-SV, but on **V.I.N.** we have SVO-SVA-SVOA-SVOC-SVC-SVOC-SV.

2. **Implications for English language teaching and learning**

The findings of this study can be applied in language teaching. For example, with reference to teaching vocabulary, international news’ topics are related to a lot of fields. Learners can learn much from terminologies. The vocabulary memorizing process is stimulated because words are grouped according to the topics. Moreover, international news provide them with useful semantic contexts to guess or infer the word meaning, finding the synonyms, antonyms.

As for teaching and learning grammar, realization of grammatical items such as the tense, the voice, the directness and indirectness, cohesive devices…are very useful methods for learners.

International news of internet newspapers can also be used as good materials of teaching and practicing translation because the lexical choice allows the use of popular and informal language. In addition, the news content is familiar to the people’s daily life.

3. **Suggestions for further research**

On carrying out this study, the author herself have gained much knowledge and are more interested in the internet news. The Internet has been indeed proving to be a very interactive, dynamic medium that combines visual and textual elements in an environment that is nearly unrestricted by time and space. International news is only a small part among those elements, which definitely encompass the interesting discourse properties. Other elements on the internet beside the news, for example the online advertisements, online chatting, or the blogs…are expected to be very attracting for further researches.
Because of the limitation of time and knowledge, the writer unavoidably makes some mistakes while conducting the study. Suggestions and constructive remarks are therefore highly appreciated. However, the writer hopes that, to some extent, this thesis will be of usefulness for readers.