

# EXCLAMATION EXPRESSIONS IN SIDNEY SHELDON'S NOVEL "IF TOMORROW COMES" AND ITS VIETNAMESE TRANSLATION EQUIVALENTS

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Received: 05/08/2024

Revised: 17/02/2025

Accepted: 26/02/2025

DOI: 10.59266/houjs.2025.541

**Abstract:** *This paper investigates the syntactic features and expression exclamations in English in the novel "If tomorrow comes" by the author Sidney Sheldon and its Vietnamese equivalent by translator Nguyen Ba Long. It is conducted with the hope of finding out the similarities and differences between how exclamations are formed in both languages and suggesting practical applications to the learning and teaching of English as a foreign language in Vietnam. Descriptive and comparative methods are used. 248 data collected from the novel "If tomorrow comes" by Sidney Sheldon are used for analysis. The result of the study illustrates the fact that exclamations in the novel "If tomorrow comes" and its Vietnamese equivalents are quite similar in syntactic and semantic features. The study aims to help English learners learn English exclamations more effectively.*

**Keywords:** *Exclamation, syntactic feature, interjection, expression of English exclamation, expression of Vietnamese exclamation.*

## I. Introduction

English is regarded as the most common language for information and ideas interchange between nations and cultures, along with the growth of human language. To fulfill the demand for global economic integration and cultural exchange with other nations, the necessity to learn English is becoming more and more pressing. Undoubtedly, both Vietnamese and foreigners want to learn English as a natural language; nonetheless, they frequently encounter several obstacles

that prohibit them from engaging in fruitful talks. Exclamations are used and understood differently by different people, which is one of the causes of these issues. We know that both English and Vietnamese people have thoughts and emotions in common. They also have different emotional tones, such as anger, joy, happiness, sadness, surprise, fear, despair, disgust, etc. However, the ways of expressing it are different. One can use gestures to show one's attitude or feelings because gestures are specific body movements that carry meaning. While the

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others express their emotions and attitudes through facial expressions. But the most basic and important means is language. It is easy to recognize the other's feelings or attitudes through their utterances. People use language to express their shock, surprise, fear, anger, and admiration. These utterances are called exclamations. Exclamation is one of the sentence types and it attracts much attention from researchers in English as well as in Vietnamese. In English as well as Vietnamese, there are many authors studying sentences including exclamations. However, so far, no research has been done into exclamations in terms of syntax in detail in both languages. Moreover, practically, learners often become confused when using exclamations in both English and Vietnamese. They have syntactic forms that look like statements or questions, but their usages are quite different. So, we decided to find out the similarities and differences of exclamations in English and their Vietnamese translation versions in the novel "If tomorrow comes" in terms of their syntactic features and their expressions to help the learners of English master this kind of sentence effectively in the process of learning English.

## **II. Literature review**

### **2.1. Previous Studies**

Exclamations are a phrase that gets linguists' attention a lot. Many authors have written works relating to them. However, there are several areas in which their strategies diverge. Exclamation is the term Quirk et al. (1972 & 1985) used to describe the grammatical category. David Crystal (1995) examines the numerous features and variants of the English language. Statements, questions, demands, and exclamations are the four categories of sentence functions that David Crystal examines. Exclamations are mostly studied in terms of their syntactic structure. Andrew Radford (1997) defines an exclamative

as "a type of structure used to exclaim surprise, delight, annoyance, etc." and goes on to say that "in English syntax, the term is restricted largely to clauses beginning with Wh- exclamatory phrases, such as "what!" or "how!" He appears to view the exclamative as a syntactic phenomenon based on his usage of the word "structure."

The analysis of Vietnamese exclamations is taken carefully in the thesis of Ha Thi Hai Yen (2000). However, this thesis discusses the parameters of a study of conversational exchanges, and she concentrates on the exclamative function of each action. Besides that, there have been some publications on sentence types including exclamations such as *Câu trong tiếng Việt* (Cao Xuân Hạo, 1998); *Ngữ pháp Việt Nam – phần câu* (Diệp Quang Ban, 2004); *Giáo trình ngôn ngữ học* (Nguyễn Thiện Giáp, 2008); *Nghiên cứu ngữ pháp tiếng Việt* (Nguyễn Kim Thản, 1963); *Câu trong tiếng Việt* (Nguyễn Thị Lương, 2005); etc. However, studies on the syntactic characteristics of exclamations in Vietnamese and English have not been conducted yet. Therefore, research on this topic is important to have a fuller knowledge of exclamations in the two languages.

### **2.2. Syntactic**

The study of syntax and expressions in phrases, clauses, and sentences focuses on the connections between language constructions, their orderly arrangement, and which sequences are well-formed. This kind of research often doesn't take any form users or worlds of reference into account. In terms of syntax, exclamations are composed of a few small clauses. The emotive position or attitude of the speaker is expressed through exclamations. Occasionally, an interjection - a phrase or sound used to indicate a quick sensation or emotion - realizes the exclamation. The most basic kind of speech, interjections, are among the earliest forms of spoken

language. Interjections can occasionally be used with an exclamatory structure. Interjections in speech are a sign of emotional intensity. Interjections are words used to communicate physical or mental emotions but have no lexical meaning. They are employed as indeterminate sounds and have no symbolic value. Exclamations are ungrammaticalized when used to demarcate the subject or predicate of sentences for this reason.

### III. Methodology

Descriptive and comparative methods are used to describe syntactic features and point out the similarities and differences between English exclamations and their Vietnamese equivalents in Sidney Sheldon's novel *If Tomorrow Comes*. There are 248 exclamations in both the

English and Vietnamese translations. The exclamations in English and their Vietnamese translation are compared and contrasted in terms of syntactic and semantic features.

### IV. Finding and discussion

#### *4.1. Syntactic features of English exclamations in English and their Vietnamese translation version in the novel "If tomorrow comes"*

##### *4.1.1. Syntactic features of exclamations in English*

In the novel "If tomorrow comes", the author used 248 exclamations, including 3 types:

##### *4.1.1.1. Exclamations formed with How and What*

*Table 1: Exclamation formed with How and what*

No	Content	Amount	%	Examples
1	Exclamation formed with How	3	37.5	<i>How he must have been laughing at her all the time! [p. 344]</i>
2	Exclamations formed with What	5	62.5	<i>What? Oh. Wait a minute! [p. 129]</i>
<b>Total</b>		<b>8</b>	<b>100</b>	

##### *4.1.1.2. Phrase, Clause, and Sentence exclamations*

There are 169 phrases, clause, and sentence exclamations that account for 68,1 %, in which Imperative sentences are the least used and Declarative sentences are the most used.

*Table 2: Phrase, Clause, and Sentence exclamations*

No	Content	Amount	%	Examples
1	Exclamatory adverb phrases	4	2	<i>Now! [p. 333]</i>
2	Exclamatory prepositional phrases	5	3	<i>Of all the rude---! [p.217]</i>
3	Exclamatory noun phrases	40	23.7	<i>Inspector! [p. 401]</i>
4	Exclamatory adjective clauses	25	14.8	<i>Formidable! [p. 284]</i>
5	Exclamatory verb clauses	33	19.5	<i>Hold it! [p.408]</i>
6	Imperative sentences	2	1	<i>Let's go of me! [p. 29]</i>
7	Exclamatory questions	3	2	<i>Isn't that exciting!" [p. 271]</i>
8	Declarative sentences	57	33.7	<i>You can't miss it now! [p. 187]</i>
<b>Total</b>		<b>169</b>	<b>100</b>	

#### 4.1.1.3. Interjections

Table 3: Interjections

No	Content	Amount	Example
1	Interjection	71	<i>Hey! [p. 29]</i>
<b>Total</b>		<b>71</b>	

#### 4.1.2. Syntactic features of exclamations in English and their Vietnamese equivalents

##### 4.1.2.1. Exclamations formed with How and What

Table 4: Exclamation formed with How and What

No	Content	English	Vietnamese	%
1	Exclamation formed with How	3	3	100
2	Exclamations formed with What	5	2	40
<b>Total</b>		<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>62.5</b>

There are 8 English exclamation sentences, 5 exclamation sentences in the Vietnamese version, accounting for 62.5 percent of the rest, and the remaining sentences are converted into questions and statements, for example:

*How dare that Swiss idiot imply that the precious Goya was a fake! [p. 338].* In Vietnamese: *Thế nào gã Thụy sỹ ngớ ngẩn này lại dám cho rằng bức tranh quý giá đó là của dỏm nhỉ! [p.510]*

*But how she would pay! [p.381]* in Vietnamese: *Nhưng cô ta sẽ phải trả giá! [p.574]*

Exclamation sentences are converted into questions and statements:

*What! Oh. Wait a minute! [129]* in Vietnamese: *Cái gì? Đợi một phút. [p.195]*

*What! That's--- that's ridiculous! [p.219]* in Vietnamese: *Trời, thật là nực cười. [p.330]*

##### 4.1.2.2. Exclamations using phrases, clauses, and sentences

Table 5: Exclamations using phrases, clauses, and sentences

No	Content	English	Vietnamese	%
1	Exclamatory adverb phrases	4	4	100
2	Exclamatory preposition phrases	5	5	100
3	Exclamatory noun phrases	40	24	60
4	Exclamatory adjective clauses	25	18	72
5	Exclamatory verb clauses	33	23	69.7
6	Imperative sentences	2	1	50
7	Exclamatory questions	3	1	33.3
8	Declarative sentences	57	40	70.2
<b>Total</b>		<b>169</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>68.6</b>

We can see that English exclamation sentences are realized by noun phrases, verb phrases, preposition phrases, imperative sentences, declaration sentences, and 169 sentences with exclamation marks. In Vietnamese translation, translator Nguyen

Ba Long also used 116 exclamation sentences accounting for 68,6%; the rest were converted into questions, imperatives, and declarative sentences:

1. Four exclamation sentences in English realized by adverb phrases

have been converted into 4 exclamation sentences in Vietnamese with exclamation marks accounting for 100 %:

*Inside!* [p.153] in Vietnamese: *Vào đi!* [p.82]

2. Five exclamation sentences in English realized by preposition phrases have been converted into 5 exclamation sentences in Vietnamese with exclamation marks accounting for 100 %:

*For God's sake, get me out of here!* [p.146] in Vietnamese: *Vì chúa, hãy đưa tôi ra khỏi đây!* [p.219]

3. Forty exclamation sentences in English realized by noun phrases have been converted into twenty-four exclamation sentences in Vietnamese, with exclamation marks accounting for 60 %:

*You! Get up!* [p.61] in Vietnamese: *Cô này! Dậy đi!* [p.95]

The rest change the sentence type into imperative, interrogative, and declarative sentences in Vietnamese without exclamation marks accounted for 40 %:

*Jesus! I've got rats!* [p.140] in Vietnamese: *Chúa ơi. Có con chuột thật.* [p.211]

4. Two exclamation sentences in English realized by Imperative sentences have been converted into 18 exclamation sentences in Vietnamese, with exclamation marks accounting for 72 %:

*Wounded!* [p.34] in Vietnamese: *Bị thương!* [p.55]

The rest change the sentence type into imperative, interrogative, and declarative sentences in Vietnamese without exclamation marks accounted for 28 %:

*Simply unbearable!* [p.132] in Vietnamese: *Thực sự là không thể chịu nổi.* [p.200]

5. Thirty-three exclamation sentences in English realized by verb clauses have been converted into 23 exclamation sentences in Vietnamese with exclamation marks accounting for 69.7%:

*Write, goddamn it!* [p.204] in Vietnamese: *Viết đi, quỷ tha ma bắt!* [p.306]

The rest change the sentence type into imperative, interrogative, and declarative sentences in Vietnamese without exclamation marks accounted for 28 %:

*Stop the goddamned check!* [p.205] in Vietnamese: *Một kiểu đùa giỡn chẳng?* [p.309]

6. Two exclamation sentences in English realized by imperative sentences have been converted into exclamation sentences in Vietnamese, with exclamation marks accounting for 50 %:

*Don't forget that the gun is loaded!* [p.26] in Vietnamese: *Chớ quên khẩu súng đó đã nạp đạn!* [p.44]

The rest change the sentence type into imperative, interrogative, and declarative sentences in Vietnamese without exclamation marks accounted for 50 %:

*Let me go!* [p.29] in Vietnamese: *Buông tôi ra.* [p.47]

7. Three exclamation sentences in English realized by Exclamatory questions have been converted into one exclamation sentence in Vietnamese with exclamation marks accounting for 33.3 %:

*Could you go faster,* [p.181] in Vietnamese: *Xin chạy xe nhanh hơn được không?* [p.273]

The rest change the sentence type into imperative, interrogative sentences in Vietnamese without exclamation marks accounted for 66.7 %:

*Could you go faster, [p.181]* in Vietnamese: *Xin chạy xe nhanh hơn được không? [p.273]*

8. 57 exclamation sentences in English realized by Declarative sentences have been converted into 40 exclamation sentences in Vietnamese, with exclamation marks accounting for 70.2 %:

*I'm dressed all wrong! [p.22]* in Vietnamese: *Mình mặc tề quá! [p.22]*

The rest change the sentence type into imperative, interrogative, and declarative sentences in Vietnamese without exclamation marks accounted for 29.8 %:

*If only Charles had said that! [p.43]* in Vietnamese: *Giá mà Charles đã nói thế? [p.67]*

#### 4.1.2.3. Exclamations using Interjections

### 4.2. Expressions of English exclamations and their Vietnamese equivalents

#### 4.2.1. English expressions of English exclamations

Table 7: English expressions of English exclamations

No	Content	Amount (sentences)	Examples
1	Exclamations used to express fears	1	<i>No! [p. 173]</i>
2	Exclamations used to express a thank you	2	<i>Oh, thank you! [p. 14]</i>
3	Exclamations used to express sadness or pity	11	<i>I'm dressed all wrong! [p. 14]</i>
4	Exclamations used to express a refusal	14	<i>No! Get down! [p. 110]</i>
5	Exclamations expressing a promise	14	<i>Hey, you've got to believe me! [p. 130]</i>
6	Exclamations used to express a compliment	16	<i>It is a feast for the eyes!" [p. 337]</i>
7	Exclamations used to express advice or encouragement	19	<i>Please, everybody! [p.405]</i>
8	Exclamation used to express anger or disappointment	20	<i>Cut the horseshit! [p. 202]</i>
9	Exclamations denoting happiness	25	<i>Oh, thank God I get hold of you, Meester Orsatti!" [p. 126]</i>
10	Exclamations showing complaint	33	<i>Oh, I'm terribly sorry! [p. 333]</i>
11	Exclamations used to show surprise	38	<i>Ten years in jail! [p. 38]</i>
12	Exclamation used to express a warn	55	<i>Talk about the untouchables! Forget about 'em. Fast! [p.61]</i>
<b>Total</b>		<b>248</b>	

Table 6: Exclamations using Interjections

No	Content	In English	In Vietnamese	%
1	Interjection	71	60	84.5

We can see that English exclamation sentences realized by interjections are 71 sentences with exclamation marks. In Vietnamese translation, translator Nguyen Ba Long also used 60 exclamation sentences accounted for 84.5%:

*Hey, you've got to believe me! [p.130]* in Vietnamese: *Trời, Ông phải tin tôi! [p.197]*

The rest were converted without exclamation marks into questions, imperatives, and declarative sentences:

*Hey! [p.29]* in Vietnamese: *Cưỡng lại đi. [p.47]*

#### 4.2.2. Expressions of Vietnamese equivalents.

Out of a total of 248 English exclamation sentences, translator Nguyen Ba Long still retains 182 semantic exclamation sentences, accounting for 73.4 percent of the remaining sentences, which have been converted into other meanings.

##### 4.2.2.1. Exclamations expressing fears

The English exclamation can be equivalent to common exclamations words in Vietnamese such as: “thôi chết, trời ơi, ối làng nước ôi, cứu”:

*It's going to be a disaster! [p.223]* in Vietnamese: *Chuyện sẽ trở thành một thảm họa.!* [p.335]

##### 4.2.2.2. Exclamations used to express thank you

*You made it! [p.357]* in Vietnamese: *Em đã hoàn thành công việc!* [p.539]

##### 4.2.2.3. Exclamations used to express sadness or pity

The English exclamations can be equivalent to common exclamations words in Vietnamese such as: thương nhiều, ời, dạ, ối giờ ời, tiếc quá, ối trời cao đất dày ời, mà, chẳng:

*If only Charles had said that! [p.43]* in Vietnamese: *Giá mà Charles đã nói thế?* [p.67]

Some are not equivalent in Vietnamese:

*Upset! [p.345]* in Vietnamese: *Phiền lòng!* [p.520]

##### 4.2.2.4. Exclamations used to express a refusal

The English exclamations can be equivalent to common exclamations words in Vietnamese such as chết nỗi, dạ, ầy, ơ, kìa, bầm, không ạ, thôi:

*No! Get down! [p.110]* in Vietnamese: *Không, xuống ngay!* [p.165]

Some are not equivalent in Vietnamese:

*It's going to be a disaster! [p.223]* in Vietnamese: *Chuyện sẽ trở thành một thảm họa. [p.335]*

##### 4.2.2.5. Exclamations used to express a promise

The English exclamation can be equivalent to common exclamation words in Vietnamese such as phải, chắc chắn, chẳng ...:

*Hey, you've got to believe me! [p.130]* in Vietnamese: *Trời, Ông phải tin tôi!* [p.197]

Some are not equivalent in Vietnamese:

*Calm down! How dare you tell me to calm down, stupid maille! Someone has stolen more than a million dollars worth of my jewels! [p.261]* in Vietnamese: *Bình tĩnh! Làm sao mà anh còn dám bảo tôi bình tĩnh hả đồ ngốc? Có kẻ nào đó đã ăn cắp chỗ nữ trang trị giá tới hơn 1 triệu đô la của tôi!* [p.393]

##### 4.2.2.6. Exclamations used to express compliment:

The English exclamations can be equivalent to common exclamations words in Vietnamese such as: ô chao, chà, giỏi, thật là giỏi, tuyệt vời, giá, thật, ra thế,...:

*Baby, what I'd like to do for you! [p.112]* in Vietnamese: *Cô bé, giá mà ta được vầy vò em!* [p.170]

Some are not equivalent in Vietnamese:

*Look who's being moral! [p.197]* in Vietnamese: *Trông anh chàng đạo đức kìa!* [p.296]

##### 4.2.2.7. Exclamations used to express advice or encouragement

The English exclamations can be equivalent to common exclamations

words in Vietnamese such as *lên, nên, thế, tốt quá, giỏi thật ...*,

*Fix it! Fix it!* [p.405] in Vietnamese: *Sửa ngay đi! Mau lên!* [p.609]

Some are not equivalent in Vietnamese:

*Please, I insist!* [p.175] in Vietnamese: *Xin mời, chính tôi muốn thế...* [p.262]

#### 4.2.2.8. Exclamations used to express anger or disappointment

The English exclamation can be equivalent to common exclamations words in Vietnamese such as *ôi, trời, thà....*:

*Oh, how Tracy wished he had not!* [p.17] in Vietnamese: *Trời, giá mà anh ấy chưa nói gì hết!* [p.26]

Some are not equivalent in Vietnamese:

*They knew we were on to them all the time!* [p.403] in Vietnamese: *Chúng biết từ đầu là ta theo dõi chúng suốt thời gian qua mà.* [p.606]

#### 4.2.2.9. Exclamations denoting happiness

The English exclamations can be equivalent to common exclamations words in Vietnamese such as *a, ơ, sướng quá, hoan hô, a ha, thật, nào, ...*:

*Nice to see you!* [p.53] in Vietnamese: *Thật hay là đã gặp nhau.* [p.83]

Some are not equivalent in Vietnamese:

*I know how I'm going to do it!* [p.329] in Vietnamese: *Mình biết cách phải làm rồi!* [p.496]

#### 4.2.2.10. Exclamations showing complaint

The English exclamations can be equivalent to common exclamations

words in Vietnamese such as *thật, đừng, ôi, đồ, chẳng, ra, bọn giá, ...*:

*Don't! Please leave me alone!* [p.80] in Vietnamese: *Đừng, xin để tôi yên!* [p.124]

Some are not equivalent in Vietnamese:

*Stop the goddamned check!* [p.205] in Vietnamese: *Một kiểu đùa giỡn chẳng?* [p.309]

#### 4.2.2.11. Exclamations used to show surprise

The English exclamations can be equivalent to common exclamations words in Vietnamese such as *ô kìa, ôi chao, ái dà, đó, vậy, thật, vẫn ...*:

*Really! How?* [p.264] in Vietnamese: *Thật à! Sao nào?* [p.398]

Some are not equivalent in Vietnamese:

*Four hundred thousand!* [p.244] in Vietnamese: *Bốn trăm ngàn!* [p.368]

#### 4.2.2.12. Exclamation used to express a warning

The English exclamations can be equivalent to common exclamations words in Vietnamese such as: *“chớ, hãy, rồi, này, có lẽ, hừm, thật thế ư, thật không, lại chả giỏi ...*:

*Don't forget that gun is loaded!* [p.26] in Vietnamese: *Chớ quên khẩu súng đó đã nạp đạn!* [p.44]

Some are not equivalent in Vietnamese:

*Of course I won't! How dare you!* [p.177] in Vietnamese: *Dĩ nhiên là tôi sẽ không mở!* [p.268]

## V. Conclusion

In terms of syntactic features in English, exclamation sentences are

divided into 3 types. In English and Vietnamese equivalents, there are 182 Vietnamese exclamations accounting for 73,4% that can be equivalent to common exclamations words in Vietnamese such as ôi, trời, sao, chẳng, giá, xin, thật, đừng.... with exclamation marks, 26,6 % English exclamations have been changed into declarative sentences, imperative sentences, interrogative sentences... In terms of semantic features in English, there are 12 types of expressions: Exclamations used to express fears, thank you, sadness or pity, a refusal, a promise, compliment, advice or encouragement, anger or disappointment, happiness, complaint, surprise, and a warning. In English and Vietnamese equivalents, 80 % of exclamation sentences can be equivalent, while the rest of them change in the expression of emotions. The rest does not represent the situation, mood, attitude, and behavior of the characters in the work. Those are also the points we need to overcome in the next translations to fully and accurately describe the characters and situations. The study aims to investigate the syntax and expression of exclamations in the novel “If tomorrow comes” and its Vietnamese translation equivalents in English and Vietnamese. They are expected to help learners master this kind of sentence more effectively in the process of learning English.

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## CÁCH BIỂU HIỆN CẢM THÁN TRONG TIỂU THUYẾT CỦA NHÀ VĂN SIDNEY SHELDON “NẾU CÒN CÓ NGÀY MAI” VÀ BẢN DỊCH TIẾNG VIỆT

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**Tóm tắt:** Bài viết nghiên cứu đặc điểm cú pháp và cách diễn đạt câu cảm thán tiếng Anh trong tiểu thuyết “Nếu còn có ngày mai” của tác giả Sidney Sheldon và bản dịch tiếng Việt tương đương của dịch giả Nguyễn Bá Long. Nghiên cứu được thực hiện với hy vọng tìm ra những điểm tương đồng và khác biệt trong cách hình thành câu cảm thán ở cả hai ngôn ngữ và gợi ý những ứng dụng thực tiễn trong việc dạy và học tiếng Anh như một ngoại ngữ ở Việt Nam. Chúng tôi đã sử dụng phương pháp mô tả và so sánh trong nghiên cứu này. 248 dữ liệu được thu thập từ cuốn tiểu thuyết “Nếu còn có ngày mai” của Sidney Sheldon được dùng để phân tích. Kết quả nghiên cứu cho thấy câu cảm thán trong tiểu thuyết “Nếu còn có ngày mai” và câu cảm thán trong bản dịch tiếng Việt khá giống nhau về cú pháp và ngữ nghĩa. Ý nghĩa của nghiên cứu là giúp người học tiếng Anh học câu cảm thán tiếng Anh một cách hiệu quả hơn.

**Từ khóa:** cảm thán, đặc điểm cú pháp, thán từ, biểu hiện cảm thán trong tiếng Anh, biểu hiện cảm thán trong tiếng Việt.

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