VIETNAMESE
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VIETNAMESE
TIẾNG VIỆT KHÔNG SON PHẢN

NGUYỄN ĐÌNH-HOÀ
Southern Illinois University, Carbondale

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## CONTENTS

*Preface*  
ix

**Chapter 1. Introduction**  
1
  1.1 Vietnamese as a national language  
1  
  1.2 Affinity with Chinese  
2  
  1.3 Genetic relationship  
2  
  1.4 Class-related dialects?  
4  
  1.5 Language and religion  
5  
  1.6 History of the language  
5  
  1.7 Writing systems  
6  
  1.8 Diversity  
9  
  1.9 Kinesics  
11  
  1.10 Syllabic Structure  
11  
  1.11 Morphemes, words and larger sequences  
15

**Chapter 2. The sound system**  
17
  2.0 An isolating language  
17  
  2.1 Syllabic structure  
18  
  2.2 Number of possible syllables  
28  
  2.3 Below the syllable  
28  
  2.4 Syllable boundaries  
30  
  2.5 Stress and intonation  
31  
  2.6 Earlier records and recent reforms  
33

**Chapter 3. The lexicon**  
35
  3.0 The word in Vietnamese  
35  
  3.1 Monosyllables and polysyllables  
35  
  3.2 Full words vs. empty words  
36  
  3.3 Sino-Vietnamese (Hán-Việt)  
36  
  3.4 Morphemes  
38  
  3.5 The simple word  
40  
  3.6 Morphological processes  
41  
  3.7 Reduplications  
44

**Chapter 4. The lexicon (continued)**  
59
  4.0 Affixation and compounding  
59  
  4.1 Prefixes  
60  
  4.2 Suffixes  
63
CONTENTS

4.3 Compounding 66
4.4 More on Sino-Vietnamese 76
4.5 Other foreign borrowings 78
4.6 Nominalization 79
4.7 Unanalyzed forms 81
4.8 Concluding remarks about the unit called tiểng 81
Chapter 5. Parts of speech 83
5.0 Parts of speech 83
5.1 Nouns 88
5.2 Locatives 98
5.3 Numerals 101
Chapter 6. Parts of speech (continued) 107
6.0 Predicatives 107
6.1 (Functive) Verbs 108
6.2 Stative verbs 119
6.3 Substitutes 123
Chapter 7. Parts of speech (continued) 139
7.0 Function words 139
7.1 Adverbs 140
7.2 Connectives 162
7.3 Particles 165
7.4 Interjections 168
7.5 Multiple class membership 168
Chapter 8. The noun phrase 171
8.0 Phrase structure 171
8.1 The noun phrase 172
Chapter 9. The verb phrase 185
9.0 The verb phrase 185
9.1 Preverbs 186
9.2 The relative positions 188
9.3 Postverbs 189
9.4 The complement before and after the head verb 197
9.5 The dĩ... vể construction 198
9.6 The positions of postverb determiners 199
9.7 The adjectival phrase 200
9.8 Coordination 205
Chapter 10. The sentence  
10.0 The sentence as unit of communication  
10.1 The simple sentence  
10.2 The subject-less sentence  
10.3 The sentence without a predicate  
10.4 The subject-less sentence with a reduced predicate  
10.5 The kernel <S-P> sentence  
10.6 Adjuncts to the kernel <S-P> sentence  
10.7 Sentence expansion  
Chapter 11. The sentence (continued)  
11.1 Types of sentences  
11.1.1 The affirmative sentence  
11.1.2 The negative sentence  
11.1.3 The interrogative sentence  
11.1.4 The imperative sentence  
11.1.5 The exclamatory sentence  
11.2 The compound sentence  
11.2.1 Concatenation of simple sentences  
11.2.2 Correlative pronouns  
11.2.3 Connectives of coordination  
11.3 The complex sentence  
11.3.1 The embedded completive sentence  
11.3.2 The embedded determinative sentence  
Appendix 1. Parts of speech  
Appendix 2. Texts  
1. Folk verse about the lotus  
2. Excerpt from a novel  
3. Excerpt from a newspaper advertisement  
Bibliography  
Index
PREFACE

This is not a complete grammar of Vietnamese, but only an essential, descriptive introduction to a Southeast Asian language that has over seventy million speakers. It is based on lecture notes I prepared for Vietnamese language and grammar classes taught in several institutions, including Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, where I had to earn my rice by means of courses in general and applied linguistics as my main teaching load between 1969 and 1990.

The book gives a conservative treatment to phonology, lexicon, and syntax, with relevant comments on semantics and a few historical remarks, particularly in connection with the writing systems, the loanwords and the syntactic structures.

Being a native speaker of it, I have made sure I trust less my intuition than the early analyses undertaken by pioneer linguists from France, Great Britain, the USA, and Vietnam itself. I am particularly indebted to Lê Văn Lý, Murray B. Emeneau, André Haudricourt, Patrick Honey, R. B. Jones & Huỳnh Sanh Thông, and Laurence C. Thompson, etc. for their works, that appeared in the 1950s, as well as to the next wave of grammarians of Vietnamese (Bùi Đức Tịnh, Trương Văn Chính, Nguyễn Hiền Lễ, Nguyễn Quí-Hưng, Dương Thanh Bình, Đào Thị Hợi, Nguyễn Đăng Liêm, Bùa Khái, Phạm Văn Hải, Trần Trọng Hải, Marybeth Clark, etc.), whose publications came out in the 1960s and 1970s.

While having the advantage of consulting nearly all the excellent monographs and journal articles produced by French authors of the last century as well as by Vietnamese academics around the Institute of Linguistics (established in Hanoi in 1969), I was handicapped in not being able to use the voluminous research work by Russian linguists—my foreign language baggage being limited to French, English and Chinese, with only a smattering of Latin, Spanish and Thai. Luckily, the relevant courses (in
general linguistics, English grammar, ESL methodology, Vietnamese grammar, language planning, and lexicography) at SIU-Carbondale, provided me with opportunities to do several contrastive analyses and to learn first-hand from many native speakers of non-European languages, including Chinese, Japanese, and such Southeast Asian systems as Thai, Khmer and Malay-Indonesian. I am thus very grateful for such an enriching exposure to a large variety of typological and areal features.

Next I would be remiss if I failed to mention the highly significant contributions of my esteemed colleagues of the Saigon Branch of S.I.L. (Summer Institute of Linguistics), including those who did field work on the minority languages in South Vietnam between 1957 and 1975: I certainly benefited from various insights offered by Richard Pittman, David Thomas, Kenneth Gregerson, Jean Donaldson, Richard Watson, Ralph Haupers, to name only a few, regarding the salient features of Vietnamese in contrast with other languages of the region.

I am also indebted to the French Bibliothèque Nationale, the British Library, and Japan’s Toyo Bunko Library, to several stateside libraries that have respectable Southeast Asia holdings, and to the Fu Tsu-Nien Library of Academia Sinica in Nankang, Taipei, for many valuable materials. Finally my thanks go to Professors Theodora Bynon, Matt Shibatani and David Bennett of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, where I spent my first sabbatical leave in 1975, and to the editors of John Benjamins Publishing Company in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, for their extremely helpful assistance in editorial matters.

I fervently hope that this monograph---meant to be titled “Vietnamese Without Veneer” following my former supervisor André Martinet’s Le Français sans fard---will help both teachers and students of Vietnamese in different institutions of higher learning as well as in secondary and primary schools around the world. This compact sketch of the workings and functions of a truly wonderful tongue is dedicated first of all to my parents, uncles and aunts, brothers and sisters, cousins, children and grandchildren, and beyond the Nguyễn clan, to all my former teachers of language and literature (in Vietnam and abroad), and last but not least to all my former students.

Nguyễn Dinh-Hoà
Chapter 1
Introduction

1.1 Vietnamese as a National Language

The language described here is known to its native speakers as tiếng Việt-nam, tiếng Việt, or Việt-ngữ, and is used in daily communication over the whole territory of Vietnam, formerly known as the Empire of Annam (whose language was known as “Annamese” or “Annamite”). It is the mother tongue and the home language of the ethnic majority: the seventy-five million inhabitants who call themselves người Việt or người kinh, and who occupy mainly the delta lowlands of the S-shaped country. The other ethnic groups such as Cambodians, Chinese, Indians, and the highlanders (once called “montagnards” in French, and now referred to as đồng bào Thuong, dân-tộc thiểu-số, dân-tộc ít người in Vietnamese) also know Vietnamese as the mainstream language and use it in their daily contacts with the Vietnamese.

Neighboring Kampuchea (or Cambodia), Laos and Thailand all have Vietnamese settlements, just as the greater Paris area and southern France as well as former French territories in the Pacific (New Caledonia, New Hebrides) and in parts of Africa can count thousands of Vietnamese settlers. In addition, over two million people have during the past twenty-odd years chosen to live overseas---in France, Great Britain, Germany, Switzerland, Denmark, Norway, the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, etc. A large number among those recent expatriates---for instance 1,115,000 in North and South America and 386,000 in Europe, according to the United Nations---left their country following the fall of South Vietnam in 1975. After settling in those host countries, they have been trying to preserve their native language as part of their cultural heritage to be handed down to second- and third-generation community members through both formal instruction offered on weekends and active participation in educational and
cultural activities organized on festive occasions and traditional holidays. Formal courses in the Vietnamese language are taught in a number of foreign universities (in France, England, Germany, the United States, Australia, Japan, China, etc.), and some secondary schools in France, Australia and the U.S., etc. allow their students to choose Vietnamese as a foreign language.

1.2 Affinity with Chinese

Vietnam was ruled by China for ten centuries, from 111 B.C. to A.D. 939; hence many Chinese loanwords have entered the Vietnamese scholarly, scientific and technical vocabulary. Indeed, until the early decades of the twentieth century, Chinese characters were used in the local system of education (with Confucian classics being the prescribed books for the grueling literary examinations that used to open the door to officialdom), and the Chinese script served at the same time as the medium of written communication among the educated people (like Latin in medieval Europe) and the vehicle of literary creations either in verse or in prose. This predominant role of written Chinese in traditional Vietnam has often led to the hasty statement that Vietnamese is “derived from Chinese” or is “a dialect of Chinese”. This is not true: Vietnam was merely under the cultural influence of China, just as Japan and Korea also owe several features of their culture to Sinitic culture. In fact, like Japanese and Korean, Vietnamese is not genetically related to Chinese.

1.3 Genetic Relationship

Vietnamese belongs instead to the Mon-Khmer stock—that comprises Mon, spoken in Burma, and Khmer (Cambodian), which is the language of Kampuchea, as well as several minority languages (Khmu, Bahnar, Bru, etc.) of Vietnam—within a large linguistic family called the Austro-Asiatic family. The latter, first mentioned by W. Schmidt [1907-08], includes several major language groups spoken in a wide area running from the Chota Nagpur plateau region of India in the west to the Indochinese peninsula in the east.
1.3.1 In 1924, Jean Przyluski, a French scholar, after comparing Vietnamese with Muông, a sister language spoken in the midlands of northern provinces (Phú-thọ, Sơn-tây, Hoà-bình) and central provinces (Thanh-hoá, Nghệ-an), wrote that Ancient Vietnamese was closely related to the Mon-Khmer languages, which have several affixes, but no tones. The similarities between Vietnamese and Muông can be seen in the following table as being closer than the similarities between either of them and other Mon-Khmer tongues (Mon, Khmer, Chrau, Bahnar and Rō-ngao, for example):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Việt</th>
<th>Muông</th>
<th>Mon</th>
<th>Khmer</th>
<th>Chrau</th>
<th>Bahnar</th>
<th>Rō-ngao</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EYE</strong></td>
<td>măt</td>
<td>măt</td>
<td>măt</td>
<td>măt</td>
<td>măt</td>
<td>măt</td>
<td>măt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NOSE</strong></td>
<td>mủi</td>
<td>muy</td>
<td>muh</td>
<td>crŏmyh</td>
<td>muh</td>
<td>muh</td>
<td>muh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HAIR</strong></td>
<td>tóc</td>
<td>thác</td>
<td>sŏk</td>
<td>săk</td>
<td>sŏk</td>
<td>sŏk</td>
<td>sŏk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FOOT</strong></td>
<td>chân</td>
<td>chen</td>
<td>jen</td>
<td>cong</td>
<td>jen</td>
<td>jen</td>
<td>jen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHILD</strong></td>
<td>con</td>
<td>con</td>
<td>kon</td>
<td>koun</td>
<td>kon</td>
<td>kon</td>
<td>kon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THREE</strong></td>
<td>ba</td>
<td>pa</td>
<td>pi</td>
<td>bei</td>
<td>pe</td>
<td>pen</td>
<td>pi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FOUR</strong></td>
<td>bŏn</td>
<td>pŏn</td>
<td>pan</td>
<td>buon</td>
<td>puŏn</td>
<td>puŏn</td>
<td>pun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FIVE</strong></td>
<td>năm</td>
<td>đăm</td>
<td>prăm</td>
<td>prăm</td>
<td>podăm</td>
<td>bodăm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BIRD</strong></td>
<td>chim</td>
<td>chim</td>
<td>cem</td>
<td>sēm</td>
<td>cim</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BUFFALO</strong></td>
<td>trâu</td>
<td>trlu</td>
<td>krobej</td>
<td>kpu</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BETEL</strong></td>
<td>trâu</td>
<td>trlu</td>
<td>joblu</td>
<td>mlu</td>
<td>bolow</td>
<td>bolau</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RIVER</strong></td>
<td>sông</td>
<td>không</td>
<td>klong</td>
<td>krong</td>
<td>krong</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.3.2 Another French scholar, Henri Maspero, also using etymology to compare names of bodily parts (such as “neck, back, belly”) among other vocabulary items, placed Vietnamese in the Tai family, all members of which—including Thai, or Siamese, the language of Thailand—are tonal. Maspero stated [1912, 1952] that modern Vietnamese resulted from a mixture of many elements, whose diversity is due to its long contacts with Mon-Khmer, with Tai, and with Chinese.

1.3.3 Only in 1954 was André Haudricourt, a French botanist-linguist, able to trace the origin of the Vietnamese tones, arguing that, as a non-tonal language in the Mon-Khmer phylum at the beginning of the Christian era,
Vietnamese had developed three tones by the sixth century, and that by the twelfth century it had acquired all the six tones of modern Vietnamese, all this at the cost of losing final consonants /-ʔ, -h/. This explanation about "tonogenesis" has thus enabled specialists to state fairly safely the genetic relationship of the Vietnamese language: together with Mường, the language of Vietnam forms the Việt-Mường group within the Mon-Khmer phylum of the Austro-ASIatic family.

1.4 Class-related Dialects?

Up to the late nineteenth century, traditional Vietnamese society comprised the four classes of scholars, farmers, craftsmen, and merchants, with the class of military men trailing behind (sĩ, nông, công, thương, binh). The 80-year-long French colonial administration, brought to an end in 1945, had created a small bourgeoisie of functionaries and civil servants, physicians, lawyers, pharmacists, compradores, importers and exporters, etc. within and around major urban centers (Hanoi, Saigon, Hải-phòng). Until the mid 1950s the language of the working masses of rice farmers and handicraftsmen in rural areas retained dialectal particularities both in grammar and in vocabulary, while that of city dwellers, including the inhabitants of Hanoi—the capital city of the whole colony of French Indochina—accepted and absorbed a large number of loanwords from both Chinese and French, the latter being the official language during more than eight decades.

Since 1945, as the omnipresent tongue of wider communication, Vietnamese has achieved greater uniformity thanks to marked progress in education. Owing to increasing demographic and socio-economic mobility, chiefly as a result of the migration of rural people toward Hanoi on the one hand, and of the exodus from North Vietnam to south of the seventeenth parallel following the 1954 Geneva Armistice Agreement, on the other hand, differences among geographical and social dialects have lessened. Among other things, Vietnamese has replaced French as the medium of instruction in all the schools of the land, from kindergarten to the primary, secondary and tertiary levels.
INTRODUCTION

1.5 Language and Religion

Up to 90 percent of the population practice either the *Mahayana* "Great Vehicle" or the *Hinayana* "Little Vehicle" form of Buddhism although traditionally the Vietnamese follow all the three major religions of China---Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism (*Phật, Nho, Lão*)---as well as the Buddhist sects Cao-dài and Hoà-hào in southern Vietnam, together with the cult of spirits and the worship of ancestors. Approximately 10 percent of the population are Catholics, and more recently there has been an increasing number of followers of various Protestant denominations. The Buddhist church requires of its clergy advanced knowledge of Pali and Sanskrit, although prayers in *Mahayana* temples are chanted in a mixture of Vietnamese and Sino-Vietnamese.

The language used by Christian priests and ministers sometimes reveals distinctive features of local dialects, with natives of Bứi-chu and Phát-diêm districts in North Vietnam speaking the distinct "Catholic-accent" local dialect of those areas. However, with the exception of the Taoist jargon in which a spiritualist attempts to communicate with the spirits of the dead by means of incantations and medium séances, there is no religious language which is different from the ordinary language.

1.6 History of the Language

The history of Vietnamese was sketched by Maspero in his important 1912 article. He distinguished six stages:

1. **Pre-Vietnamese**, common to Vietnamese and Mường prior to their separation;
2. **Proto-Vietnamese**, before the formation of Sino-Vietnamese;
3. **Archaic Vietnamese**, characterized by the individualization of Sino-Vietnamese (tenth century);
4. **Ancient Vietnamese**, represented by the Chinese-Vietnamese glossary *Hua-yi Yi-yu* [*Hoa-di Dịch-ngữ*] (fifteenth century);
5. **Middle Vietnamese**, reflected in the Vietnamese-Portuguese-Latin dictionary by Alexandre de Rhodes (seventeenth century); and
1.7 Writing Systems

The language has made use of three different writing systems: first, the Chinese characters, referred to as *chữ nho* 'scholars' script' or *chữ Hán* 'Han characters', then the demotic characters called *chữ nôm* (< *nam* 'south') 'southern script', then finally the Roman script called *(chữ) quốc-ngữ* 'national language / script'.

1.7.1 *Chữ nho* or *chữ Hán*

Chinese written symbols, shared with Japanese and Korean---the two other Asian cultures that were also under Sinitic influence---for a long time served as the medium of education and official communication, at least among the educated classes of scholars and officials. Indeed from the early days of Chinese rule (111 B.C. to A.D. 939) the Chinese governors taught the Vietnamese not only Chinese calligraphy, but also the texts of Chinese history, philosophy and classical literature (while the spoken language absorbed a fairly large number of loanwords that were thoroughly integrated into the recipient language).

The "Sino-Vietnamese" (*Hán-Việt*) pronunciation of those Chinese graphs, which formed part of learned borrowings, is based on the pronunciation of Archaic Chinese, taught through the scholarly writings of Chinese philosophers and poets. Since these writings constituted the curriculum of an educational system sanctioned by triennial civil service examinations, the vast majority of peasants found themselves denied even a modicum of education dispensed in private village schools. Often the schoolteachers were either unsuccessful candidates in those examinations or scholars of literary talent and moral integrity; who preferred the teaching profession to an administrative career.

1.7.2 *Chữ nôm*

While continuing to use Chinese to compose *luất-thi* 'regulated verse' as well as prose pieces, some of which have endured as real gems of Vietnamese literature in classical *wen-yen* (*văn-ngôn*), Buddhist monks and
Confucian scholars, starting in the eleventh century, proudly used their own language to produce eight-line stanzas or long narratives in native verse. The “southern” characters, which they used to transcribe their compositions in the mother tongue, had probably been invented from the early days when Sino-Vietnamese, i.e. the pronunciation of Chinese graphs à la vietnamienne, had been stabilized, that is to say, around the ninth or tenth century. At any rate, thanks to the woodblock printing methods used within Buddhist monasteries, nôm writings were already prospering under the Trần dynasty (1225-1400). Samples of these characters, which consist of Chinese graphs (or their components and combinations) and which are often undecipherable to the Chinese themselves, have been found on temple bells, on early stone inscriptions as well as in Buddhist-inspired poems and rhyme-prose pieces [Nguyễn Đình-Hoà 1990].

Over ten thousand such demotic characters appeared in Quốc-âm thi-tâp ‘Collected Poems in the National Language’, the seventh volume in the posthumously published works (Uc-trai di-tâp) by Nguyễn Trãi (1380-1442) [Schneider 1987]. This 15th-century scholar-geographer-strategist-poet was the great moving force behind Emperor Lê Lợi’s anti-Ming campaign (1418-1428). His 254 charming poems in the vernacular, long thought to be lost, yield ample evidence of early Vietnamese phonology, with many nôm characters reflecting 15th-century Vietnamese pronunciation. It is worth noting that some features of that pronunciation were still present in Middle Vietnamese (see 1.6), as recorded in Dictionarium Annamiticum Lusitanum et Latinum, the trilingual dictionary compiled by Alexandre de Rhodes—a gifted Jesuit missionary from Avignon—and published two centuries later (1651) in Rome [Gregerson 1969, Nguyễn Đình-Hoà 1986, 1991].

Some examples of nôm characters follow:

(1) tài ‘talent’ \[\begin{array}{c} \text{Cf. Sino-VN tài with same meaning} \end{array}\]

(2) bùa ‘written charm’ \[\begin{array}{c} \text{Cf. Sino-VN phù with same meaning} \end{array}\]

(3) làm ‘to do, make’ \[\begin{array}{c} \text{[from Sino-VN lâm]} \end{array}\]
1.7.3 Chữ quốc-ngữ

Vietnam owes the Roman script called (chữ) quốc-ngữ to Catholic missionaries from Portugal, France, Spain and Italy, who at first needed some sort of transcription to help them learn the local language well enough to preach the Gospel in it without the aid of interpreters, and in the next step to give their new converts easy access to Christian teachings in Vietnamese translation. The French colonialists, on the other hand, viewed this romanization as a potential tool for the assimilation of their subjects, who they hoped would be able to make a smooth transition from this sound-by-sound transcription of their mother tongue in Latin letters to the process of learning French as their "langue de culture". The quốc-ngữ script proved indeed to be an excellent system of writing that enabled Vietnamese speakers to learn how to read and write their own language within a few weeks. Not
only did the novel script assist in the campaign against illiteracy, but it also helped the spread of basic education and the dissemination of knowledge, significantly introducing information about socio-political revolutionary movements in Japan, in China—and in European countries. Nowadays, quốc-ngữ serves as the medium of instruction at all levels of education, and despite its imperfections it has been groomed as the official conventional orthography: conferences and seminars have been held before and after reunification in 1976 to hear specialists from both zones discuss its inconsistencies and recommend spelling reforms, to be carried out gradually with a view to standardizing both the spoken and the written forms.

1.8 Diversity

1.8.1 Henri Maspero [1912] put Vietnamese dialects in two main groups: on the one hand the Upper-Annam group, which comprises many local dialects found in villages from the north of Nghe-an Province to the south of Thừa-thiên Province, and on the other hand the Tonkin-Cochinchina dialect, which covers the remaining territory.

Phonological structure veers off the dialect of Hanoi, for a long time the political and cultural capital of the Empire of Annam, as one moves toward the south. In each of the three complex nuclei iê, uô, uo, for example, the second vowel tends toward -â in the groups transcribed iêc [iâk], iêng [iân], uôc [uâk], uông [uân], uoc [uâk] and uo [uân]. The Vinh dialect, which should belong to the Upper Annam group, has three retroflexes: tr- [tʰ] affricated, s- [s] voiceless fricative, and r- [ʂ], the corresponding voiced one. The Huế dialect, considered archaic and difficult, has only five tones, with the hoi and ngã tones pronounced the same way with a long rising contour. The initial z- is replaced by the semi-vowel /j-/ and the palatal finals -ch and -nh are replaced by alveolars /t/ and /n/.

The phonemes of the Saigon dialect generally are not arranged as shown in the orthography. However, the consonants of Saigonese present the distinction between ordinary and retroflex initials. Also the groups iêp, iêm, uôm, uôp, uóm are pronounced /iːp, iːm, uːm, uːp, uːm/, respectively.
Most dialects indeed form a continuum from north to south, each of them somewhat different from a neighboring dialect on either side. Such major urban centers as Hanoi, Hué and Saigon represent rather special dialects marked by the influence of educated speakers and of more frequent contacts with the other regions.

1.8.2 The language described herein is typified by the Hanoi dialect, which has served as a basis for the elaboration of the literary language. The spoken style retains its natural charm in each locality although efforts have been made from the elementary grades up to nationwide conferences and meetings "to preserve the purity and the clarity" of the standard language, whether spoken or written. The spoken tongue is used for all contexts of oral communication except public speeches, whereas the written medium, which one can qualify as the literary style, is fairly uniformly used in the press and over the radio and television, too.

After noticing the inconsistencies of the ơơ script, early French administrators and scholars tried on several occasions to recommend spelling reforms. However, earnest efforts in standardization, begun as early as in 1945, moved ahead only since 1954, when the governments in both zones established spelling norms—a task that was greatly facilitated by the increase in literacy among thousands of peasants and workers both north and south of the demarcation line between 1954 and 1975. There is a very clear tendency to standardize the transliteration of place names and personal names borrowed from foreign languages, as well as the transliteration and/or translation of technical terms more and more required by progress in science and technology. Committees responsible for terminology work, i.e. the coining and codification of terms both in the exact sciences and in the human and social sciences, have considerably contributed to the enrichment of the national lexicon.

Members of the generations that grew up under French rule were bilingual in Vietnamese (their home language) and French, but have subsequently added English. The so-called generation of 1945, for whom French ceased overnight to be the medium of instruction, read and write English as well. During the 1954-1975 partition, because of the influence of socialist countries, Russian as well as Mandarin Chinese became familiar to
classes of professors, researchers, cadres and students in the northern half of the country, exposed to various currents of Marxist thought. South of the demarcation line, on the other hand, secondary school students could choose either French or English as first foreign language, to be studied for seven years, then at the senior high school level add the other tongue as their second foreign language in the three upper grades. French itself remained for many years the official language in diplomatic and political circles. Chinese characters continued to be taught as a classical language needed for studies in Eastern humanities.

In the past two decades or so, such western languages as French and English have again become increasingly popular among the student population within the country while the young people in overseas communities have adjusted themselves to nearly every foreign language spoken in their respective countries of asylum and residence.

1.9 Kinesics

The kinesics of Vietnamese has not been studied in depth. Bodily postures taught in the traditional society still subsist: one bows one’s head when saying greetings to a superior and avoiding eye contact, and the older folks still prostrate themselves while offering prayers in front of the ancestral altar on ceremonial occasions (weddings, funerals, New Year’s Day, etc.) or inside a shrine dedicated to Buddha, to Confucius, to Taoist deities, or to their village’s tutelary deity. Parents give a look of dissatisfaction and use clicks to show disapproval. In the presence of strangers, an attitude of reserve is called for, and children are taught to refrain from making hand gestures or even raising their voices while trying to use proper terms of address and reference, notably honorific formulas, most of which based on terms of family relationship.

1.10 Syllabic Structure

Vietnamese is an isolating language, that is to say, it has more free forms than bound forms. Each unit of form, often referred to as tiếng (mọt), is a syllable (âm-tiệt).
1.10.1 In the uniquely Vietnamese verse form called the “six-eight” (lục-bát) meter, a line of six syllables is followed by a line of eight syllables, thus

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Thanh-minh trong tiêt tháng ba,} \\
Lê là táo-mô, Hội là dệp-thanh.
\end{align*}
\]

(Nguyễn Du)

‘Now came the Feast of Light in the third month
‘With graveyard rites and junkets on the green.’

(transl. Huỳnh Sanh-Thông)

In the old days, when Vietnamese made use of the Chinese written symbols (chữ Hán, chữ nho) or the southern, i.e. Vietnamese characters (chữ nôm), each of those graphs represented a separate syllable:

`清明節踏青`

`禮羅掃墓會羅踏青`

However, in the currently used conventional orthography called (chữ) quốc-ngữ lit., ‘national language’, each syllable, which can still be easily recognized as a graphic unit, may either stand as one of many independent words (like trong ‘inside’, tiêt ‘season’, tháng ‘month’, ba ‘three’, etc.) or serve as a constituent within hyphenated compounds that are usually made up of two or more syllables (for instance, thạnh-minh ‘purity and light’, táo-mô ‘to sweep the graves’, dệp-thanh ‘to step on the green grass’).

1.10.2 Each of the building blocks within a syllable is a unit of sound, called phoneme (âm-vi) and written with a symbol enclosed between slashes: we speak of the Vietnamese phonemes /m/, /i/, /n/ that make up the syllable minh, in which each phoneme may be represented by one letter (m, i) or two letters (nh).
Furthermore, since Vietnamese is a tonal language, the meaning of a given syllable may change according to its tone (thanh-diều, thinh), which is determined by a pitch level and a definite contour (level, falling, rising, dipping-rising, etc.): the same consonant-vowel combination /la/ has six realizations --- la, là, lâ, lă, là, lả --- which mean respectively ‘to yell’, ‘to be, equal’, ‘tree leaf’, ‘[of water] plain’, ‘exhausted’, and ‘strange’.

It is often said that “Vietnamese is a monosyllabic language” (ngôn-ngữ đơn-âm). But a formal message, either oral or written, usually contains many polysyllabic (đa-âm-tiế = đa-tiế) words, i.e. words which are made up of several syllables. The single syllable (âm-tiế) can be defined as the smallest meaningful unit of linguistic form, whose structure is a linear sequence of several phonemes affected by a tone. True, it is often found standing by itself as an autonomous unit (called tiếng) in the phonological system (Chapter 2). But it is at the same time the equivalent of a morpheme (hình-vị, ngũ-vị, móóc-phim) and of a simple word (tử) in the morphosyntactic system---where it also co-occurs with similar units to make up complex words through reduplication and compounding (Chapters 3 & 4).

[Let us note that tiếng (which refers to “syllable”, “morpheme” as well as “word”) also means ‘sound’, ‘noise’, and even ‘language’ as in tiếng Việt ‘Vietnamese’, tiếng Pháp ‘French’, etc.]

1.10.3 From the point of view of semantics, we can distinguish several types of tiếng:

a. those like ăn ‘to eat’, hội ‘festival’, trong ‘inside’, ba ‘three’, etc., which can be used freely in larger constructions—that is, in phrases or in sentences;

b. those like minh ‘bright, light’, tao ‘to sweep’, thanh ‘green’, etc. which cannot be used alone, but must occur in such larger forms as two-syllable compound words like tao-mỏ, dap-thanh, thanh-minh. These “restricted” forms are mostly borrowings from Chinese, which was the language of culture in traditional Vietnam, China having ruled so long over the country south of its border;

c. those like áp in ăn-áp ‘comfortably warm’, chap in châm-chap ‘slow(ly)’, súa in sáng-súa ‘bright, well lit’, lam in tham-lam ‘greedy’, etc., which though not carrying a meaning of their own, serve as “helping”
syllables in the creation of such reduplicative, i.e. repetitive, forms that usually contain two syllables having the same initial sounds or rhyming together.

1.10.4 In the subfield of morphology, we study the structure of lexemes or words (từ), their shapes and their meanings as well as the individual meanings of their components. In the subfield of syntax, we study sentences as meaningful strings of words, put together according to definite syntactic rules. On both levels, tiếng functions as the relevant grammatical unit that is used to construct words (từ), then phrases (ngữ), then sentences (câu).

In the following sentence
(1) Tôi ăn cơm trưa ở trường.
I eat rice-noon at school
‘I eat lunch at school.’

each tiếng or syllable is a word---though cơm-trưa is often called a compound.

But in the next example
(2) Tôi ăn lót dạ ở câu lạc bộ.
I eat line-stomach at club
‘I eat breakfast at the club.’

it takes two tiếng or syllables to make up the compound idiom lót dạ ['to line one's stomach'—'breakfast'], and three tiếng or syllables to yield the noun câu lạc bộ (a mere transliteration of the English word ‘club’ as borrowed through Chinese).

We are now ready to become familiar with a few more technical terms. First, a word (từ) in Vietnamese may consist of:

one monosyllable, e. g. tháng, ba, tôi, ăn, com, etc.;
or two syllables, e. g. thành-minh, tảo-mồ, cơm-trưa, lót dạ, etc.;
or three syllables, e. g. câu lạc-bộ ‘club’, quan-sát-viên ‘observer’, liên-lạc-viên ‘liaison person’, kiến-trúc-su ‘architect’, etc.

Each word thus structured can function as a constituent in a sentence, e.g.:
INTRODUCTION

(3) Bây-gió là tiết tháng ba.
that-time be season month three
'It was then the third lunar month.'

(4) Lễ đồ gọi là lễ tảo-mộ.
rite that call be ceremony sweep-grave
'That rite is called the grave-sweeping ceremony.'

I eat line-stomach at club but not correct at cooperative
'I ate breakfast at the club, and not at the cooperative.'
[The hyphenated units are either disyllabic, as in bây-gió 'then', lót-da 'breakfast', or trisyllabic, as in câu-lạc-bộ 'club', hợp-tác-xăng 'cooperative'.]

Compound words, especially those borrowed from Chinese, may be written with spaces between the syllables (tảo mộ, hợp tác xã), or with hyphens between them (tảo-mộ, hợp-tác-xã), or as solid compounds, with the syllables run together (tăomô, hoptácxă). As semantic wholes, they each have a very stable structure, and in actual, normal pronunciation there is no break or pause between syllables. Although the first style, considered by some people as careless, has been used in books, newspapers and other publications printed inside Vietnam or overseas, and although the third style is far superior because it reflects phonological realities---as several conferences on spelling reforms had noted---this book uses the second style (with hyphens) for purely pedagogic purposes.

1.11 At the word level, we have to look at morphemes (variously called tiêng, tù-tờ, hình-vi, ngū-vị, moóc-phim), which are parts of words or lexemes (từ). As for the term chū, it is used to refer to either ‘a single letter of the alphabet’ (like chū a, chū b, chū ơ, etc.) or ‘a system of writing, a script’ (like chū Hán, chū Pháp) or ‘an individual character, that is to say, a written symbol in the Chinese script or the nôm script’---in all cases some written form(s) used to reflect the spoken forms.

Words or lexemes are in turn grouped into larger sequences known as phrases and sentences. The sentence as a unit of communication is a string of words carrying a meaningful message, obeying the syntactic rules of the
language and following a specific pattern of stress and intonation. As we shall see in the chapters on Syntax, the structure of a minimal sentence (câu) consists of two essential parts or constituents: the subject (chữ-ngữ) announcing a topic (đề) and the predicate (vi-ngữ) providing a comment (thuyết) on that topic.

The subject-predicate or “topic-comment” relationship is obvious in such a simple sentence as

(6) Trời mưa.
   sky rain
   ‘It’s raining.’

in which Trời is the subject, and mưa is the predicate, and which represents a predication or statement about the weather.

The same sentence may be reduced to

(7) Mưa., with the subject Trời left out,

or it may be incorporated into a more complex form, for instance:

(8) (Nếu) trời mưa thì tôi không đi.
   if sky rain then I NEG go
   ‘If it rains, I won’t go’.

As vital units of speech communication, sentences make up paragraphs, and paragraphs make up a given discourse that takes place in a given contextual environment---for instance an exchange or a conversation between two persons under given circumstances, or a written document designed to be read for the purpose of information or entertainment.

Vietnamese utterances will be analyzed into sentences. But before proceeding to an analysis of words and sentences we will first need to discuss the phonology of the language, that is to say, the sound system and how the latter correlates with the quốc-ngữ writing system used throughout the country. This will be the objective of Chapter 2.
Chapter 2
The Sound System

2.0 An Isolating Language

Comparative linguistics, focusing on the characteristics of the word, would label Vietnamese as an “isolating language”, that is, one in which all the words are invariable and grammatical relations are primarily shown by word order: in the sentence *Sáng nay tôi uống hai tách cà phê.* (morning this I/me drink two cup coffee) ‘I drank two cups of coffee this morning’, the verb *uống* actually could mean “drink, drank, drunk, or drinking”. Other languages such as Chinese, and many Southeast Asian languages (including Thai, Lao, etc.) are likewise “non-inflectional”.

An alternative term is “analytic language”, as opposed to “synthetic language”, the label for a system in which a word typically contains more than one morpheme: in English the verb *drank* /dræŋk/ consists of the base *drink* /drɪŋk/ plus the “past tense morpheme” (/i/ becomes /æ/), just as the verb *talked* contains the base *talk* /tɔk/ followed by the past tense morpheme /t/, which is spelled -ed. The noun *cups*, on the other hand, consists of the base *cup* /kʌp/ plus the “plural morpheme” /s/.

In each language, the spoken chain can be divided into syllables. A syllable is the minimum unit of pronunciation: it is larger than a single sound and smaller than a word. It is defined phonetically, within a string of sounds in any language, in terms of “peaks of sonority” with each peak corresponding to the center of a syllable. Phonologically, that is, with regard to an individual language, two classes of sounds can be distinguished: those which can occur on their own, or at the center of a sequence of sounds, and those which cannot occur on their own, or which occur at the margins of a sequence of sounds. The former sounds, like [a], [e], [i], [o], [u], etc., are generally referred to as vowels (*nguyên-át*); the latter sounds, like [p], [t], [k], [m], [f], [x], etc., are generally referred to as consonants (*phụ-át*).
A consonant-vowel (CV) sequence seems to be found in all languages: these “open” syllables occur for instance in words [here hyphenated] in Japanese ta-be-ru ‘to eat’, Vietnamese ba ni-cô ‘three (Buddhist) nuns’, Thai bu-riii ‘cigarette’, French ma-ri ‘husband’, ca-fé ‘coffee’, etc. The CVC pattern is also very common: examples of “closed” syllables are Vietnamese bát com ‘bowl of rice’, Thai maj-khiid ‘matchstick’, English fat, mad, cat, sit, hot, tin, roof, etc.

In examining the Vietnamese phonological system, we will start with the structure of a Vietnamese syllable, since as a self-contained entity called tiêng (môt) in common parlance, the syllable (âm-tiêt) forms the basis of our description. Indeed we will concentrate on the grouping of phonemes “sound units” (âm-vi) into syllables, which in this language are coextensive with morphemes “smallest meaningful units of linguistic form” (ngũ-vi).

2.1 Syllabic Structure

Each syllable, that is, each minimum pertinent unit under analysis is composed of three constituents:

1. an “initial” [or “onset”] , which is a beginning consonant;
2. a “final” or rhyme, which is the rest of the syllable minus the tone, and consists of a vowel nucleus either standing by itself or preceded by a medial /w/, and/or followed by a final consonant [called “coda”]; and
3. a tone.

If we represent the beginning consonant by the symbol C₁, the final or rhyme by x, and the tone by T, then a CVC syllable in Vietnamese may be summarized as

\[ T \rightarrow C_1 + x \]

[In traditional phonology, the initial (consonant) C₁ is called thanh-mâu, and the final or rhyme x is called vân-mâu = vân.]

The final or rhyme x consists of the obligatory main vowel V, optionally preceded by the medial /w/ and optionally followed by a C₂:

\[ x = (w) V + (C_2) \]
2.1.1 Initial Consonants (*phụ-âm đầu*)

The initial consonant $C_1$ may be absent, as in $\ddot{a}n$, $\ddot{o}m$, $\ddot{i}m$, $\ddot{u}ng$, etc., wherein the rhyme $x$ is $\ddash-\ddot{a}n/\ddash-\ddot{o}m/\ddash-\ddot{i}m/\ddash-\ddot{u}ng$, respectively. Here the tones are $\ddash$level$/\ddash$rising$/\ddash$level$/\ddash$dipping-rising$, marking those syllables as meaning respectively ‘to eat’, ‘sick’, ‘to keep quiet’, and ‘rotten’. (Actually each vowel in the above examples is preceded by a “glottal stop” --- complete closure at the glottis --- $[\ddash\ddot{a}n]$, $[\ddash\ddot{\ddot{a}}m]$, $[\ddash\ddot{i}m]$, $[\ddash\ddot{u}n\ddash\ddot{m}]$.)

Although there may be only one initial consonant $C_1$ in each syllable, for instance $\ddash$-$-$/ or $\ddash$-$-$/ , the final or rhyme $x$ may consist of

1. just a vocalic nucleus
2. a vocalic nucleus followed by a final consonant
3. a vocalic nucleus preceded by a medial sound $\ddash$-$-$/ [u]; or
4. a vocalic nucleus preceded by that $\ddash$-$-$/ element and also followed by a final consonant, as shown in the following two sets of examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Syllable</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>$t-\ddot{e}$</td>
<td>$C_1 + V$ ‘numb’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>$t-\ddot{e}n$</td>
<td>$C_1 + V + C_2$ ‘name’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>$t-\ddot{i}\ddot{e}$</td>
<td>$C_1 + w + V$ ‘year of age’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>$t-\ddot{o}\ddot{\ddot{a}}n$</td>
<td>$C_1 + w + V + C_2$ ‘math’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b1</td>
<td>$c-\ddot{a}$</td>
<td>$C_1 + V$ ‘fish’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>$c-\ddot{a}n$</td>
<td>$C_1 + V + C_2$ ‘handle [of tool]’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>$q-\ddot{u}\ddot{\ddot{a}}$</td>
<td>$C_1 + w + V$ ‘to exceed’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>$q-\ddot{u}\ddot{\ddot{a}}n$</td>
<td>$C_1 + w + V + C_2$ ‘inn’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Phonetically, the examples a3, a4, b3 and b4 containing the medial $\ddash$-$-$/ are interpreted as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Syllable</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a3</td>
<td>$t-\ddot{u}\ddot{\ddot{e}}$</td>
<td>/twé/ [tué]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a4</td>
<td>$t-\ddot{o}\ddot{\ddot{a}n}$</td>
<td>/twań/ [tuán]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b3</td>
<td>$q-\ddot{u}\ddot{\ddot{a}}$</td>
<td>/kwá/ [kuá]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b4</td>
<td>$q-\ddot{u}\ddot{\ddot{a}}n$</td>
<td>/kwán/ [kuán]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the following table of consonant phonemes that may occur in the syllable-initial position, the letter(s) used to represent a consonant in the quốc-ngữ script almost coincide(s) with a phonemic symbol, which appears between slashes:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consonant</th>
<th>Representation</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/b-/</td>
<td>b-</td>
<td>(ba bón bà beo-béo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/k-/</td>
<td>c-, k-, q-</td>
<td>(con cá, cái kim, quá cam)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/c-/</td>
<td>ch-, tr-</td>
<td>(cha, chú, chi; tra, trú, trự)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/z-/</td>
<td>đ-, gi-, r-</td>
<td>(đa, đì, gia, ra)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/d-/</td>
<td>đ-</td>
<td>(đi dài di dọ)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/g-/</td>
<td>g(h)-</td>
<td>(ghi, ghé-góm, gay-go)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/n-/</td>
<td>h-</td>
<td>(ho-hen, hên-hò, hồn-hén)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/x-/</td>
<td>kh-</td>
<td>(khó-khẩn, khò-khè, khoe-khoang)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/h-/</td>
<td>l-</td>
<td>(lụ-lo, lẹu-láo, lẹ-loi, lổi-lılm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/m-/</td>
<td>m-</td>
<td>(mọ-màng, mái-mái, mò-mò)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/n-/</td>
<td>n-</td>
<td>(no-nê, năn-ni, nổ-nang)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ŋ-/</td>
<td>ng(h)-</td>
<td>(nghi-ngò, ngó-nghé, nghe-ngòng)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ɲ-/</td>
<td>nh-</td>
<td>(nhè-nhé, nhỏ-nhung, nhặc-nhọ)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ɾ-/</td>
<td>p-</td>
<td>(pīp, pô-ke, pô-po-lìn)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/x-/</td>
<td>ph-</td>
<td>(phương-pháp, phu-phen, phe-phiai)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/t-/</td>
<td>t-</td>
<td>(tết ta, tú-tài tài, tí-teo, to-tuông)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ʈ-/</td>
<td>th-</td>
<td>(thạt-thà, thong-thà, thinh-thoảng)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/v-/</td>
<td>v-</td>
<td>(vui-vế, vói-vàng, vồng-vẻ)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/s-/</td>
<td>x-, s-</td>
<td>(xa-xăm, xa-xôi, Xă Xế; sa-sì, sao sáng)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ʈʃ-/</td>
<td>tr-</td>
<td>(tra, trú, trự)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ʃ-/</td>
<td>s-</td>
<td>(sa-sì, sao sáng)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ʒ-/</td>
<td>r-</td>
<td>(rỗi ra rất rác-rői)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The phoneme /p/ used to occur only in final position, but nowadays it also occurs at the beginning of several words borrowed from French, for example, pín ‘battery’, píp ‘smoking pipe’, pô-ke ‘poker’, pô-po-lìn ‘poplin’, etc.

Of the above 22 beginning consonants, the first nineteen represent the northern dialect typified by the speech heard around Hanoi whereas the last three (#20, #21 and #22) are typical of areas running from northern Central Vietnam southward and also of some areas in North Vietnam. Of these three retroflex consonants (pronounced with the tip of the tongue tilted upward), the last one is sometimes pronounced like / r / in the Saigon dialect, which does not have the labiodental / v / (#18) of the northern dialect.
In the northern dialect, the two consonants spelled tr- and ch- fall together in pronunciation (tra and cha sounding alike --- /ca/). Also in the north, urban speakers do not differentiate between words spelled with s- and x- (sa and xa sounding alike --- /sa/). Some people in rural areas do not differentiate between words spelled with l- and n-, pronouncing both làm and näm as /năm/: this is considered a non-standard feature. However, in the conventional orthography, members of such pairs as sa : xa /sa : xa /, tra : cha /tra : ca /, and làm : näm / làm : näm / are differentiated. Although the sounds spelled with d-, with gi- and with r- no longer show any distinction in modern Hanoi speech, spelling rules require that the word for ‘skin’ be spelled da, the word meaning ‘house(hold), home; family’ be spelled gia, and the word for ‘to go out, exit’ be spelled ra. [Indeed, in a dictation test, even a teacher who is a native speaker of northern Vietnamese may give the “spelling pronunciation” of each of these three sounds.]

Some speakers of the Saigon dialect pronounce both da and gia as /ya/, that is with the glide or medial /j/ before the main vowel /a/.

The Vietnamese-Portuguese-Latin dictionary (often referred to as “Từ điển Việt-Bồ-La”) by Alexandre de Rhodes (1591-1660) recorded in 1651 some consonant clusters:

\[ /bl-/ \] as in blá, blái, blái, blang, blo, blói, etc. Cf. Modern VN trò, tròi, tròi, tro, tròi, etc. with /bl/ becoming /t̂/.

\[ /ml-/ \] as in mläm, mlái, mlái, mlái, mlói, mlón, etc. Cf. Modern VN làm, lát, lát, lói, lón, etc. with /ml/ being dropped.

\[ /mnh-/ \] as in mnhám, mnähé, etc. Cf. Modern VN nhám, nhé, etc. with /m/ being dropped.

\[ /tl-/ \] as in tlaí, tlái, tlái, tlói, tle, etc. Cf. Modern VN tròi, tròi, tròi, tròi, tròi, tlái, etc. with /tl/ becoming /t̂l/.

No dialect in Modern Vietnamese has retained any of those consonant clusters, which had existed --- as sounds --- at least up to the seventeenth century.

But in the quốc-ngữ script, some of the consonant phonemes are transcribed with a digraph, that is to say, a group of two consonant letters (ch- as in cha ‘father’; gh- as in ghe ‘small boat’, ghê ‘awe-stricken’, ghi ‘to record’; ph- as in pha ‘to mix’; th- as in tha ‘to set free; to forgive’;
2.1.2 Rhymes (văn, vān)

Within the final or rhyme x, the vowel nucleus can be one of the eleven simple vowels: a, ā, à, e, ē, i (y), o, ō, ơ, u, ŭ (respectively, low central, short low central, short mid central, unrounded low front, unrounded mid front, unrounded high front, rounded low back, rounded mid back, unrounded mid central, rounded high back, and unrounded high back). The nucleus can also be one of the three double vowels: fiâ/ spelled ia, iē-; fuâ/ spelled ua, uō-; and fuâ/ spelled ua, uō-.

Of these two-vowel clusters, also called diphthongs (âm dôi), each has a noticeable change in quality within the syllable—the “glide” from a more sonorous element ē i u toward the less sonorous, central element /a/.

The nuclear vowel phoneme / i / is sometimes spelled i (as in di ‘to go’, mī ‘noodles’, sī ‘scholar’) and sometimes spelled y (as in lý ‘reason’, kī ‘careful, thorough’, Mī ‘America; American’). [i̯, kī, Mī] would be better representations, as recommended in the campaign to standardize the spelling system. But specialists recognize that spelling reforms take time.

All three diphthongs, written with two letters, are spelled -ia, -ua, -uâ, respectively, if they occur in open syllables: mīa ‘sugar cane’, mua ‘to buy’,
"muà 'to rain' (examples a1, b1, c1 below). However, when there is a final consonant C₂, that is, in a closed syllable, the complex vowels are spelled respectively iê-, uô-, uo-: thus, miêng 'morsel, bite, piece, bit', muôn '10,000', muong 'irrigation canal' (examples a2, b2, and c2):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>C₁ + V₁</th>
<th>'sugar cane'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a1</td>
<td>m- ña</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>m- iêng</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b1</td>
<td>m- ña</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>m- uôn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c1</td>
<td>m- ña</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>m- uoŋ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The double nucleus /-iâ/, spelled -ia or -iê-, obeys some special spelling rules. It is spelled yê- when there is a final consonant but no initial consonant (as in yêu /iâw/ ‘to love’, yén /iâm/ ‘Vietnamese halter bra’), or when it is both preceded by the medial sound /-w-/ and followed by a final consonant (as in uyên /wiân/ [uông] ‘mandarin ducks’, thuyêt /thwijt/ ‘theory’, Nguyễn /ñwijt/ ‘the family name Nguyen’, tuyên-truyên /wiân—cwijt/ ‘propaganda’). If there is no final consonant, then the sequence -ia is respelled -ya, as in the unique lexeme khuya /xiâw/ ‘late at night’ (Cf. khuyên /xiân/ ‘to advise’).

Let us finally note that the two vowels å (short a) and â (short œ) cannot occur in an open syllable, but must be followed by a final consonant: ân ‘to eat’, âm ‘lukewarm’, tân ‘toothpick’, tăng ‘to increase’, sáp ‘to arrange’, mät ‘eye’, bách ‘north’, càn ‘to need’, cáp ‘to provide’, dât ‘earth, ground’, nặc ‘hiccough’, etc. The presence of a final consonant is implied when we place a hyphen after either vowel: æ-, å-.

2.1.3 Final Consonants (phu-âm cuôi)

There are eight possible elements occurring in syllable-final position: we can find one of the three stops (tác-âm) /p t k/, one of the three nasals (tj-âm) /m n ŋ/, or one of the two semivowels (bân-nguyên-âm) /y w/:
nam [n a m] ‘south’, bán [bá n] ‘to sell’, tranh [c a j] or [ť a j] ‘page’, trăng [cá a j] or [ť a j] ‘painting’;
tái [t a j] /tây/ ‘ear’, táy [t a j] /tây/ ‘arm’;

The (pre-)velar stop which follows i and ê is spelled -ch (as in thích [tʰ i k] ‘to like’, éch [ä i k] ‘frog’), and the (pre-)velar nasal is spelled -nh (as in mình [mí n] ‘body’, bểnh [bä i n] ‘disease’).

Among the final consonants C₁, the labials /p m/ pattern together, the alveolars /n l/ pattern together, just as the velars /k n/ pattern together, as seen in the reduplications áim-áp ‘comfortably warm, cosy’, dém-dep ‘fairly good-looking’, tòn-tôt ‘rather good’, man-mát ‘rather cool’, sinh-sích ‘[of engine] running loudly’, vãng-vác ‘[of moonlight] bright and clear’ [see 3.5.2.2].

The spellings ung, ông, ong, uc, oc, oc represent [uu m], [ău m], [ăuk], [ăuk p], [ăuk p], respectively, with labio-velar co-articulation following a rounded back vowel /u o/ as in ung ‘ulcer, cancer’, ông ‘grandfather’, ong ‘bee’, duc ‘muddy’, đóc ‘poison(ous)’, đóc ‘to read’.

In rare examples of simple velar nasals or stops occurring after back vowels /o o/, the latter are spelled ôô, oo: càông in càông-kênh ‘to carry someone sitting astride or standing on one’s shoulders’ (cf. càông ‘peacock’); boong ‘ship deck’ [< Fr. pont] (cf. bong ‘[of glued surface] to come loose’), ba-toong ‘walking stick, cane’ [< Fr. bâton] (cf. tong ‘lost, all gone’), loong-toong ‘messenger’ [< Fr. pliant] (cf. long ‘to become detached’), bù-loong ‘bolt’ [< Fr. boulon], xoong ‘saucepan’ [< Fr. casserole] (cf. xong ‘completed’), ra-mooc ‘trailer’ [< Fr. remorque] (cf. móc ‘to pick out’), (quan) soóc ‘walking shorts’ [< Engl. shorts] (cf. sóc ‘squirrel’).


The semivowel /-w/- [u] --- which does not occur after /u o o/ --- is spelled -o following /a- e- / (as in ao ‘pond’, mèo ‘cat’), but -u elsewhere (đâu ‘where’, mâu ‘blood’, mưu ‘ruse’, kêu ‘to shout’, thiệu ‘stale’).
2.1.4 The Medial Sound (âm đệm)


The lexemes that have the initial /nw-/ are all (rare) Sino-Vietnamese words: noa /nwa/ ‘infant, baby’, noa /nwa/ ‘lazy’, noăn /nwăn/ ‘egg’, nuy /nwi/ ‘dwarf’.

/-w-/ cannot be followed by a rounded vowel such as u, o, uo- (i.e. /uə/). If there is no initial consonant and the vowel nucleus is i, é, ye, a, à, then /w-/ is spelled -u- as in uy /wè/ ‘to delegate [authority]’, uê /fwèl/ ‘dirt, filth’, uyên(-ùông) /wiân(-ùông) ‘mandarin ducks’, uôi /wôi/ ‘angered’.

But if the vowel nucleus is a, a, e, the syllable is spelled respectively oà, oã, oe, as in oà ‘to break into tears’, hoà ‘peace’, oát ‘brat’, ngoàt ‘sudden turn’, oe-oe ‘[of infant] to cry loudly’, khoè ‘strong’.

If the initial consonant is not q-, the same rule applies, and /-w-/ is spelled:

-u- as in tuy ‘although’, Huè ‘the city of Huê’, thuyên ‘boat’, khuya ‘late at night’, huơ ‘to brandish’, tuân ‘week’, etc. and

-o- as in hoa ‘flower’, khoa ‘to brag’, ngoâc ‘bracket, parenthesis’, etc.

If, on the other hand, the syllable starts with q-, then the rhyme sequences /wa, -wá-, -wel/ are spelled -ue, -uá, -ue (qua ‘to cross over’, quån ‘[of hair] curly’, qua ‘stick’, quen ‘acquainted’, quét ‘to sweep’, etc.).

2.1.5 Tones (thanh-diêu, thanh, thinh)

Tone, said to be “phonemic” because it affects meaning, pertains to the entire syllable. The six tones of Vietnamese differ from one another in terms of pitch level(s), length, contour, intensity and glottality. They can be described respectively as (1) high (or mid) level, (2) low falling, (3) high (or mid)
VIETNAMESE

rising, (4) creaking-rising -- raspy because of glottal stop, (5) (low) dipping-rising, and (6) constricted---also raspy with glottal stop. Their Vietnamese names are: ngang, huyễn, sác, ngã, hỏi, nẳng, or respectively “level”, “hanging”, “sharp”, “tumbling”, “asking” and “heavy”.

The diacritical marks used to represent these tones are respectively (1) no mark, (2) a grave accent, (3) an acute accent, (4) a tilde; (5) a little question mark without the dot—all these four diacritics placed above the vowel letter---and (6) a dot put under the vowel letter, thus:

la là lá lă là là
ma mà mă mà mà mà
bền bên bến (bến) bến bến
gáp gáp
mât mät
sách sach

Sông sông sông (sông) sông sông

The level tone (ngang), the falling tone (huyễn) and the dipping-rising tone (hỏi) make the syllable somewhat longer.

A syllable ending with a stop can only have either the sác tone or the nằng tone, as in gáp /gáp, mät /mät, sách /sách, học /hoc, etc. [The items in parentheses (bến, công) are possible but nonsensical syllables.]

In some provinces of Central Vietnam, speakers do not keep apart the /hỏi/ and /ngã/ tones, or the /ngã/ and /nằng/ tones, or the /hỏi/ and /sác/ tones.

Diagram of the six tones
The six tones have been analyzed into groups and categories. Henri Maspero [1912] and Lê Văn Lý [1948 & 1960] grouped them as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Plain</th>
<th>Melodic</th>
<th>Glottal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>á</td>
<td>ã</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>à</td>
<td>â</td>
<td>ã</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Marcel Dubois [1909] and Eugénie Henderson [1943] used slightly different features:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Normal</th>
<th>Relaxed</th>
<th>Glottal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plain</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>à</td>
<td>ã</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melodic</td>
<td>á</td>
<td>â</td>
<td>ã</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In poetry, the six tones are divided into two groups: the level (ngang) and falling (huyền) tones are called bàng “level, flat” whereas the other four (sắc, ngă, hôi, näng) belong to the trác “oblique, sharp” group. Rules of prosody require that, in regulated verse, bàng - trác tones occur in parallel lines, and that a word in a certain position must have the appropriate tone.

As will be seen in the analysis of reduplicative patterns, the six tones can also be divided into two registers:

- bàng “level”
- trác “oblique”

Upper register
- ngang
- sách* hôi**

Lower register
- huyền
- nāng* ngă**

[Haudricourt in his 1954 article on the origin of Vietnamese tones (see 1.3.3) pointed out that, in the process of tone-development, non-tonal Vietnamese acquired the sách and nāng tones* when the final glottal stop [-ʔ] dropped, and the loss of final [-s -ʃ -h] resulted in the hôi and ngă tones**.]

Tonal harmony requires that, within a reduplicative pattern, the two repeated syllables carry tones of the same register. Examples of such reduplications:

(Upper register)
- ām ām ‘a little warm’ < ām ‘lukewarm’
- nho nho ‘smallish, tiny’ < nho ‘small’
- trăng trăng ‘whitish’ < trăng ‘white’
- kha khá ‘rather good, rather well’ < khá ‘pretty good’
- xam xám ‘grayish’ < xám ‘gray’; etc.
2.2 Number of possible syllables

Emeneau’s calculation shows that there are 3,872 phonologically possible syllables ending in stops, and that the number of possible syllables ending in nasals or in vowels number 17,952. Thus his total is 21,824 possible syllables [Emeneau 1951: 22]. More recent analyses have found that there are 157 basic rhymes [Nguyễn Kim Thân 1981: 233] and a total of 11,900 possible syllables [Hoàng Tuyết & Hoàng Minh 1975: 88]. Another calculation shows 19,520 as the total number of possible syllables, but only 5,890 as the number of syllables actually occurring in “the modern cultural language” [Nguyễn Quang Hồng 1994: 186-187]. Thus there is a large number of potential units which are of course nonsense syllables, and only about 51% or 6,100 out of the 11,900 “effectively function as (or in) significant units” [Hoàng Tuyết & Hoàng Minh 1975: 88].

2.3 Below the syllable

2.3.1 Pig Latin. In section 2.1 we have seen that a syllable is fruitfully analyzed as the sequence onset + rhyme (C₁ + x): for example, nam = n + am; lợ = l + ợ; tướng = t + ợ ng; còn = c + ợn; cây = c + ợy, etc. This enables native speakers to evolve a kind of “pig-Latin” that adults use in the presence of children. In English the inadvertent transposition of initial sounds of words, as queer old dean for dear old queen, is called a “spoonerism” [after English clergyman W. A. Spooner (1844-1930)]. In the Vietnamese variety, called nói lả lì, if the two words in the phrase tướng lo ‘The statue worries’ switch position and tones, we have lợ tướng ‘a bottle of soy paste’. Or còn cây ‘the dog’ would become cây còn ‘the tree remains’. Likewise a mother could playfully say dầm dãi (no meaning) when she wants...
to avoid the phrase dabí dâm ‘(Baby) wet his / her pants’, and gossipers refer to an unwed pregnancy (chûa hoang) as hoâng chuta ‘Aren’t you scared?’.

The nói lái device is considered a clever usage: instead of asking the servant “to prop up the bamboo blind” (chôhg rèm), the master of the house may pronounce the Sino-Vietnamese phrase tram long “behead the dragon”, which the houseboy is expected to convert into the equivalent Vietnamese chém rông.

In humoristic stories, the speaker or writer often combines homonymy and punning to make fun of fakers and charlatans, as in this example. Mr. Lái, a former pig vendor (láiIon) had managed to buy some honorific title, about which he proudly bragged to his co-villagers, so a sophisticated joker subtly praised the honoree derisively as “our big mandarin” (quánIon Lái!)

In another instance, a collaborator under the French administration was presented with a congratulatory panel featuring the two Chinese characters quàn than. This Sino-Vietnamese expression could be defined as bây tôi meaning ‘all the king’s subjects’. But those two syllables, when undergoing commutation of rhyme and tone, would generate bôi tây, which means ‘servant in a French household’.

Smart children design their own secret language by adding a key syllable, for instance la, and letting it switch initial (C₁) and rhyme (x) with the pertinent word. Thus ăn ‘to eat’ becomes /l + ān al/, phô ‘beef noodle soup’ becomes /l + f + âl/, hoan /h + oan/ becomes /l + oan h + āl/. Likewise each constituent of the compound hoàn-cânh ‘environment, circumstances’, for instance, is decomposed as /h + oàn k + ânh/, and after commutation of onset and rhyme with /l + āl/, we have /loan - hà lanh - kâl/. As soon as the kids code is broken by grownups, they still rattle off in their medium now choosing a new key, for instance chim, and the new expression, using /ch + im/, becomes /choan - hîm chanh - kim/.

2.3.2 Subsyllabic morphemes. When divided similarly into the two elements C₁- and -x, each set of monosyllabic demonstratives shows extremely interesting semantic relationships among its members, as each pertinent syllable is broken down into an initial morpheme and a nuclear morpheme:
30 VIETNAMESE

Unspecified Close Distant
/-ao, -âu/ /-ay, -ây/ /-ây, -o/
Reference /n-/ nào nay nây, nọ
‘which?’ ‘this’ ‘that’
Place /d-/ đâu đấy dây dây, dô
‘where?’ ‘here’ ‘there’
Quantity /b-/ bao bây bây
‘how much?’ ‘this much’ ‘that much’
Manner /s-, v-/ sao vây vây
‘how? why?’ ‘this way’ ‘that way’

Examples:
người nào? ‘which person?’ người nay ‘this person’ người (n)ay ‘that (same) person’
hôm nào? ‘which day? when?’ hôm nay ‘today’ hôm nọ ‘the other day’
ở đâu? ‘where?’ ở dây ‘here’ ở dây, ở dô ‘there’
bao nhiêu? ‘how much? how many?’ bày nhiều ‘this much, this many’
bây nhiều ‘that much, that many’
bao giờ? ‘when?’ bày giờ ‘now’ bày giờ ‘then, at that time’
bao lâu? ‘how long?’ *bây lâu bây lâu ‘for that long’
bao xa? ‘how far?’ *bây xa *bây xa
(taï) sao? ‘why, how come?’ nhu vây ‘this way’ nhu vây ‘that way, so’

2.4 Syllable boundaries

Juncture between two syllables helps both speaker and hearer distinguish between a single syllable (as already defined as one tiếng) which contains the medial /-w-/ and a two-syllable phrase (containing two tiếng):

khoa /xwa/ [xwa] ‘department; study’
vs. khu A /xu + a/ [xu a] ‘section A’;
khoai /xway/ [xway] ‘(sweet) potato’
vs. khu ai? /xu + ay/ [xu aj] ‘whose area?’
vs. khoa y /xwa + i/ [xwa i] ‘the field (or school, or department) of medicine’;
quái /kwáy/ [kuaj] ‘strange, weird’
vs. cu Ái /ku + áy/ [ku aj] ‘little boy (named) Ái’.

It is also juncture that helps distinguish between such sequences as:
cám on /kám + on/ (feel favor) ‘thank you’ and
cá mon /ká + mon/ (fish mon) ‘mon fish’;
xem ơ-tô /sem + oto/ ‘to look at automobiles’ and
xe môtô /se + moto/ (vehicle motor) ‘motorcycle’.

Such a contrast is explained by the fact that in each pair of nasals, the
bilabial sound /-m/ occurring in final position (as in cám, xem) is unreleased,
“implosive” whereas the sound /m-/ occurring initially (as in mon, môtô) is
“explosive”.

2.5 Stress (đô nhán) and intonation (ngũ-díeu)

A syllable may be unstressed, stressed, or heavily stressed. The following
sentences contain all three degrees of stress:
Tôi không biết. /toy xâwn ‘biêt/ (I NEG know) ‘I don’t know.’
Tôi không đi. /toy xâwn ‘dí/ (I NEG go) ‘I’m not going.’

The stress on the pronoun dâu ‘where; anywhere’ marks emphasis or
insistence when it means ‘(not) anywhere’ (7.3.2). Compare:
Cô ấy đi đâu? (aunt that go where) ‘Where did she go?’
Cô ấy (cô) đi ‘dâu! (aunt that EMPH go anywhere) ‘She did not go!’
Tôi không đi đâu (cã). (I NEG go anywhere all) ‘I’m not going anywhere.’
Tôi không đi ‘dâu! (I NEG go anywhere) ‘I’m not going. (Don’t insist.)’

Intonation is tied to stress and also to contours of different tones. It is
perceived as the melody or total swing of the tones, marked by the way in
which the force of each syllable decreases and also by differences in tonal
contours.

In his descriptive grammar of Vietnamese [1965c, reprinted 1987],
Laurence Thompson distinguishes four patterns of intonation: (a) decreasing,
(b) fading, (c) sustaining, and (d) increasing, which he earlier [1959]
called “diminuendo”, “morendo”, “sostenuto”, and “crescendo”, respectively.
Whereas the first example (Cô ấy đi đâu?) has the “morendo” intonation and the third example (Tôi không đi đâu cả) has the “diminuendo” intonation, the second and fourth examples (Cô ấy có đi đâu!, Tôi không đi đâu!) are lengthened, with the voice rising (“crescendo”) before the tonal contour of the last syllable goes down and the initial force of the accentuation completely phases out. The same “crescendo” phenomenon is noticed in these two contrasting sentences:

**Bao nhiêu tiền?** (what-extent much money) ‘How much money?’

‘**Bao nhiêu (là) tiền!**’ (what-extent much be money) ‘So much money!’

“Diminuendo” means that in this normal pattern the intensity gradually diminishes from the beginning of the syllable, with the stress curve accompanying most syllables in the sentence.

When the “morendo” intonation affects a declarative sentence, the level of each tone is slightly lower than normal:

1. Tôi đi ngủ. (I go sleep) ‘I’m going to bed.’
2. Tôi đi chùa. (I go Buddhist temple) ‘I’m going to the temple.’

In general, interrogative sentences have the “sostenuto” pattern, in which the pitch level of each tone is somewhat higher than in a declarative sentence:

3. Cô đi không? (aunt go not) ‘Are you going, Miss?’
4. Cô đi chưa? (aunt go yet) ‘Have you gone there yet, Miss?’

But these questions, which contain either không? or chưa?, expect “yes” or “no; not yet” as an answer. They are different from another type of question, which contains an interrogative pronoun ‘who, what, where, when, why, which, whose,’ etc. These content questions have the “crescendo” intonation, with the stress on the question words **ai, gì, đâu, bao giờ, tại sao**, respectively ‘who?, what?, where?, when?, why?’, etc.

Examples:

**Ai nói?** (who say) ‘Who said it? Who said so?’

Cô nói gì? (aunt say what) ‘What did you say, Miss?’

Cô đi đâu? (aunt go where) ‘Where are you going, Miss?’

Cô đi **bao giờ?** (aunt go what-extent time) ‘When did you go, Miss?’

**Bao giờ cô đi?** (what-extent time aunt go) ‘When will you go, miss?’

Tại sao cô thôi? (because how aunt stop) ‘Why did you quit, miss?’
The same question words can be used as indefinite pronouns in exclamations, again with the “crescendo” intonation and a heavy stress on the syllables ai, gi, đau, etc. This phenomenon can be observed particularly in women’s speech:

- Không ai nói (cô). (NEG who speak all) ‘No one spoke at all.’
- Ai nói! (who speak) ‘No one spoke up.’
- Tôi nói gì? (I say what) ‘What did I say [wrong to upset him]?’
- Tôi đi bao giờ? (I go what-extent time) ‘I never went.’
- Cô nói gì tôi cũng tin. (aunt say whatever I likewise believe)
  ‘I believe anything you say, Miss.’
- Cô ấy (cô) đi đâu! (aunt that EMPH go wherever)
  ‘But no, she did not go at all!’
- Cô ấy đâu cô đi! (aunt that wherever EMPH go) ‘No, she did not go!’
- Cô ấy không đi đâu! (aunt that NEG go wherever)
  ‘She’s not going, don’t insist!’

2.6 Earlier records and recent reforms

When it was first invented, the Roman script (chữ quốc-ngữ) did not show any diacritic signs: có instead of có, lют instead of lụt. There was no distinction between the vowels a /ă, or between o /ơ, u /ư, e /ê. Thus, ăn was transcribed an; muôn was transcribed muon; ông trùm was spelled ontrum; and hết was simply written het.

Middle Vietnamese [Gregerson 1969], as recorded in the trilingual dictionary by Alexandre de Rhodes (Rome, 1651), displayed the above distinctions through the use of vowel markers and tone markers. However, modern v- was written by means of ơ, u --- ơác, uác for vác; ơei, uai for vai. Ông was written oǐ; trong was written traõ; học was written haoc, hăoc; and cuồng was written cuăng; etc.

The language recorded in lexicographical works of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and particularly in the Vietnamese-Latin dictionary by Bishop Taberd (published in Serampore, India, in 1838) seemed to have been fairly codified, and its stabilized appearance did not differ greatly from its modern form. Lexicographic efforts by French missionaries and administrators as well as by Vietnamese priests and scholars themselves have
step by step contributed to the standardisation of the written medium through several excellent monolingual, bilingual and trilingual dictionaries, with Vietnamese being the source language or a target language. As the conventional orthography, (chữ) quốc-ngữ has immensely helped the literacy campaign since the 1940s, and at the same time served as a new vestment to groom the Vietnamese language into an adequate and efficient tool for the dissemination of culture and science [Nguyễn Đình-Hoà 1979].

Indeed, educators, writers, poets and other cultural workers in both sides of the demarcation line emulated one another, during the 1954-1975 partition, in a serious attempt to move toward the unification and standardization of their mother tongue. South of the seventeenth parallel—which separated the Democratic Republic of (North) Vietnam and the Republic of (South) Vietnam by virtue of the Geneva Armistice Agreements of 1954—a conference on Language Unification (Hội-nghi Thông-nhat Ngôn-ngữ), convened by the Ministry of Education, met in Saigon from September 5 to October 3, 1956. In the north, a four-day conference on the improvement of the quốc-ngữ script (Hội-nghi bàn văn-de cải-tién chữ quốc-ngữ), organized by the Institute of Literature, a unit within the State Scientific Commission, met on September 21, 28 and 30 and October 7, 1960. The scholarly papers presented at either conference, the discussions which followed, and the resolutions which were passed, all dealt with the problem of how to standardize the conventional orthography and with the technical terms increasingly needed in the natural sciences, humanities and social sciences. The continuing efforts during the past few decades toward “preserving the purity and clarity of the Vietnamese language” (giữ giữ sự trong sáng của tiếng Việt), it is hoped, will bring about different levels of spelling reforms, e.g. with regard to the consistent representation of vowels, semivowels and consonants, syllable structure and boundaries, stress and intonation, capitalization, punctuations, etc.—as well as to some creative aspects of language planning, notably vocabulary building and terminology work.
3.0 The Word in Vietnamese

In this chapter and the next we look closely at the Vietnamese lexicon or vocabulary. We are particularly concerned with morphology, that is to say, we will examine the shape and structure of the lexical unit defined earlier as "word, lexeme" (từ), and at the same time investigate the form and content, i.e. meaning, of each of its components, defined earlier as "morpheme" (tiếng, từ-tố, ngữ-vị, hình-vị, móóc-phim). In Chapter 5, we will take a close look at different word classes or parts of speech (từ-loại).

3.1 Monosyllables and Polysyllables

Phonologically, a Vietnamese word may have just one syllable (âm-tiết, tiếng mot), or it may have two or more syllables. By looking at its structure, we will see that it is not correct to say that the language is monosyllabic "đơn âm(-tiết)". Outsiders used to think so because the majority of units in the Vietnamese lexicon consist of only one syllable: nhà, cửa, com, cháo, quàn, áo, ăn, ngủ, đi, dùng, học, làm, chó, mèo, трав, bố, lớn, gà, cam, quìt, cau, dưa, etc. [In English we may encounter a sentence which is a string of monosyllables, for instance, \textit{I saw a big black cat on the hot tin roof out there}. But that does not allow us to say that English is “monosyllabic.”]

At any rate statistical studies have shown that in modern Vietnamese there is a clear tendency toward disyllabism, with many words consisting of two syllables. One study has mentioned the 80% ratio: examples are cháu ngoại, bánh mi, xe dạp, nhà đa, nhà cửa, com nước, com cháo, quần áo, ăn học, điểm-tầm, buu-diện, ngân-hàng, tiền-tệ, giám-dốc, đại-học, hiệu-trường, etc. And there are even words that have three or four syllables, as we shall see below.
3.2 Full words vs. Empty words

The majority of monosyllables in the Vietnamese lexicon (từ-vựng) are:


(2) or “empty words” (hu-từ), that is function words such as the modal đã in đã cày ‘has already plowed’, the modal sẽ in sẽ ăn ‘will eat’, the degree marker rất in rất chăm ‘very diligent’, the conjunction thì in ....... thì tôi không dì ‘[if .......] then I won’t go’, or the “relative pronoun” mà in ......... mà tôi mới mua ‘......... which I just bought’, etc.

But there is also a large number of disyllabic words, which have two syllables, and trisyllabic words, which have three syllables:


There are even words made up of four syllables through patterns of reduplication [section 3.5]: vời-vơi vạng-vàng < vời-vàng ‘in a great hurry’, bù-lù bù-loa < lu-loa ‘to raise a hullabaloo by crying and complaining’, lúng-ta lúng-túng < lúng-túng ‘completely helpless, at a complete loss’, hấp-ta hấp-táp < hấp-táp ‘hurriedly and nervously’, etc.

3.3 Sino-Vietnamese (Hán-Việt)

Apart from the native vocabulary, there are numerous words that have been integrated into the language through the process of lexical borrowing from Chinese. Loanwords from other languages such as Malay, Tay-Thai, French, English and Russian are outnumbered by those borrowed from the language of China, since the country was under Chinese domination for no less than ten centuries (111 BC - AD 939).
The present forms of earlier loanwords from Chinese are nowadays hardly recognizable as such, because they have been thoroughly vietnarnized in the spoken language, e.g.


In addition to these borrowings of Qin and Han times (through daily contacts with Chinese soldiers, merchants, priests and officials—and very likely through intermarriage, too—during the “northern rule”) the learned words introduced later through the written medium of Chinese characters gradually inundated the recipient language. Native students and teachers had to become acquainted in their classrooms with formal written works in Chinese history, philosophy and literature. During the millennium of direct Chinese rule (111 BC - AD 939), then more importantly under successive national dynasties (10th century - 20th century), the classical language of China played a role similar to that of Latin in medieval Europe: it was the (prestigious) medium of education, which led to literary examinations designed to recruit native administrators and judges in the mandarinal system.

Whereas the earlier forms cited above could be traced back to Archaic Chinese, their equivalents used by the native intelligentsia during the Tống dynasty are respectively: phong, phàm, phù, trà, tràm, tràn, tro, troc, chức, cac, can, giắc, ha, xão, khoa, giáo, quán, tuế, vong, vư, vũ, vị, van, etc.

In traditional Vietnam, the latter Chinese-borrowed elements, were taught through primers where, in verse form used to facilitate memorization, the “foreign language” items appear with their respective glosses: just like thiên, defined as trời ‘sky’, dia, whose native equivalent is đất ‘earth’, and văn, whose native equivalent is mây ‘cloud’ [Nguyễn Đình-Hoà, ed. Nhật Thiên Tự (1989)]. The pronunciation of these latter borrowings, close to that of Ancient Chinese, has been called “Sino-Vietnamese” (Hán-Việt) [Maspero 1912, Mineya 1972, Hashimoto 1978].
More recently borrowed lexemes have swollen the ranks of those 3,000-odd items of Chinese origin, and new concepts have helped the assimilation of new terms like xã-hội ‘society’, canh-nông ‘agriculture’, kỹ-nghề (ki-nghề) ‘industry’, tự-bản ‘capitalism’, cộng-sán ‘communism’, etc.

That twofold process of vietnamization has sometimes brought about the presence of a pair of equivalents of one loanword, with the pronunciation of the second member making the origin of each lexeme less evident: e.g.

*cáч -- gác ‘upper storey’, *can -- gan ‘liver’, *căn -- gần ‘near’,
*hoạ -- vạ ‘calamity’, *ký -- ghi ‘to record’, *kiểm -- guom ‘sword’,
*kính -- guong ‘mirror’, etc.

Anyway a formal text, like a newspaper or magazine article, contains many of those Chinese-borrowed items whether the discourse is about politics, history, culture, law, medicine, science, or technology. However, those morphemes marked with an asterisk cannot be used freely: *Thiên mua. cannot mean ‘It’s raining’, because as a bound element thiên ‘sky; heaven’ has only the status of a word constituent, its use being restricted to such compounds as thiên-ha ‘people (under the sky)’, thiên-tai ‘natural disaster’, thiên-văn ‘astronomy’, thiên-duong ‘paradise’, etc. Likewise the sentence *Có nhân gọi cửa. (exist homo call door) is ill-formed because nhân does not occur freely. Rather the grammatical sentences are Trời mua. (sky rain) ‘It’s raining.’ and Có người gọi cửa. (exist person call door) ‘There’s someone at the door.’ Students of the language find it rewarding to be exposed fairly early to this learned vocabulary, as the lexemes called từ gọc Hán, từ Hán-Việt are encountered with great frequency.

3.4 Morphemes. In discussing words, it is useful to keep in mind that the morpheme (hình-vi, ngữ-vi) is the smallest meaningful unit of linguistic form which can be isolated. Structured as a syllable, it may occur by itself as a simple word or it may co-occur with similar units. In the latter case, it is one of two (or three) constituents that make up a complex word. At the same time it is considered one of the ultimate constituents of a sentence.

Practically all Vietnamese morphemes are monosyllabic, e.g. người ‘person, man, human being’, cơm ‘cooked rice’, đi ‘to go, walk’, muốn
‘to want’, cao ‘tall’, đúng ‘correct, right’. A very small number of morphemes of obscure etymology or of foreign origin have more than one syllable, e.g. cù-lao ‘island’, măng-cut ‘mangosteen’ and sầu-riêng ‘durian’ [from Malay], xà-phông, xà-bông ‘soap’, cà-rốt ‘carrot’, ’ét-xăng ‘gasoline’, so-mí ‘shirt’, ca-vát, cà-vạt [from French], dâu-lâu ‘skull’, bù-nhîn ‘scarecrow; puppet’, mê-hôi ‘sweat’, etc.

Although these are written as two syllables (either hyphenated or spaced) and are often morphologically complex in origin, they are not, in the spoken language, further analyzed into meaningful parts.

When abbreviated, for instance at the fruit market, the first syllable măng in the Malay-borrowed word măng-cut for ‘mangosteen’ [Garcinia mangostana] being homophonous with măng ‘bamboo shoot’, the customer may ask Măng này bao nhiêu hở bà? (măng this what-extent much huh grandma) ‘Ma’am, how much are these măng?’ --- although those tropical fruits have nothing to do with bamboo shoots. Likewise, folk etymology puts cà-rốt ‘carrot’ in the cà ‘eggplant’ family, thus allowing a linguistic play, which suggests that those ‘eggplants’ or ‘red aubergines’ are dót [zót] ‘stupid, dumb’.

On the other hand, the same item cà, when occurring in the French loanword cà-phê ‘coffee’, is never assimilated in sound to that eggplant (Solanum melongena) family, probably because popular etymology cannot identify the meaning of the attribute phê: cf. Emeneau [1951: 4, 158]. The non-native beverage under discussion has, however, been associated with tea (trà), and long before some people became addicted to it, the loanword itself had been treated as trá phê, that is, ‘a kind of tea with the phê attribute’, whatever that attribute may mean!

As we move along in our analysis of the monosyllabic morpheme, we will try to identify the larger units which are composed of morphemes. Each morpheme (understood to be an element within a word = tôi-tôi) may appear by itself as a simple word (tôi), or it may appear in combination with another morpheme or other morphemes to make up a larger word. Words---large or small---are freely occurring units that constitute significant parts of a longer sequence called a phrase (ngữ), or even a sentence (câu) at the higher level. We will, therefore, begin by studying those units called words (each of which has a specific meaning), then go on to look at their structure in
order to examine how they are constructed from those building blocks (called morphemes) through reduplicating and compounding, the two principal processes of word-formation.

3.5 The simple word

A morpheme that has lexical meaning (nhà, cửa, com, nước, ăn, uống) or grammatical meaning (đaprès, sể, raprès, thì, mà) (see 3.2) can function as a simple word, and so can a morpheme like â!, â!, nhé!, nhé!, chỉ!, chú!, which functions as a final particle to convey the speaker’s feeling or attitude toward the hearer. Thus, a simple word is a word that contains only one single morpheme, and a word made up of two morphemes or more through derivation is either a reduplication or a compound.

3.5.1. Simple words can be broken down into four kinds:
3.5.1.1. Most simple words are “full words”, i.e. they have lexical meaning and denote things, phenomena, concepts, etc. They include five classes:

Nouns: bàn, ghế, sách, võ, chó, mèo, trâu, bò, com, gao, gió, tay, chân, mắt, mũi, cây, cỏ, etc.
Verbs: ăn, uống, đi, đứng, ngồi, nằm, học, nói, cay, cay, etc.
Adjectives: cao, thấp, béo, xanh, dò, tôt, xâu, xinh, đẹp, etc.
Numerals: một, hai, năm, ba, vài, etc.
Substitutes (Pronouns): tôi, ta, mày, anh, chị, ông, bà; đầu, dây, đó, kia; ai, ơi, nào; thế, vậy, etc.


Most simple words are native elements, but a small number of them are Chinese loanwords: buổi / phòng ‘room’, chè / trà ‘tea’, mùi ‘smell, taste, color’, vị ‘taste, flavor’, ngà ‘ivory’, nam ‘boy, male’, nữ ‘girl, female’, trọng ‘to respect’, khinh ‘to despise’, etc.
3.5.1.2. Other classes of simple words serve as grammatical tools, i.e. they help express grammatical meanings within a phrase or a sentence: they are

**Prepositions:** bàng, cua, với, về, do, vi, cho, etc.

**Conjunctions:** nhưng, mà, vi, nên, tuy, néu, hô, etc.

**Auxiliaries (Modals):** đang, dâ, sê, không, chẳng, chưa, cùng, vấn, hãy, đúng, chờ, rồi, xong, etc.

Some simple words possess either lexical meaning or grammatical meaning: cho means ‘to give’ or ‘to, for’, dé means ‘to place, put’ or ‘in order to’; đì means ‘to go’ or ‘away, off’ (bay đì ‘to fly away’, gây đì ‘to become emaciated’), ra means ‘to exit, go out’ and also serves as a resultative coverb in such idioms as trang ra ‘[of complexion] to become lighter’, mập ra ‘to become fat, gain weight’.

3.5.1.3 Dozens of others have direct emotive values: they are either **interjections** such as ơ, ơi, ơï, o, oï, chà, cho, hôi, hù, or expressive **final particles** such as à, a, u, ư, nhé, nhí, etc.

3.5.1.4 Whereas most onomatopeias fall into reduplicative patterns [see 3.7], there is only a small number of single **onomatopeias** : ăm, oang, ēu, cac, gâu, hí, hi, etc.

3.6 Morphological processes

The processes which affect entire words in Vietnamese can be considered at several levels. Basically, at the word level, English words like cup : cups, dog : dogs, rose : roses, ox : oxen, talk : talked : talking, display partial similarities of form and meaning (using the plural morpheme /-s/, /-z/, /-iz/, or -en, etc. for nouns, and the past tense morpheme -ed, the present continuous morpheme -ing for verbs). Vietnamese has no such system of inflection, and instead of using such morphemes as English -s, -es, -en, -ed, -ing (i.e. “suffixes”, which must always be glued to a stem like cup, dog, rose, ox, talk), grammatical relations are indicated by means of “function words” and word order.
3.6.1 Phonetic modification. We can observe phonological alternations (consonant, vowel, tone) and contractions. In colloquial speech, the numeral hai mươi ‘20’, when followed by a unit numeral is contracted into hăm-, as in hăm một ‘21’ [< hai mươi một ], hăm hai ‘22’ [< hai mươi hai ], hăm ba ‘23’ [< hai mươi ba ], etc. Similarly, ba mươi and băm- alternate, resulting in băm một = ba mươi một ‘31’, băm ba = ba mươi ba ‘33’, băm lăm = ba mươi lăm ‘35’, etc.

3.6.1.1 A change of tone within a word:
A. Numbers.
   mốt ‘1’ > mốt ‘1 after mươi’ : for example hai mươi mốt ‘21’,
   ba mươi mốt ‘31’, b opción mươi mốt ‘41’, ....
   mươi ‘10’ > mươi ‘10 when preceded by a unit numeral’ : for
   example bốn mươi ‘40’, năm mươi ‘50’, tám mươi ‘80’, ....
   ruồi ‘[of quantity, amount, unit] and a half’, as in mốt thang ruồi
   ‘one month and a half’, mốt dỗ-la ruồi ‘one and a half dollars’, hai giờ
   ruồi ‘2:30; two and a half hours’, tăng gấp ruồi ‘to increase 50%’ --- but
   ruồi ‘[of number] and a half’, as in hai thang ruồi ‘250’, ba nghin ruồi
   ‘3,500’, tám triệu ruồi ‘8,500,000’, ....
B. (Demonstrative) substitutes.
   nay ‘this; here, now’ (hôm nay ‘today’, ngày nay ‘nowadays’) :
   này (tháng này ‘this month’, tuần này ‘this week’, học-kỳ này ‘this term’)
   đây ‘here’ : dấy ‘there’
   bày giờ ‘now’ : bày giờ ‘then’
   kia ‘there’ : kia ‘yonder’
   nhiều ‘much, many’ : nhiều [in bao nhiêu? ‘how much? how
   many?’, bày nhiều ‘this much, this many’, bày nhiều ‘that much, that
   many’].
C. Verbs.
   cùa ‘to saw’ > cùa ‘to cut in a sawing motion with a (dull) blade’
   cúng ‘hard’ > cúng ‘to have an erection’
   mượn ‘to borrow’ > mượn ‘to hire, rent’
   ngang ‘transversal, horizontal’ > ngang ‘to trip, make [somebody]
   stumble’
nguọc 'upstream, opposite direction' > ngóc 'to look up'

There are some examples among the Chinese loanwords: *lâu ‘tower' and lầu ‘tower; stor(e)y, floor'; qua ‘to pass by, cross' and quá ‘to go beyond, exceed'; trưởng ‘long' and trưởng ‘to grow up'; trung ‘center' and trúng ‘to hit squarely'; truyện ‘to pass on' and truyện ‘story, novel'; etc.

D. Nouns.

Beside the above pairs of related words that should for practical purposes be learned as separate words used in different contexts, there are interesting items which are used to refer to people or places. They are clearly derived from regular nouns (denoting relatives and locations).

(1) Such kinship terms as bà ‘grandmother--lady’, ông ‘grandfather--gentleman’, cô ‘aunt--unmarried young lady’, anh ‘elder brother--male equal’, etc. are used as personal pronouns in both address and reference. They would in the Saigon dialect take the hỏi tone and mean respectively ‘that lady’, ‘that gentleman’, ‘that young lady’, ‘that fellow’:

bà > bà = bà ây ‘she'
ong > ông = ông ây ‘he'
cô > cô = cô ây ‘she'
anh > anh = anh ây ‘he'
chi > chí = chí ây ‘she'
thằng > thằng = thằng ây ‘that guy, he'
thằng cha > thằng cha = thằng cha ây ‘that bloody guy; he’

[This does not work for words that have the sắc tone like chú ‘father’s younger brother’, bác ‘father’s older brother’.]

(2) On the other hand, such nouns as hôm ‘day’, bên ‘side’, đằng ‘location’, or such noun-like locatives as trong ‘place inside’, ngoài ‘place outside’, trên ‘place on top’, etc. would among speakers of Saigonese yield forms with the hỏi tone, too. The relevant forms mean respectively:

hôm (= hôm ây) ‘that day’,
bến (= bên ây) ‘that side; over there’,
dằng (= đằng ây) ‘that location; there’,
trong (= trong ây) ‘that space inside; in there’,
ngòi (= ngoài ây) ‘that space outside; out there’,
trên (= trên ây) ‘that space on top; up there’, etc.
The above items trong, ngoài, trên, dưới (and trước, sau, ...) make up a small word class of locatives that on the surface resemble English prepositions. They all refer to position (in space or time), so have been called “relator-nouns” [Thompson 1965: 200]---phương-vị-từ in Vietnamese.

A diachronic (historical) explanation has been attempted by Thompson [1965c: 149] concerning this phenomenon: southern derivatives with hỏi tone may involve anticipation of the tone of ấy ‘that’ in the preceding noun at an earlier stage of the Saigon dialect when ấy was used (as it is in the northern dialect today) instead of modern độ; later the demonstrative ấy was dropped, leaving the noun or noun-like form with modified tone.

3.6.1.2 A change in the initial consonant.
This may result in two rhyming syllables, as in the case of the numeral năm ‘5’, which gives lâm /nhâm ‘5 in numbers between the tens,’ i.e. when occurring after mười /mười ‘10’: mười lâm /nhâm ‘15’, hai mươi lâm /nhâm ‘25’, ba mươi lâm /nhâm ‘35’, bảy mươi lâm /nhâm ‘75’, etc.

But there are abundant examples of formations in which the final -c/k/ following a vowel alternates with -ng/ŋ/, for instance nòng-n góc ‘tadpole’, or the final -ch/j/ alternates with -nh/ɲ/, for instance [cuội] khanh-khách ‘to laugh heartily’. These formations will be treated in detail in the section devoted to reduplications.

3.6.1.3 Vowel alternations.
There is a vowel alternation between /ă/ and /â/, as in bắc ‘north’: bắc ‘[of wind] northerly’, and between /ă/ and /ơ/, as in nam ‘south’, nôm ‘[of script] southern, demotic’ and nôm ‘[of wind] southerly’.

There are also alternations between /a/ and /ă/, /ơ/ and /e/, /o/ and /e/, which will be discussed under reduplications (3.7).

3.7 Reduplications (lập láy, láy). Reduplications are iterative forms (tiếng dôi = mots doubles) in which a repeated element reflects certain phonological characteristics of the base. This feature is also found in other Southeast Asian languages. In Thai, for instance, reduplication results in imitative words, such as sùbsīb ‘to whisper’, huahee ‘sound of hearty laughter’, etc. In Malay languages, a complete repetition denotes plurality: orang-orang ‘men’ < orang ‘man’, bangsar-bangsar ‘nations’ < bangsar ‘nation’, api-api ‘box of matches’ < api ‘fire’, etc. In English the nearest examples are
such compound words are chop-chop, clip-clop, clackety-clack, dillydally, helter-skelter, mumbo-jumbo, palsywalsy, razzle-dazzle, teeter-totter, etc.

In Vietnamese, the basic and the "derived" syllables display sound harmony, resulting in some parallelism in the structure and a change in meaning. The reduplicative formations, which have recently been studied in detail in several monographs and articles, and even listed in dictionary form [Hoàng Văn Hành 1994], show several types of combinatorial alternations, for instance, alternation in the rhyme plus alternation in the tone.

3.7.1 The repetitions perform several functions, of which the most important ones are:

3.7.1.1. Most classifiers (5.1.3.B7) and a few common nouns and pronouns can be reduplicated (with no loss of tone) with the meaning "every unit, each unit or group in turn" as in **ai ai** 'everyone', **dâu đâu** 'everywhere, somewhere', **gi gì** 'everything, something', **người người** 'everybody', **ngày ngày** 'every day, day after day', **chiều chiều** 'every afternoon', **năm năm** 'year after year', **tháng tháng** 'month after month', **dồi dồi** 'generation after generation, eternity', etc.

3.7.1.2. In another pattern of total repetition, a verb, an adjective or an adverb may be reduplicated, the meaning being that of "liveliness", "good and ....", and even "intensification" or "attenuation", as in **mau mau**, **nhanh nhanh**, **le le / le le** 'good and fast', **luôn luôn** 'continually; always, forever'. More examples:

- **đều đều** 'regularly, evenly' < **đều** 'equal, even, regular, steady'
- **hoài hoài** 'incessantly' < **hoài** 'continually'
- **hơi hỏi** 'somewhat, a little' < **hỏi** 'a little'
- **mãi mãi** 'for ever' < **mãi** 'without interruption'
- **quen quen** 'rather familiar, casually acquainted' < **quen** 'acquainted'
- **rung rung** 'to rustle' < **rung** 'to shake'
- **thường thường** 'usually, regularly' < **thường** 'ordinary; often'

Each syllable of a two-syllable adjective or adverb may also be reduplicated (see 3.7.5).

3.7.1.3. Names of birds, insects, plants and fruits are often reduplications: **ba-ba** 'river turtle', **bướm bướm** 'butterfly', **cào-cào** 'grasshopper, locust', **châu-châu** 'grasshopper', **chuồn-chuồn** 'dragonfly', **đa-da** 'partridge', **dom-**


3.7.2 The patterns of reduplication show much variety.

3.7.2.1 Total reduplication. In a total or complete reduplicative pattern (3.5.1), the second syllable is stressed: ào-ào ‘sound of water running’, dưng-dưng ‘with a big bang’, hao-hao ‘analogous, rather similar’, mành-mành ‘blinds’, xưởng-xưởng ‘angular, bony’, khäng-khäng ‘obstinate, persistent’, khu-khu ‘to hold tight [to ....], guard jealously’, tro-tro ‘unchanged; brazen-faced’, dòng-dòng ‘[of rice] to be in ear’, bùng-bùng ‘glowing; in blazing anger’, tròn-tròn ‘to glower, stare’, etc.

The most often cited examples are adjectives referring to colors, shapes and states of mind: den den ‘rather black, [of skin] rather dark’ < den; xanh xanh ‘bluish, greenish; pale’ < xanh; vàng vàng ‘yellowish’ < vàng; tròn tròn ‘roundish; plump’ < tròn; gầy gầy ‘slender, rather skinny’ < gầy; hay hay ‘rather interesting’ < hay; buồn buồn ‘somewhat sad’ < buồn; vui vui ‘jovial; fun’ < vui, etc.

Tone harmony requires that the tone of the basic syllable (underlined in the examples) and that of the derived syllable belong to the same register [see 2.6]: ngang, sác, hoi, of the upper register, and huyễn, ngã, năng, of the lower register. Examples:

certain’, khang-khác ‘rather different, not quite the same’, man-mát ‘rather cool’, etc.


3.7.2.2 Partial reduplication. The patterns can be alliterative (diệp âm) or rhyming (diệp văn).

A. Alliterative patterns. When the initial consonant is repeated (diệp âm), and only the rhyme of the basic syllable changes, we have alliteration: examples are /ch-1 châm-chú ‘to concentrate’, /l-1 làm-lung ‘to work hard, toil’, /r-1 rác-rśli ‘complicated, intricate’, etc.

In one pattern, a back (rounded) vowel /u ơ o/ alternates with a front (unrounded) vowel /i ê e/ of the same height: u - i, ơ - ê, and o - e. Some examples of this vowel harmony:


The derivative formation may either precede or follow the basic word: C-âm -- C-x as in ngâm-ngụi ‘deeply grieved’, or C-x -- C-àng as in kỹ-càng ‘carefully, thoroughly’ [C-x = initial consonant + rhyme, see 2.1]. Other examples:

C-x -- C-a: thiết-tha ‘insistent, earnest’ < thiết ‘deeply interested’;

C-ân -- C-x: dận-do ‘to weigh the pros and cons’ < do ‘to measure’;

C-x -- C-ân: dưng-dán ‘correct’ < dưng;

C-âm -- C-x: thiet-tha ‘insistent, earnest’ < thiết ‘deeply interested’;

C-an -- C-x: bàn-bật ‘to leave no echo, no news’ < bạt;

C-x -- C-ân: thit-tha ‘insistent, earnest’ < thiết ‘deeply interested’;

C-âm -- C-x: bàn-bật ‘to leave no echo, no news’ < bạt;

C-x -- C-ân: dưng-dán ‘correct’ < dưng;

C-âm -- C-x: bàn-bật ‘to leave no echo, no news’ < bạt;
According to one analyst, who listed 254 instances of the latter pattern, all forms (in which the derived syllable C-âp has either the sâc or the nang tone) convey the idea of something appearing then disappearing, or something moving up and down, or a flame or a shadow flickering, with a continuing, repetitive on-and-off motion [Phi Tuyêt Hinh 1977: 42-50].

But in an alliterative pattern, there may be alternation between final consonants---between a stop and a nasal that are “homorganic”, i.e. that share the same point of articulation (labial, dental or velar) [see 2.4]:

/-m/ and /-p/: âm-áp ‘comfortably warm’, âm-áp ‘chock-full, crammed’, câm-âp ‘to tremble, shake [with cold or fear]’, côm-côm ‘thick, bulging’, dêm-dep ‘rather pretty’, nom nôp ‘fearful, worried’;

/-n/ and /-l/: tôn-tôt ‘rather good’, man-mài ‘rather cool’, kin-kit ‘[of crowd] milling’, quàn-quít ‘to hang around [somebody]’;

B. Rhyming patterns. The dominant pattern of diếp văn seems to consist of perfectly rhyming syllables, that constitute (like the alliterative forms introduced above) real “emphatics”, that is, picturesque forms with intensive, attenuative, figurative connotations:

In approximately half of the cases, the first syllable has initial /l-/ which most commonly alternates

- with /k-1 as in lích-kích ‘of carried utensils’ weighty, burdensome, clanging; [of procedures] complicated; lúng cúng ‘cumbersome’;
- with /d-1 as in lão dao ‘to stagger’, lác dác ‘of huts, trees, stars, rain drops’ scattered’,
- with /kh-1 as in lom khom ‘bending, stooping’, lù-khù ‘slow, laggard, lethargic’,
- with /m-1 as in lô-mô ‘to grope (one’s way) (in the dark)’, lô-mò ‘dim, vague, unclear’;
- with /nh-1 as in lăng-nhàng ‘tangled; to drag on’, lì-nhì ‘of writing’ minuscule; [of voice] soft, indistinct’;
- with /t-1 as in linh-tinh ‘miscellaneous’, lúng-túng ‘embarrassed, helpless, not knowing how to get out of an awkward situation’;
- with /h-1 as in kot-thơ ‘sparse, thin’, lông-thũng ‘to saunter, stroll along, walk leisurely’, etc.

3.7.3 Stylistic effects. Sometimes reduplications serve as onomatopoeias or sound-imitating forms, e.g. chí-choé ‘of kids’ to squabble’, chiêm- شيپ ‘of small bird’ to chirp, khẩu-khích ‘to giggle’, lū-ło ‘of bird, kid’ to trill’, őa-őa ‘of infant’ to cry’, róc rách ‘of brook’ to babble, murmur’.

Moreover, in literary utterances, the derivative forms help evoke visual imagery and suggest movements, gestures, shapes, sizes, lights, as in lôm-ngóm ‘to crawl, creep’, lác-dác (see 3.7.2.2B) , láp ló ‘to appear and disappear alternately’. lom khom (see 3.7.2.2B) , khump-nüm ‘to bow low [in a servile or fawning manner], thúot-tha / tha-thuột ‘lithe, lissome’, thoán-thoát ‘to walk briskly’, nhơn nháo ‘[of crowd] disorderly, panicky’, báp bùng ‘[of flames] to flicker’, dầy-dâ ‘corpulent’, kháng-khỉu ‘lean, lank, skinny, twiggy’, bát-ngát, mèn-mông ‘[of space] immense’, diu-hiú ‘desolate’, quanh-quê ‘deserted’, etc.
Indeed, “each reduplication is a ‘musical note’ containing a concrete ‘picture’ of the senses of sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell, accompanied by the impressions of the speaker’s subjective perceptions, evaluations and attitudes toward things and phenomena---impressions strong enough to deeply affect the hearer through his or her outward and inward senses” [Đỗ Hữu Châu 1981: 51].

Poets take full advantage of reduplications---generally untranslatable---which help convey their feelings of vague melancholy, nostalgia (bảng khuâng), deep grief (bùi ngùi), or hesitation (tân ngần), etc.

In these illustrative verses from Nguyễn Du’s 3,254-line narrative The Tale of Kiều, the national bard (1765-1820) made ample use of reduplicative patterns:

\[
\text{Nao-nao dòng nước uốn quanh,}
\text{Nhip cầu nhỏ nhỏ cuối ghềnh bác ngang.}
\text{Sè-sè năm đất bền đáng,}
\text{Đâu-dâu ngọn cỏ nửa vàng nửa xanh.}
\]

‘The rivulet, babbling, curled and wound its course
‘under a bridge that spanned it farther down.
‘Beside the road a mound of earth loomed up
‘where withered weeds, half yellow and half green.’

[The Tale of Kiều, lines 55-58, transl. Huynh Sanh-Thông]

Closer to us, Nguyễn Khuyến (1835-1909) also made frequent use of symbolism and allegory as shown in the following lines from his pastoral poems about autumn:

\[
\text{.Ao thu lanh lêo nước trong veo,}
\text{Một chiếc thuyền câu bé têo têo}
\]

..............................................

\[
\text{Tăng máy la lùng trời xanh ngát,}
\text{Ngô trúc quanh co khách vàng teo.}
\]

‘Cold autumn pond with water pure and clear.
‘A tiny little boat for catching fish.

..............................................
‘Clouds dangling high aloft in stark blue skies.  
‘Path winding through bamboos where no man walks.’

[Thu diệu “Fishing in Autumn”, transl. Huỳnh Sanh-Thông]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Năm gian nhà cổ thấp le te,} \\
\text{Ngô tôi đêm sâu đêm lấp loè,} \\
\text{Lung giư phi pho màu khỏi nhát,} \\
\text{Làn ao lồng lánh bóng trưng loè.}
\end{align*}
\]

‘Five rooms make up a low, low hut of thatch,  
‘Deep night, a pitch-dark alley--glowworms blink.  
‘Around the hedgerow vapors waft and fade,  
‘Inside the pond the moonlight gleams and glares.’

[Thu âm “Drinking in Autumn”, transl. Huỳnh Sanh-Thông]


A good writer discriminates between then thô ‘shy, bashful’ and then thủng ‘looking ashamed’ (< then ‘shy, timid’). Likewise, of several reduplications containing êm ‘soft, gentle; calm’ an effective writer has a choice among êm ả, êm ải, êm âm, êm dịu, êm đẹp, êm dêm, êm thấm, etc.

3.7.5 Larger forms. There are a number of forms that have three syllables: nhỏ nhỏ nhỏ (là) ‘to miss ... very much’ < nhỏ ‘to miss’, còn con con ‘tiny’ < còn con ‘little, tiny’ < con, tí tí tí ‘tiny’ < tí tí < tí ‘tiny’, sach sành sành ‘clean sweep; completely’ < sach ‘clean’, vui vui vui ‘lots of
fun’ < vui ‘fun’, xốp xôm xốp ‘very porous’ < xốp xốp < xốp ‘porous’,
tèo tèo teo ‘very tiny’ < tèo teo ‘tiny’ < teo ‘to shrivel, contract’.

A compound form X-Y (4.3) like nói cười ‘to speak and laugh’ may
become nói nói cười cười (X-X Y-Y) ‘speaking and laughing at the same
time’. Other examples:

dì lai ‘go and come,—to go back and forth’ > dì dì lai lai ‘back and
forth, to and fro’; hâm hô ‘ardently’ > hâm hâm hô hô ‘impetuously,
enthusiastically’; răm rô ‘noisily’ > răm răm rô rô ‘noisily, with great
fanfare’; anh em ‘elder brother and younger sibling’ > anh anh em em ‘to
use sibling terms in addressing someone’; etc. The reduplication
vôi-vàng
‘hurriedly’ < vôi ‘to be in a hurry’ can be intensified through repetition of
each syllable, resulting in vôi vôi vàng vàng ‘hurry-skurry’.

3.7.5.1 Such disyllabic formations as áp ửng ‘[of embarrassed person] to
speak haltingly, embarrassedly’, lúng tung ‘at a loss, not knowing what to
do’, lúng cùng ‘cumbersome’, lúng thung ‘[of garment] too roomy’, dung
dính ‘to walk leisurely’, hấp táp ‘hasty’, hôm hên ‘panting’, hôm hô
‘excited, elated’, nhí nhảnh ‘lively’, ống eo ‘to mince, walk with short,
affectedly dainty steps’ deserve special mention. To reduplicate such a
disyllabic base, the base is preceded by two syllables, the first of which is
the first syllable of the base (áp, lúng, lúng, lùng, dung, hấp, hôm, hôm,
nhí, ống) while the second --- receiving stress --- consists of the initial
consonant of the second syllable of the base followed by the new rhyme -a/
or -à/. The resulting four-syllable formations with strong “dramatic”
overtones are respectively:

áp a áp ửng, lúng ta lúng tung,
lúng ca/cà lúng cùng, lúng thà lúng thung,
dúng da/dà dúng dính, hấp ta hấp táp,
hơn ha hôm hên, hôm ha hôm hô,
nhí nha nhí nhảnh, ống à ống eo.

With l-ol occurring less frequently as the new rhyme, we have
câu bạt ‘vagrant, homeless’ > câu bố câu bạt;
hót hãi ‘nervous and panicky, out of breath’ > hót họ hót hãi;
vất vường ‘discarded, abandoned’ > vất vô/va vất vưởng;
ngát ngưng ‘tall, unsteady, staggering’ > ngát ngo/nga ngát ngượng;
nhơn nhác ‘awestruck’ > nhơn nhợ/nha nhơn nhác ‘terror-stricken’.

with /-ol occurring less frequently as the new rhyme, we have
câu bạt ‘vagrant, homeless’ > câu bố câu bạt;
hót hãi ‘nervous and panicky, out of breath’ > hót họ hót hãi;
vất vưởng ‘discarded, abandoned’ > vất vô/va vất vưởng;
ngát ngưng ‘tall, unsteady, staggering’ > ngát ngo/nga ngát ngượng;
nhơn nhác ‘awestruck’ > nhơn nhợ/nha nhơn nhác ‘terror-stricken’.
 Lê Văn Lý calls /-a/ or /-ol/ an infix, and also lists Phát phượng > Phát phọ phượng [1968: 44]. His other example Nghèo xơ Nghèo xác < Nghèo ‘poor’ is ill-chosen because this is but an interlocking construction containing the compound xác xơ = xơ xác ‘ragged, tattered; denuded’ and optionally occurring as Nghèo xác Nghèo xơ: either phrase means ‘as poor as a church mouse, pauperized, destitute—like a tatterdemalion’.

3.7.5.2 In the spoken language, a particle may be used following the repeated syllable in an exclamatory expression: den ‘black, dark’ would yield *den den là!* ‘so dark’; sọ ‘scared’ would yield *sọ sọ là!* ‘I was so scared!’; vui ‘fun’ [see 3.5.5] would yield Vui vui (vui) là! [with heavy stress on the first syllable vui] ‘Oh, we had so much fun!’

Talking to children, a mother or grandmother may exclaim *Đẹp oi là dep!* ‘Oh [you’re] so pretty!’, Thượng oi là thượng! ‘Oh, how I love you!’, or Ngon thật là ngon! ‘So delicious!’ A person impressed with a large quantity of mangoes or mosquitoes may cry out *Nhũng xoài là xoài!* ‘So many mangoes!’, *Nhũng muỗi là muỗi!* ‘Nothing but mosquitoes!’

3.7.6 Suffix -iec. Finally we have to mention a very productive suffix /(C)-iec, (C)-iec/, which, when added to the initial consonant of the basic word C-x, yields a derived form C-iec. This phenomenon, called “iec-hoá” by native linguists, supplies some emotional coloring (disinterest, irony, etc.) to the meaning of any base:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ăn} & \rightarrow \text{ăn-iec} \ ‘\text{to eat}’ \\
\text{học} & \rightarrow \text{học-hiec} \ ‘\text{to study}’ \\
\text{hát} & \rightarrow \text{hát-hiec} \ ‘\text{to sing}’ \\
\text{nói} & \rightarrow \text{nói-niec} \ ‘\text{to speak, talk}’ \\
\text{áo} & \rightarrow \text{áo-iec} \ ‘\text{coats and the like}’ \\
\text{mũ} & \rightarrow \text{mũ-miêc} \ ‘\text{headgear [collectively]}’ \\
\text{bạn} & \rightarrow \text{bạn-biec} \ ‘\text{friends}’ \\
\text{cón} & \rightarrow \text{cón-kiec} \ ‘\text{rice and the like}’ \\
\text{canh} & \rightarrow \text{canh-kiec} \ ‘\text{soup and the like}’ \\
\text{phở} & \rightarrow \text{phở-phiéc} \ ‘\text{beef noodle soup and the like}’ \\
\text{xe} & \rightarrow \text{xe-xiec} \ ‘\text{cars and the like}’ \\
\text{sách} & \rightarrow \text{sách-siec} \ ‘\text{books and the like}’ \\
\text{göm} & \rightarrow \text{göm-ghiéc} \ ‘\text{abominable, horrible}’.
\end{align*}
\]
Emeneau, whose material contains none of this pattern, quotes Maspero [1912: 109] as saying that this is “a Cochin Chinese pattern” [Emeneau 1951: 186]. Actually, the northern dialect makes frequent use of this formative element. Indeed, this “chameleon alliterative suffix” [Thompson 1965c: 173, 176]---not at all limited to the southern dialect area---is used even when the base is a compound word: di thi di thiéc < di thi ‘to go take an exam’, di hoc di hiéc < di hoc ‘to go to school’. Given a basic form like ô-tô ‘automobile, car’ (a fairly recent loanword from French), the highly colloquial suffix -iéc would affect the second syllable and yield ô-tô ô-tiéc ‘automobiles and the like’, just like xe đạp xe diéc ‘bikes and the like’ < xe đạp ‘bicycle’, ca-vát ca-viéc ‘neckwear’ < ca-vát ‘necktie’, and more recently ti-vi ti-viéc ‘television and the like’ < ti-vi ‘TV’.

Nguyên Quý-Hùng [1965: 124] cites three other examples of -iéc occurring in borrowings from foreign languages: cà-phê cà-phiéc ‘coffee and the like’, ten-nít ten-niéc ‘tennis and the like’ [from French], and phá-sa phá-siéc ‘roasted peanuts and the like’ [from Cantonese fasang].

A native speaker has no difficulty in understanding or using hop-tác-xâ hop-tác-xiéc ‘cooperatives and the like’ < hop-tác-xâ ‘cooperative’. The three-syllable English loanword càu-lac-bô (from “club”, borrowed via the Chinese transliteration) would be reduplicated as càu-lac-bô càu-lac-biéc ‘clubs and the like’.

According to Trương Văn Chinh & Nguyễn Hiền Lê [1963: 93] the syllable (C)-iec is generally used when one speaks disparagingly or playfully. We agree, and further suggest that it is used most often in such negative sentences as

Từ sáng đến giờ tôi đã cà-phê cà-phiéc gì đâu!
(from morning reach now I ANTERIOR coffee-coffee whatever where)
‘I haven’t had any coffee this morning!’

Mấy tuần này chưa ten-nít ten-niéc gì cả!
(few week this NEG tennis-tennis whatever all)
‘No tennis these past few weeks at all!’

Occurring less often in colloquial speech are four-syllable forms containing the syllable C-ang or C-ung, which alternates with C-x:

dàn ông dàn ang ‘men, males in general’ < dàn ông ‘man, male person’;
hoa tai hoa tung ‘earrings [collectively]’ < hoa tai ‘earing’.
3.7.7 Concluding remarks
The discussions in sections 3.7.1 to 3.7.3 have presented the meanings and functions of reduplicative forms; the following summary will underline the important role of this process of building words from syllables.

3.7.7.1 Reduplicated forms of nouns seem to carry at least three broad meanings:


3.7.7.2 Reduplicated forms of verbs carry even more meanings, all of them showing “emphatic” sound symbolism, hence such terms as “impressifs” [Durand 1961], “descriptives” [Smith 1973] or “expressives” [Diffloth 1976]:

- **general, mutual, or reciprocal**:

  (a) bàn-bac ‘to deliberate’ < bàn ‘to discuss’, kè-lé ‘to relate in detail’ < kè ‘to recount, enumerate’, khóc-lóc ‘to cry bitterly’ < khóc ‘to cry, weep’, làm-lung ‘to toil’ < làm ‘to work’, nói-năng ‘to talk’ < nói ‘to speak’, tệp-tành ‘to exercise, drill’ < tệp ‘to practice’, etc.

  (b) cãi-cô < cãi ‘to argue, quarrel’, chen-chúc < chen ‘to jostle, push, shove’, dát-dìu < dát ‘to lead’, gáp-gò ‘to encounter’ < gáp ‘to meet’, hên-hò ‘date, tryst’ < hên ‘to make an appointment’, etc.

- **expressive, ironical or imagist**: chay-chót ‘to solicit [favor], run for [position]’, chẽ-chóc ‘to die, perish’, dăn-dò ‘to keep reminding’, gât-gù ‘to nod’, gũi-gùm ‘to entrust’, giũ-gìn ‘to preserve’, hát-hông ‘to sing’, mùa-may ‘to dance’, ngâm-ngũa ‘to keep looking at [oneself, something, someone]’, nghẽ-ngõí ‘to think, ponder’, ngű-nghẽ ‘to sleep’, nhảy-nhót ‘to jump up and down; to dance’, nhâu-nhọt ‘to have a
drinking bout’, **nuôi-nâng** ‘to nurture, rear’, **quán-quít** ‘to hang on to’, **rũ-rẽ** ‘to entice, lure, tempt’, **sồ-soảng** ‘to paw, pet’, **tím-tôi** ‘to search for, do research’, **to-tuông** ‘to think fondly, dream of’, **uôn-éo** ‘[of woman] to wriggle, swing hips’, **vô-vämp** ‘to give an effusive welcome’, **vuốt-ve** ‘to fondle, caress’, **xìn-xô** ‘to ask for this and that’, etc.

3.7.7.3 Reduplicated forms of adjectives carry three broad meanings:

• **general**: **chát-chê** ‘tight(ly)’, **dep-dê** ‘beautiful, nice’, **ém-dèn** ‘peaceful, quiet, soothing’, **im-lìm** ‘quiet, still’, **may-mân** ‘lucky, fortunate’, **nhe-nhàng** ‘gentle, soft’, **sạch-sê** ‘clean’, **vui-vè** ‘glad, merry’, etc.

• **concrete**: **báp-bênh** ‘unsteady, unstable’ < **bênh**; **bội-rội** ‘perplexed’ < **rội**; **lung-lay** ‘shaky’ < **lay**; **luân-quán** ‘[of circle] vicious’ < **quán**; **lè-loi** ‘lonesome, lonely, solitary’ < **lê**; **mô-mang** ‘developing, expanding’ < **mô**; **rội-rội** ‘excited’ < **rội**; **sác-sáo** ‘keen, smart’ < **sác**; **táp-tênh** ‘limping’ < **táp**; **xa-xám, xa-xôi** ‘far, distant, remote’ < **xa**; **xâu-xế** ‘ugly, unattractive’, **xâu-xa** ‘shameful’ < **xâu**; etc.

Some constructions have a good connotation: **bé-bông** ‘small’ < **bé**; **gàn-gũi** ‘close, intimate’ < **gàn**; **thom-tho** ‘aromatic’ < **thom**; **tron-trình** ‘rotund’ < **tron**; **xinh-xán** ‘cute, fine-drawn’ < **xinh**. But others have a bad connotation: **hay-hôm** ‘(not) interesting’ < **hay**; **méo-mó** ‘awry, crooked’ < **méo**; **qui-quát** ‘immoderate, irrational’ < **quát** etc.


All early authors have mentioned that reduplicative formations (called **tiếng dôi** = **mots doubles**) are aimed at adding elegance to utterances. In particular the stylistic device that uses the formative element **-iec** has been called a pattern of “poetic licence” [Vallot 1905: 182-183].

In the first grammar of Vietnamese written in English, **Studies in Vietnamese (Annamese) Grammar** (1951), Professor Murray B. Emeneau, to whom people often refer as the dean of American grammarians of
Vietnamese, offered the insightful remark that “any attempt at elevation of style, even in the most casual conversation, has as one of its marks a multiplication of pairs of verbs.” “Sometimes the pairs are made up of freely used verbs, sometimes they are borrowings from Chinese, sometimes they are Vietnamese reduplicative formations. This trait is in some ways the equivalent of the sesquipedalianism of Johnsonese English” [1951:76].

There is indeed, in both the spoken and written languages, a tendency to use two-syllable expressions where just a monosyllabic form would adequately convey the desired meaning. If this is true of reduplicated nouns, verbs and adjectives, it is also true of affixation and compounding, to which we will now turn in the next chapter.
Chapter 4
The Lexicon (continued)

4.0 Affixation and Compounding

We have seen (in 3.2, 3.5) that a simple word consists of a single morpheme ---a syllable-morpheme---like nhà ‘house’, cửa ‘door’, ăn ‘to eat’, ngủ ‘to sleep’, học ‘to study’, làm ‘to do, act, work’. We have also seen that, beside this very large class of words which constitute the most basic elements of the vocabulary, another large class (in 3.7) consists of words which comprise one single morpheme plus a kind of derived form through reduplication: do do ‘reddish’, vội-vàng ‘in a hurry’, âm ỉ ‘noisy’, etc. In the colloquial language, another class (discussed in 3.7.6) uses the highly productive -iêc suffix: for instance dài-học dài-hiec ‘college and the like’.

In this chapter we will continue to examine the makeup of other kinds of Vietnamese words---through the processes of affixation and compounding. On the one hand, there is a fairly large class of polysyllabic words which contain real affixes, i.e. bound morphemes that are added to root (or stem) morphemes, just like English words illegal, impossible, untrue, boyhood, freedom, teacher, lyrics, geology (which contain prefixes il-, im-, un-, suffixes -hood, -dom, -er, -ics, -logy): for example bất-trung ‘disloyal’, bất-hiëu ‘impious, unfilial’, vô-lý ‘absurd’, nhiệt-kê ‘thermometer’, toán-học ‘mathematics’, etc. On the other hand, there are words that are composed of two roots usually occurring with stress on the second element: they are called compounds, for example người ông ‘servant’, thầy mặc ‘carpenter’, học trò ‘student’, thầy giáo ‘(male) teacher’, cô giáo ‘(female) teacher’, đêu chuột ‘cucumber’, etc.

Since numerous lexical elements of Chinese origin make up around 70% of the total vocabulary, Sino-Vietnamese (see 3.3) lexemes like móc ‘wood’, giáo ‘to teach’, etc. will be identified as they occur in complex forms.
Regarding affixation, the types of formatives which can be used when added—glued—to a stem are called affixes: though limited in number, they are rather productive “bound” morphemes. Depending on their position with reference to the stem—whether preceding it, following it, or within it—affixes are classified into three types: prefixes (tiên-tò), suffixes (hậu-tò) and infixes (trung-tò), respectively. Malayo-Polynesian languages (Malay, Indonesian, Cham, etc.) have infixes, but modern Vietnamese has none.

4.1 Prefixes

Vietnamese has few prefixes (tiên-tò), that is affixes which are added in front of the root (or stem) morpheme (cf. “nominalizers” in 4.6).

4.1.1 The most common ones are found among numerals or terms for days of the week or days of the month:

thủ- ‘prefix for ordinal numbers’ as in thủ máy? ‘which one (in order)?’, thủ nhất ‘first’, thủ hai ‘second; Monday’, thủ ba ‘third; Tuesday’, thủ mười ‘tenth’, thủ hai mươi ‘20th’, thủ bốn mươi ba ‘43rd’;
mồng / mùng ‘prefix for the first 10 days of the month’ (cf. Fr. quantième) as in mồng máy? ‘which day of the month?’, mồng mười tháng giêng (day one month principal) ‘January 1st’, mồng bốn tháng bảy (day four month seven) ‘the Fourth of July’, mồng mười tháng mười (day ten month ten) ‘October 10’;

lão- as a prefix is used before monosyllabic surnames to express some familiarity as lão Thinh ràng vàng ‘old Thinh with gold teeth’.

The item thủ- has as its close cousin the noun thủ ‘kind, variety, etc.’ which occurs in such compounds (see 4.3) as thủ-bặc ‘hierarchy’, thủ-hạng ‘category, class’, thủ-tự ‘order, sequence’, although the same Chinese “etymon” [the form from which a later form in Vietnamese derives] occurs as a bound element in such compounds as thủ-nam ‘second son’, thủ-nữ ‘second daughter’, thủ-phỉ ‘second imperial concubine’, thủ-trưởng ‘vice minister, undersecretary’, thủ-yêu ‘(of) secondary (importance)’, etc.
4.1.2 Journalistic texts contain many of those frequently occurring prefixes of Chinese origin. Below are examples of highly productive Sino-Vietnamese prefixes found in newspapers and magazines:


*khasil-* ‘able, -ible’ as in *khasil-tí* ‘lovable, lovely’, *khasil-kính* ‘respectable’, *khasil-năng* ‘capability; possibility’, *khasil-nghi* ‘suspect; suspicious’, *khasil-ó* ‘detestable’, *khasil-quan* ‘good, satisfactory’, etc.


VIETNAMESE


4.1.3 Within the past five decades or so, teachers and writers have had to coin a new terminology for each of the physical and social sciences. An increasing number of scientific and technical terms have crept into many disciplines, including atomic physics and cybernetics. From the very beginning three methods had been followed: using elements within the
mother tongue, transliterating terms from European languages, and using Sino-Vietnamese words [Lê Khả Kế 1969: 113]. The new medical terminology, for instance, includes the following coinages, which each contain a prefix:

- **tăng-** 'hyper-' as in **tăng axit** 'hyperacid(ity)', **tăng canxi** 'hypercalcemia';
- **giảm-** 'hypo-' as in **giảm-duong** 'hypoglycemia', **giảm-thân-nhiệt** 'hypothermia';
- **bạn-** 'an-' as in **bạn-huyệt** 'anemia';
- **viêm-** 'inflammation, -itis' as in **viêm họng** 'angina', **viêm mỏm** 'stomatitis', **viêm mũi** 'rhinitis', **viêm gan** 'hepatitis', etc. This contrasts with the traditional way, when complaining of ailments, of using just the vague word **dau** 'pain, hurt' as in **dau họng**, **dau mỏm**, **dau mũi**, **dau gan**, etc.

### 4.2 Suffixes

Suffixes (hậu tố) are tail-affixes which are added to a root (or stem) morpheme to create larger forms: for example, **-hoa** 'to change; -fy, -ize' is a Chinese loanword which helps create many verbs equivalent to such English forms as solidify, deify, americanize, democratize, etc.

#### 4.2.1 Again among the small number of suffixes---all of them bound elements within larger forms---those borrowed from Chinese occur very frequently together with bound or free partners:

- **-gia** '-er, -ist' as in **tác-gia** 'author, writer', **chính-trị-gia** 'statesman' [<chính-trị 'politics'], **khoa-học-gia** 'scientist' [<khoa-học 'science'], **sử-gia** 'historian', **ngữ-học-gia** 'linguist', etc.
- **-già** '-or, -er' as in **hoc-già** 'scholar' [<hoc 'to learn'], **tác-già** 'author' [<tác 'to make, create'], **dịch-già** 'translator', **soạn-già** 'author, compiler, editor', **ki-yi-già** 'correspondent', etc.
- **-sĩ** '-ist, expert' as in **hoa-sĩ** 'artist, painter' [<hoa 'to draw, paint'], **thi-sĩ** 'poet' [<thi 'poetry'], **văn-sĩ** 'writer' [<văn 'literature, prose'], **ca-sĩ** 'singer', **nhạc-sĩ** 'musician', **giáo-sĩ** 'missionary' [<giáo
'religion'), tu-sī ‘priest’ [< tu ‘to enter religion’], dạo-sī ‘Taoist priest’ [< dạo ‘the Way, religion; Taoism’], etc.

-su ‘master’ as in giáo-su ‘teacher, professor’ [< giáo ‘to teach’], giảng-su ‘lecturer’ [< giảng ‘to lecture’], mục-su ‘pastor, Protestant minister’ [< mục ‘to tend (sheep), lead (sheep, cow) to pasture’], kiến-trúc-su ‘architect’ [< kiến-trúc ‘to build, erect’], luật-su ‘lawyer’ [< luật ‘law’], vũ-su ‘dance master’ [< vũ ‘to dance’], võ-su ‘martial arts teacher’ [< võ ‘martial arts’], kŷ-su = công-trình-su ‘engineer’, etc.


as equivalents of 'eye medicine, eye study’ were later replaced by khoa mắt (Lê Khả Kê 1969: 128).]


The numerous bound elements borrowed from Chinese are comparable to Greek elements geo- ‘earth’, -logy ‘study’, or -graphy ‘writing, description’ found in such formal, technical English words as geology (dia-chất-học), geography (dia-lý [-hoc]), geophysics (dia[-cau]-vật-lý [-hoc]). The larger forms, which play an important role in the dissemination of science and technology, have been called “pseudo-compounds” [Thompson 1965c: 133-134].

4.2.2 A number of disciplines have created their own terminologies through that “pseudo-compounding” process. As in the case of prefixes (4.1.3), medical terms also contain interesting suffixes, such as:

-dô ‘-gram’ as in (quang-) phô-dô [later ânh phủ] ‘spectrogram’, điện-tâm-dô [later điện-dô tim] ‘electro-cardiogram’;

-ký ‘-graph’ as in (quang-) phô-ký [later máy ghi phô] ‘spectrograph’, điện-nào-dô-ký [later máy ghi điện-dô náo] ‘electroencephalograph’;

-niêu ‘-uria’ as in duong-nieu ‘diabetes’, huyet-nieu ‘hematuria’, anbumin-nieu ‘albuminuria’;

-pham ‘-mer’ as in dong-pham ‘unimer’, don-pham ‘monomer’.

As pointed out in 4.1.3, the originally bound element -viem, which had been chosen as the equivalent of ‘-itis’, is now used by physicians as a free element occurring as head noun and meaning ‘inflammation of’...: viem thanh-quan ‘laryngitis’, viem hau ‘pharyngitis’, viem gan ‘hepatitis’, viem cuong phoi ‘bronchitis’, viem mien / mieng ‘stomatitis’, etc. These terms are structured like real compounds (see below), which follow the Vietnamese word order “head noun + modifier”, and we witness here a switch from affixation to compounding. This practice fulfills one of the three criteria of an adequate terminology: its popularity—it must be easily understood and easily learned by the masses while maintaining its scientific systematicity and national tinge.

4.3 Compounding

A compound (tu ghép) is composed of two or three free elements, each of them a simple word. Two-element compounds are the most commonly found. We can distinguish coordinate compounds, in which each constituent is a center, and subordinative compounds, in which only one constituent is the center.

4.3.1 Coordinate compounds

4.3.1.1 In a coordinate compound (tu ghép dang-lap or song-song), two nouns, two verbs or two adjectives occur in juxtaposition, and their meanings supplement or complement each other. Each constituent is a center, as shown in the following examples:

- N-N compounds
  chim-muong ‘bird + beast --- animals’
  rau-co ‘vegetable + grass --- veggies’
  ruong-nuong ‘wet field + dry field --- cultivated fields’
  ruoi-muoi ‘fly + mosquito --- flies and mosquitoes’
  quan-ao ‘pants + coat --- clothes’
sách-vô ‘books + notebooks --- books’

bàn-ghé ‘table + chair --- furniture’

• V-V compounds

ān-uŏng ‘to eat + to drink --- to get nourishment’
ān-ơ ‘to eat + to live --- to live; to behave’
ān-mać ‘to eat + to dress --- to dress’
lo-nghĩ ‘to worry + to think --- to worry’

• Adj-Adj compounds

mạnh-khoe ‘strong + strong --- well in health’
do-bán ‘dirty + dirty --- filthy’
giàu-có ‘rich + to have --- wealthy’
lười-biếng ‘lazy + lazy --- slothful’

These are comparable to such English constructions as *kith and kin, hale and hearty, brain and brawn, safe and sound*, etc., which incidentally contain alliterations.

From the point of view of meaning, compounds can be divided into two types: generalizing compounds and specializing compounds, the former usually hyphenated with weak stress on the first syllable, and the latter usually not hyphenated.

4.3.1.2 Generalizing Compounds.

The class meaning of generalizing compounds is “the two items and other similar ones, making up a general class” [Thompson 1965c: 128]. In the additional examples below, which include nouns, verbs and adjectives, each compound is made up of two lexemes in juxtaposition:

• bàn-ghé ‘table + chair --- furniture’
bát-dĩa ‘bowl + plate --- dishes, dinnerware’
chùa-chiên ‘Buddhist pagoda + Buddhist temple --- temples’
con-cháu ‘child + grandchild --- offspring, descendants’
êch-nhái ‘frog + tree toad --- batrachians’
rũĩ-muĩ ‘fly + mosquito --- flies, bugs’
giây-bút ‘paper + pen --- desk supplies’
mũa gió ‘rain + wind --- the elements, inclement weather’
phố-phương ‘shop, street + guild --- streets’
thốc-lúa ‘paddy + cereal, rice --- grain, cereals’
cây-cò ‘tree + grass --- vegetation’
thuyễn-bè ‘boat + raft — boats, craft’
dêm ngày ‘night + day — night(s) and day(s)’

- **mua-bán** ‘to buy + to sell — to go shopping’
  buôn-bán ‘to buy in for resale + to sell — to trade’
- **cày-cấy** ‘to plow + to transplant — to engage in farming’
  nấu-nướng ‘to cook + to grill — to cook’
- **chải-chuột** ‘to comb, brush + to polish — to groom oneself’
- **hoc-tập** ‘to study + to practice — to learn, study’
  khen-chê ‘to praise + to censure — to critique’
- **thay-dổi** ‘to replace + to exchange — to change, vary’

- **khó-dễ** ‘difficult + easy — difficulties’
- **thành-bại** ‘successful + unsuccessful’
- **tuổi-tốt** ‘fresh + good — all fresh’
- **xinh-dep** ‘cute + pretty — beautiful’
- **vui-suông** ‘glad + happy — happy’
- **sớ-muộn** ‘early + late — sooner or later’

### 4.3.1.3 Characteristics

**A. Reversibility.** Such compounds may be reversible, especially in verse: both **mua-gió** and **gió-mua** mean ‘the elements’, both **sông-núi** and **núi-sông** mean ‘rivers and mountains’. Other examples: **ngày-dêm = dém-ngày** ‘day and night’, **quăn-áo = áo-quăn** ‘clothing’, **nhà-cửa = cửa-nhà** ‘house(s), buildings’, **mua-bán = bán-mua** ‘to shop; to trade’, **thay-dổi = đổi-thay** ‘to change’, **dáng-cay = cay-dáng** ‘spicy, peppery hot + bitter — [fig.] bitter, sour, virulent’, **dói-no = no-dói** ‘hungry or full’, **chê-mong = mong-chê** ‘to wait (anxiously)’, **mạnh-khoẻ = khoẻ-mạnh** ‘well in health, healthy’, **tim-kiểm = kiểm-tìm** ‘to look and search’, **dòng-dua = dua-dòng** ‘to meet and to see off’, **tranh-dâu = dâu-tranh** ‘to struggle’, etc.

But in other compounds, the two constituents occur in a fixed order: **sách-vở** ‘books + notebooks’, **trâu-bò** ‘water buffalo + ox—cattle, livestock’, **đất-nước** ‘land + water—country’, **hoc-hoi** ‘to study (and to inquire)’, **bân-uống** ‘to eat and drink’, **bân-ô** ‘to live; to behave’, **di-lai** ‘to come and go’, **ngọt-bụi** ‘sweet + tasting like nuts — [fig.] sweet, happy’, **may-rủi** ‘lucky + unlucky’, **lợi-hai** ‘good and bad factors’, etc.
People do not say *cô-rau* for ‘vegetables’ or *nghĩ-lo* for ‘to worry’: the correct forms are *rau-cô* [vegetable + grass], *lo-nghĩ* [to worry and to think].


**B. Alliteration.** Some compounds display alliteration: *bao-bọc* ‘to cover, protect’, *cười-cười* ‘to joke, laugh’, *cây-cỏ* = *cỏ-cây* ‘vegetation’, *chùa-chiên* ‘temples’, *ruộng-rầy* ‘wet fields and slash-and-burn fields’, *non-nước* = *nuóc-non* ‘mountains and waters’, *trong-trảng* ‘pure and clean’, etc. However, they are not reduplications.

**C. Archaic morphemes.** Several of these “generalizing” compounds merit special attention. For instance, in such compound nouns as *áo-xòng* ‘clothes’, *bếp-núc* ‘kitchens in general; cooking’, *cá-mú* ‘fishes’, *chim-chóc* ‘birds’, *chùa-chiên* ‘temples, monasteries’, *chó-má* ‘dogs in general’, *chợ-búa* ‘markets’, *cỏ-rá* ‘grasses in general’, *duường-xá* ‘roads’, *gà-quê* ‘chickens, fowl’, *heo-cúi* ‘pigs in general’, *làng-mạc* ‘villages’, *lúa-má* ‘cereals’, *tre-pheo* ‘bamboos in general’, *tuổi-túc* ‘age’, *vườn-tược* ‘gardens’, *xe-cô* ‘vehicles’, the second constituent (*tiếng*) is often considered meaningless, when actually it used to have a definite meaning as a legitimate noun---nowadays still found in such a minority language as Mường or Tày-Nùng. Indeed at present few native speakers of Vietnamese realize, for example, that the bound lexemes *núc, má, cúi, pheo* in the above compound nouns, have simply lost their respective meanings (*‘kitchen’, ‘dog’, ‘pig’, ‘bamboo’*) and in modern usage occur only in combination with *bếp, chó, heo* and *tre* [Vương Lộc 1970: 32-34].
Similar examples are found among compound verbs and compound adjectives: **dố-chắc** ‘to exchange’, **e-lệ** ‘shy’, **hỏi-han** ‘to ask, inquire’, **lo-âu** ‘to worry’, **nghèo-khó, nghèo-ngạt** ‘poor’, **ngô-hâu** ‘so that, so as to’, **sum-vây** ‘to be together as a family’, **theo-dổi** ‘to follow up’, etc. In fifteenth-century poetry, Nguyên Trái used many such autonomous lexemes (**ông** ‘to worry’, **chắc** ‘to buy’, **dố** ‘to follow up’, **hạn** ‘to ask’, **lệ** ‘shy’, **khó, ngạt** ‘poor’, **ngô** ‘in order to’, **vây** ‘to have a reunion’) [Nguyên Đình-Hòa 1985: 463-473], whose occurrence is nowadays restricted to “synonym compounds”: indeed, of the two parts within the modern compound verb **lo-âu**, for instance, the great bard used the item **ông** 27 times and its synonym **lo** only four times in his 254 poems in the vernacular [cf. Schneider 1987, an annotated French translation of Nguyên Trái’s **Quốc-âm Thi-táp** “Collected Poems in National Language”].

**D. Synonym and antonym compounds.** Semantically, we can distinguish among generalizing (coordinate) compounds those in which the elements in juxtaposition are synonyms and those in which the two juxtaposed elements are antonyms. To the list of synonym compounds cited above, which have an abstract or figurative meaning, we can add, for example, these combinations: **ngày-giờ** ‘day and hour—time’, **tội-lỗi** ‘offense and fault—sin’, **ăn-uống** ‘to eat and drink—to wine and dine’, **kén-chọn** ‘to pick and choose—choosy’, **kêu-gọi** ‘to call and call—to call upon, appeal’, **thèm-muốn** ‘to covet and desire—to crave for’, etc.

Each antonym compound, on the other hand, consists of two opposite elements, for instance **già-trẻ** ‘old and young’, **giàu-nghèo** ‘rich and poor’, **lớn-bé** ‘large and small’, **duốc-thua** ‘to win and to lose’, **mất-còn** ‘lost and remaining’, **sống-chết** ‘life and death’, **xa-gần** ‘far and near’, **vàng-thau** ‘gold and brass—things to be distinguished’, etc.

Thompson also cites some “reinforcing” compounds, which contain synonymous elements but have “a more figurative or abstract reference than either of their bases” [1965c: 130-131]: **giàu-có** ‘wealthy, well-off’ [to be rich + to own], **lâu-dài** ‘durable’ [to last + to be long], **quen-biết** ‘to know, be well acquainted with’ [to be acquainted with + to know], **tân-tới** ‘to make progress’ [to advance + to attain’], **mũi-kê** ‘strategy’ [ruse + scheme, plot’], **ngày-giờ** ‘time (in general)’ [day + hour].
Moreover, in such reinforcing compounds as don-rút ‘to meet’, tim-kiep ‘to search’, lửa-gat ‘to dupe, cheat’, chon-lua / lua-chon ‘to select’, do-bàn ‘dirty’, di-thu ‘superfluous’, hu-hông ‘to break down, spoil’, la-màng ‘to scold’, hám-doa ‘to threaten’, vâng-dã ‘to obey; yes’, etc. one component (don, tim, lua, chon, bàn, thu, hông, màng, doa, vâng) may be characteristic of the northern dialect while the other (rút, kiep, gat, lua, do, đù, hût, la, hâm, đâ) is its synonym in the southern dialect.

E. Idiom compounds. In addition, a large number of compounds can be called idiom compounds: they contain parallel constituents which are neither synonymous nor antonymous, but which are used together to denote idiomatically groups of individuals or activities. These constructions have a weak stress on their first syllable (or tiêng): cha-me ‘father + mother—parents’, anh-em ‘older brother + younger sibling—brothers and sisters’, vợ-chồng ‘wife + husband—spouses’, bà-con ‘grandmother + child—relative; related, kin to’, ngưê-ta ‘others + we, us—people, Fr. on’, chân-tay = tay-chân ‘foot + hand—underling’, nhà-nước ‘house, family + country—the state’, non-sông ‘mountains + rivers—homeland’, cơm-nước ‘rice + water—meals; cooking’, may-mua ‘cloud + rain—sexual intercourse’, etc.

4.3.2 Subordinative compounds

This type is a descriptive construction which is built up like an ordinary syntactic construction: its center is either a head noun followed by its modifier or a head verb (or adjective) followed by its complement (từ ghép chính-phụ). Thompson [1965c: 129-130] gives it the label “specializing compound”.

4.3.2.1. Compound nouns.

A. The modified-modifier relation is obvious in the following compound nouns, which comprise a head denoting the ‘genus’ and its modifier (also a noun) identifying the ‘species’. Some examples:

with cây ‘tree’:
- cây lúa ‘rice plant’
- cây cau ‘areca tree’
- cây đa ‘banyan tree’
- cây du-du ‘papaya tree’
with **quả/trái** ‘fruit’:
- **quả cau** ‘areca nut’
- **quả chuỗi** ‘banana’
- **quả khách** ‘star fruit’

with **bò** ‘bovine’:
- **bò due** ‘ox, bull’
- **bò cái** ‘cow’
- **bò con /non** ‘calf’

with **chó** ‘canine’:
- **chó due** ‘he-dog’
- **chó cái** ‘bitch’
- **chó con** ‘puppy’

with **gà** ‘chicken’:
- **gà trống** ‘rooster’
- **gà mái** ‘hen’
- **gà con** ‘chick’

The first two sets of examples are N-N (Noun-Noun) compounds, and the last three sets are N-Adj (Noun-Adjective) compounds. Below are listed more examples of those and also of N-V (Noun-Verb) compounds. In all of them, the center (or head noun) is followed by its modifier, which can be a noun, an adjective or a verb:

- **N-N** (the modifier is a noun):
  - **chăn trôi** ‘horizon’ (foot + sky), **bánh mì** ‘bread’ (pastry, cake + wheat), **com gà** ‘rice with chicken’ (rice + chicken), **thuốc lá** ‘cigarette’ (drug + leaf), **thuốc láo** ‘tobacco’ (drug + Laos), **gà tây** ‘turkey’ (chicken + west), **xe bò** ‘oxcart’ (vehicle + ox), **bút lông** ‘writing brush’ (pen + hair), **bút chì** ‘pencil’ (pen + lead), **xe lửa** ‘railway train’ (vehicle + fire), **xe điện** ‘streetcar’ (vehicle + electricity), **nhà đầy** ‘stone house; jail’ (house + stone), **nuộc dứa** ‘ice’ (water + stone), **dây thêp** ‘telegram’ (wire + steel), etc.

- **N-ADJ** (the modifier is an adjective):
  - **cà chua** ‘tomato’ (eggplant + sour), **đường cái** ‘main road’ (road, path + big), **dụa cát** ‘stirring chopstick’ (chopstick + big), **bơ ngang** ‘ferry boat’ (ferry + across), **nhà thương** ‘hospital’ (house + wounded), **bằng đen** ‘blackboard’ (board + black), **tiếng Pháp** ‘French (language)’ (language + French), **áo dài** ‘Vietnamese dress, tunic’ (coat, shirt, gown + long), **bánh ngọt** ‘cake’ (cake, pastry + sweet), **đậu hàu** ‘water melon’ (melon + ?), etc.
N-V (the modifier is a verb):

người ở 'servant' (person + to reside), người làm ‘servant, help, staff’ (person + to work), bàn là = bàn úi ‘iron’ (table + to press), bóng chuyền ‘volley ball’ (ball + to pass), đôn gánh ‘carrying pole’ (pole + to shoulder), đôn bày ‘lever’ (pole + to pry), xe đạp ‘bicycle’ (vehicle + to kick, pedal), xe kéo ‘rickshaw’ (vehicle + to pull), máy hát ‘gramophone’ (machine + to sing), máy bay ‘plane’ (machine + to fly),

Prior to the French period, the means of conveyance were the palanquin and the sedan chair. In the countryside, where the means of transport were the oxcart (xe bò) for people and the wheelbarrow for small animals, people soon got used to urban conveniences, too, and the bicycle (xe đạp) and the rickshaw (xe kéo, xe tay) slowly gave way to the motorcycle (xe bình-bích, xe mô-tô) and the automobile (xe ô-tô, xe hơi). Because of western influence new words were created to refer to new articles of material culture first introduced in urban centers, and the field of transportation and communication was no exception. New compound nouns include xe cam-nhông (< Fr. camion) or xe (vận-)tái [tái = vận-tái ‘to transport’] ‘truck’, xe buýt ‘bus’ (< Fr. autobus), xe tắc-xi ‘taxi’ (< Fr. taximètre), xe xích-lô ‘pedicab’ (< Fr. cyclo-pousse), xe lam ‘Lambretta scooter’, etc.

It is through this process of compounding that the language has created a wealth of new coinages needed to designate new articles of food and clothing, as well as new tools, machines, contraptions and gadgets. Here are examples of highly descriptive terms used widely in scientific and technical terminology to refer to different machines (máy): máy chém (to behead criminals) ‘guillotine’, máy giặt (to wash clothes) ‘washing machine’, máy đánh trưởng (to beat eggs) ‘eggbeater’, máy xay thịt (to grind meat) ‘meat grinder’, máy rửa bát (to wash eating-bowls) ‘dishwasher’, máy hút bụi (to suck dust) ‘vacuum cleaner’, máy bơm ‘pump’, máy kéo (to pull) ‘tractor’, máy gặt-dập (to reap and thresh) ‘combine harvester’, máy sấy ‘dryer’, máy ra-da ‘radar’, máy tính ‘calculator’, máy tính điện-tử (calculator electronic) ‘computer’, etc.

F-115', `lính thủy đánh bộ ‘soldier water fight land---marine’ (cf. thủy-quân lucr-chiên ‘water-soldier land-fight---navy man fighting on land’).

4.3.2.2. Compound verbs.

In a compound verb, a head may be followed by its direct object or its complement.

A. Verb-Object (V-O) compounds. Below are some examples of Verb-Object compounds:

- ăn cơm ‘to eat, have a meal’ (to eat + rice---the staple), làm việc ‘to work’ (to do, make + job), làm ruộng ‘to engage in farming’ (to work + ricefield), nói chuyện ‘to talk, give a talk’ (to speak + conversation), trả lời ‘to reply’ (to return + words, speech), cảm / cảm ơn ‘to thank’ (to be affected + favor), xin lỗi ‘to apologize’ (to beg + fault), chiều lòng ‘to show movies’ (to project + shadow), trực tiếp ‘to ski’ (to slide, glide + snow), có mặt ‘to be present’ (to have + face), mất mặt ‘to lose face’, đánh giá ‘to evaluate, assess’ (to strike + price), etc.

B. Verb-Complement (V-C) compounds. With its core meaning ‘to eat’, the head verb ăn in the first example above yields as many as fifty compounds, all of which contain an object or a complement. The following examples of idioms would qualify as dictionary entries:

- ăn bám ‘to be a parasite, sponge on...’, ăn cấp ‘to steal, pilfer’, ăn chay ‘to follow a vegetarian diet’, ăn cuộp ‘to hold up’, ăn gian ‘to cheat’, ăn hiếp ‘to bully’, ăn hối-lỗi ‘to take bribes’, ăn không ‘to be idle’, ăn lãi ‘to charge interest’, ăn may ‘to beg for food’, ăn mừng ‘to celebrate’, ăn tiền ‘to take bribes’, ăn trộm ‘to burglarize’, etc.

C. Verb-Result (V-R) compounds. In resultative compounds, the complement denotes the result of the action expressed for instance by the head verb đánh ‘to strike, hit, beat’: đánh đổ ‘to drop, spill’, đánh vỡ ‘to break [glass, cup, bottle]’, đánh gãy ‘to break [stick-like object, pencil], đánh mất ‘to lose [something] through carelessness’, with the verb làm ‘to make, cause to’ substitutable for đánh.

Other examples are:

- bôi nhọ ‘to smear’, bẻ cong ‘to bend [long piece of metal, bamboo or wood]’, uốn cong ‘to curl’, bỏ rơi ‘to drop, abandon’, chặt dứt ‘to chop off, cut [stick, bone, piece of wire], đập tan ‘to smash to pieces’, đánh bại
‘to defeat’, **đẩy lui** ‘to push back, repel’, **gạn dúc khỏi trong** ‘to purify, filter’, **giết chế** ‘to kill’, **lật đổ** ‘to overthrow, topple’, **xẻ rách** ‘to tear to pieces’, **ăn mòn** ‘to corrode’, **soi sáng** ‘to illuminate’, **tẩy sách** ‘to bleach clean’, **xoa dịu** ‘to soothe’, etc.

4.3.2.3. **Compound adjectives.**

A. In a unique idiomatic adjective pattern, the modifying object of the adjective slightly changes the meaning of the head element that precedes it, as in the following examples:

- **ADJ-N** (the modifier is a noun):
  - **nhanh trí** ‘quick in the mind, quick-witted’, **nhanh tay** ‘fast with one’s fingers / hands—agile’, **mát tay** ‘cool with one’s hands—[of physician, healer] competent’, **giàu con** ‘rich in children, to have many children’,
  - **tốt bụng** ‘kind-bellied—kind-hearted’, **mù chữ** ‘blind about letters—illiterate’, **nồng tính** ‘hot-tempered, quick-tempered’, **tốt mà** ‘having a good appearance’, **tinh dõi** ‘good in judging people and things’, etc.

- **ADJ-V** (the modifier is a verb):
  - **dễ chịu** ‘easy to bear—pleasant, comfortable’, **dễ bao** ‘easy to guide—docile’, **dễ chiều** ‘easy to please’, **dễ nuôi** ‘easy to rear/raise’, **chăm học** ‘diligent in study—studious’, **khó ô** ‘difficult in living—under the weather’, **khéo nói** ‘clever in speech—diplomatic’, etc.

- **ADJ-ADJ** (the modifier is another adjective):
  - **xanh thâm** ‘dark blue/green’, **xanh lạt** ‘light blue/green’, **ngọt dịu** ‘sweet and mild—very sweet’, **mát lạnh** ‘cool + cold—very cool’, etc.

- **V-N** (the complement of head verb is a noun):
  - **có tiếng** ‘to have + fame—famous, renowned’, **có gan** ‘to have + liver—daring’, **có cửa** ‘to have + wealth—wealthy’, **có ích** ‘to have + usefulness—useful’, **lằm biến** ‘to act + lazy—lazy’, etc.

B. In some idiomatic compound adjectives, the head element (denoting some characteristic feature) is followed by a restricted intensifier which indicates degree and also conveys the resulting effect:

  - **chết tươi** ‘dead + fresh—dead’, **dột đặc** ‘dumb + solid, i.e. completely ignorant’, **gầy nhöm** ‘gaunt + skinny—emaciated’, **lấm sạch** ‘dirty + clean—soiled’, **dại nhãch** ‘[of meat] very tough’, **nhat phèo** ‘very bland, watery’, **dày áp** ‘chock-full’, **rách bươm** ‘tattered’, **cũ rich** ‘outdated,

C. Among these, color adjectives are of special interest. The adjective trắng ‘white’, for instance, may occur in such compounds as trắng bạch (describing a sick person’s pale skin), trắng bọp (describing the color of well-laundered linen), trắng dã (describing staring eyes that show only the whites), trắng hêu (describing a clean-shaved scalp), trắng lỗp (describing well-bleached white cloth), trắng nhơn (describing a dog’s teeth), trắng non (describing the smooth white of a complexion), trắng phau (describing a sand beach), trắng tinh (describing a sheet of paper), trắng toát (describing a radiant white), trắng treo (describing a fine white complexion), trắng xoá (describing an expanse of white blossom or white clouds), etc.

Other color terms may also be followed by their respective qualifiers, so that different shades of red are indicated in several adjectives like đỏ au, đỏ löm, đỏ ổi, đỏ rực, đỏ ống, etc., just as there are several words like đen dủi, đen lay-lây, đen ngöm, đen nhung-nhục, đen sì, đen thui, etc. to connote different degrees of blackness: since a light complexion is more desirable (especially among women) than a healthy tan, the two adjectives đen sì and đen thui are very negative whereas the complimentary term đen nhung-nhục is used (in traditional Vietnam) to describe a young woman’s shiny-jet blackened teeth— that look like the seeds of a custard apple or cherimoya (Annona squamosa, Annona reticulata).

4.4. More on Sino-Vietnamese

4.4.1. Etymology. We have seen that the language has absorbed a large number of syllable-morphemes borrowed from Chinese to build complex forms through the two processes of affixation and compounding. In formal texts with varying degrees of literary pretensions, compounds and pseudo-compounds containing fully integrated Sino-Vietnamese (Hán-Việt) elements may reach seventy percent of the total vocabulary. Indeed a newspaper article taken at random will show such disyllabic terms as cải-cách ‘change, reform’, hoạt-dộng ‘active; activity’, học-tập ‘to study’, lãnh-tù ‘collar + sleeve,—leader’, mâu-thuần ‘spear + shield,—contradiction’, mĩnh-buch

A native speaker may not be aware of the etymology of each element within the construction. But more sophisticated speakers are able to recognize the meaning of each individual morpheme (= tiếng) in such generalizing compounds as lãnh-tu, mâu-thuân. And such frequently used words as cạm-thú ‘animals’, gia-dinh ‘family’, quốc-gia ‘nation(al)’, giang-son ‘motherland, nation’ can be readily analyzed into their constituents, respectively ‘bird + quadruped’, ‘house + courtyard’, ‘country + family’, and ‘rivers and mountains’.

4.4.2. Word order. Let us look closely at some of those compounds:

Whereas the first two examples (thi-văn, gia-tốc) are coordinate compounds, the remaining examples (all subordinative compounds) show Chinese word order, with the modifier preceding the modified. This is the opposite of Vietnamese word order in attributive constructions that contain a modified followed by its modifier (see 4.3.2). In a concerted effort, linguists and writers appeal for the use of native elements instead of Chinese loanwords, a practice actually followed years ago by such patriotic authors as the fifteenth-century poet Nguyễn Trãi [Nguyễn Đình-Hoà 1975, 1983].
4.4.3. Mixed origin. Some compounds contain either both Chinese-borrowed elements or one Chinese-borrowed and one "native element", the latter actually being just an earlier loanword: tâm-hồn 'soul', lương-tâm 'conscience', bình lính 'soldiers', lính-tráng 'soldiers', in-án 'to print', nuôi-dưỡng 'to nourish, nurture', sức-lực 'strength', gan-dã 'courage, bravery', etc. Of the two constituents of the unique example canh gác 'to guard, protect', the first (canh) is a Chinese loanword, and the second (gác) is borrowed from Fr. garder.

4.4.4. Vietnamese word order. But many Chinese-borrowed V-O (verb-object) compounds strictly follow the Vietnamese order:


These Chinese-borrowed compounds are usually hyphenated, but some writers do not hyphenate them. The average speaker, of course, uses them effectively even though being usually incapable of providing precise information on etymology, hence the frequent confusion, for instance, between yếu-diểm 'vital, important point' on the one hand, and nhược-diểm, the learnèd equivalent of diểm yếu 'weakness', on the other hand.

4.5. Other foreign borrowings.
In addition to the lexical elements borrowed from Chinese, which function much like the bound morphemes that Greek and Latin have contributed to the English language, the lexicon has made use of borrowings from other languages, too:

- from Malay: măng-cut 'mangosteen', sầu-riêng 'durian', cù-lao 'island; chafing dish', xà-lông 'sarong', etc.

- from English: bội 'houseboy', mít-tinh 'meeting, rally', ten-nít 'tennis', bát-kết 'basketball', xố-lây 'volleyball', gôn 'goal; goalkeeper', tầu 'drive', (dành) bốc 'boxing', pô-ke 'poker', ửy-ki 'whiskey', cao-bạ 'cowboy', etc.


Among Chinese loanwords, those borrowed through the spoken dialects of South China denote popular foodstuffs introduced by street vendors or restaurant waiters: chí-má-phù 'sesame dessert soup', lúc-tào-xá 'mung bean dessert soup', tào-phô 'soybean cheese in syrup', xá-xiu 'barbecue pork', lap-xương 'Chinese sausage', mân-thàn 'wonton soup', sủi-cào 'shrimp dumplings in soup', lồ-máy-phàn 'steamed glutinous rice', xi-dâu 'soy sauce', mì-chính 'cooking powder, MSG', etc.


A verb or an adjective often takes a “nominalizer” like việc, sự, cuộc, nội, niêm, tính to yield such definite nouns as việc tranh giáng 'feud, quarrel, dispute' < tranh giáng 'to fight, dispute', sự cần-thân 'cautiousness' < cần-thân 'cautious, careful', cuộc tranh-luân 'debate' < tranh-luân 'to debate', nội buồn 'sadness' < buồn 'sad', niêm vui 'joy' < vui 'merry, fun', tính nhất-quán 'consistency [of an argument]' < nhất-quán 'consistent'. Such nominalizers function like the definite article the, le, la, les in western languages: việc tranh-giáng giữa họ và chủ 'the dispute
between labor [thợ “worker”] and management [chủ “boss”], nội buôn mất nước ‘the sorrow of losing mất one’s country [nuóc’], etc.

Names of objects, tools and the like are often forms with the head cái, the “classifier” normally used for names denoting nonliving things, inanimate objects [as opposed to con, the classifier for living things and animals]: cái ăn cái mặc ‘food and clothing’ [ăn mặc ‘to eat and dress’], cái got bút chỉ ‘pencil sharpener’ [got “to whittle” + bút chỉ “lead pencil”], cái dụng tăm ‘toothpick holder’ [dung “to contain” + tăm “toothpick”], etc.


Furthermore such a noun as máy bay (a loan translation from Cantonese fēigēi > Sino-Vietnamese phi-co ‘flying machine’) has given such combinations as máy bay thám-thính ‘reconnaissance plane’, máy bay trực-thăng or máy bay lên thẳng (trực-thăng = lên thẳng ‘go-up straight’) ‘helicopter’, máy bay oanh-tạc or máy bay ném bom (oanh-tạc = ném bom ‘shell, throw bomb’) ‘bomber’, and many others needed in military discourse.

Sometimes, a “native” base (originally a Chinese loanword) such as kính ‘eye glass(es), spectacles’, xe ‘vehicle’, súng ‘firearm’ is combined with a modifier which may be of Chinese or French origin:

4.7. Unanalyzed forms.
Finally it is necessary to mention, next to a few scores of reduplications that can be traced back to Chinese (bàng-hoàng ‘dazzled, stunned’, bỗi-hội ‘to fret, worry’, bồn-ba ‘to scurry, tramp about through thick and thin’, do-dư ‘to hesitate, waver’, lôi-lạc ‘outstanding, eminent’, thưng-dưng ‘leisurely, calm’), a small number of two-syllable words which cannot be easily analyzed into their meaningful constituents:


4.8. Concluding remarks about the unit called tiếng.
The grammatical unit called tiếng (một), which is comparable to the morpheme (hình-vi) in Western languages, is also coterminous with the syllable (âm-tiết). That is why some authors have called it a morphosyllable (hình-tiết), whose grammatical function is to help structure a larger lexical unit—the word (từ). We have encountered monosyllabic simple words as well as polysyllabic compound words. The latter are most often disyllabic and formally fit into one of the three broad categories: derivatives through reduplication, derivatives through affixation, or compounds. But unlike the English syllable, a Vietnamese syllable can functionally occur either by itself or in combination with others, or in interlocking constructions. This is certainly the most salient feature of Vietnamese morphology, a feature whose presence will be duly emphasized in later discussions of different syntactic structures.
5.0 Parts of Speech.

A. Some earlier classifications
With the exception of some early analysts like M. Grammont and Lê Quang Trinh [1912], who denied the existence of parts of speech in Vietnamese, students of the language have all tried to distinguish various parts of speech, that is, word classes. Among the early grammarians, Aubaret [1868], Trường Vĩnh Kỳ [1883], P.-G. Vallot [1905], etc. offered classificatory schemes which were patterned after the traditional French model. For instance, Vallot [1905] distinguished ten “parties du discours” : substantives, articles, adjectives, pronominals, pronouns, verbs, prepositions, adverbs, conjunctions and interjections. The school grammar by Trần Trọng-Kim, Bùi Kỳ & Phạm Duy-Khiêm [1940] discriminated no less than thirteen classes. (Trà-Ngân) Lê-Ngọc Vương [1943] listed eight classes, and Bùi Đức Tịnh first listed eight classes [1952] and later nine classes [1966].


In his dissertation on Le Parler Vietnamien [1948, rev. 1960], Lê Văn Lý used sets of mots témoins to distinguish four classes: A, B, B’ and C. Once identified, his classes A, B and B’ turned out to be respectively nouns, verbs (of action) and adjectives (or verbs of quality), whereas
all other words, including “witness words”, personal pronouns, numerals and particles are thrown into his C class. His insight is that the labels “nouns”, “verbs” and “adjectives” as well as “pronouns”, “numerals” and “particles” should not be assigned a priori to such and such a group: this is certainly a new and more reliable method, which incidentally had been employed four years before Charles Fries published The Structure of English (1952), which used the same criteria of combinatory possibilities.

Emeneau’s five major word classes are substantives, verbs, conjunctions, final particles and interjections, with the nouns subdivided into classified nouns and nonclassified nouns, classifiers, numerators, demonstrative numerators, personal names and place names, and pronouns [1951].

Honey’s system enables “systematic syntactic statements to be made” and his twelve word classes “are themselves wholly definable in terms of such statements” [1956: 535]. The scheme is not based on notional criteria, but his criteria being “formal, even mechanical,” the categories are stated “in unambiguous terms” [543]. First given simply numbers from 1 to 12, those word classes—modestly offered as “no more than mnemonics”—are: Adjective, Verb, Qualified noun, Qualifier, Unqualified noun, Numeral, Marker of plurality, Personal pronoun, Initial particle, Medial particle, Final particle, and Polytopic particle.

Thompson [1965c, reprint 1987] counts only four major classes: substantives, predicatives, focuses and particles. His substantives include numerals and nominals, with the latter comprising categoricals (or classifiers) and nouns, broken down into relator nouns, mass nouns, indefinite nouns, and item nouns. Under the label “predicatives” are listed negatives and verbals (definitives, comparatives, quantifiers, auxiliaries and verbs—the latter further subdivided into momentary action verbs and extended state verbs). The class of “focuses” is composed of proper names, pronouns, manner focuses, locational focuses and temporal focuses. The particle class includes interjections, sentence particles, clause particles, predicative particles and movable particles.

B. Full words and Empty words
The old classification, due to traditional Chinese grammar, divides the entire lexicon or vocabulary into two broad categories: “full words” (thực-tự) (3.2)
with lexical meaning regarding things and phenomena (as tròi ‘sky’, mua
‘rain’ in Trơi mua ‘It’s raining’, or nó ‘he, she’, trôn ‘to hide’ in Nó trôn
‘He’s hiding’), and “empty words” (hút-tù) with grammatical meaning (rất
‘very’, quá ‘too’, và ‘and’, với ‘together with’, thì ‘in that case, then’, mà
‘which, that’, etc.). The main difference between the two categories is that a
full word can serve as either the subject (= topic) or the predicate (= com-
ment) of a sentence [see Chapters 10 and 11], whereas an empty word
cannot. Empty words can only combine with a full word to make up a
phrase, for example dang ‘in the process of’ within the predicate of Trồi
dang mua ‘It’s raining right now’, or to express a syntactic relationship, as
in Áo quan tôi bị uốt hêt (shirt pants I/me suffer wet finish) ‘My clothes
were all wet’.

Chinese grammarians further differentiated on the one hand, between
thực-tù, real “full words”—like nouns—and bàn-thực-tù, “semi-full words”
---like verbs and adjectives, and on the other hand, between hút-tù, real
“empty words”---like adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions---and bàn-hút-tù,
“semi-empty words”---like final particles and reduplicating derivatives
[Trần, Bùi & Phạm 1943: v].

At any rate, “full words” or “content words” as an open class far
outnumber “empty words” or “function words”. But “empty words” occur
with greater frequency and indeed make up closed classes, in the sense that
newly created nouns, verbs and adjectives may be added to the lexicon of
any language, whereas there is hardly a new preposition or interjection.

C. Further division
In order to reach an acceptable classification, we will try not to rely on
linguistic feeling, but to rely on contextual environment, that is, we will try to
find objective evidence of combinatory possibilities of such and such a word.
(1) Full words can be usefully divided into two broad syntactic classes:
substantives and predicatives. Suppose a foreign student of Vietnamese
who wants to comment on an orange he/she is eating says *Quá cam nay là
ngon (fruit orange this be delicious) for ‘This orange is delicious’. The
teacher will correct him/her thus, “You don’t need là. Just say Quá cam
nay ngon.” (fruit orange this delicious). On another occasion the same
student says Quá dó buôi with the intended meaning ‘That fruit is a pomelo’.
This time the teacher will offer Quả đỗ là (quả) buội. (fruit that equal fruit pomelo). If the student scratches his/her head, the teacher can explain that when the predicative is an adjective like ngon, you don’t need to translate is as là --- because “to be” is already built-in as part of ngon --- but when the predicative is a noun like (qua) buội, then you need to use the copula or identificational verb là.

Thus we have a class of words (like ngon ‘delicious’, chua ‘sour’) which can serve as predicate, and another class (like buội ‘grapefruit, pomelo’, cam ‘orange’) which can also serve as predicate, but only when introduced by là. Members of another class (những, các ‘pluralizer’, mỗi ‘each’, mọi ‘every’, etc.) always occur before nouns, for instance, and yet another smaller class includes words like b.lang ‘by means of’, bôi ‘by’, etc., which never stand alone.

Two criteria are needed for our search: we will rely both on meaning and on contextual environment, and we consider word classes (or parts of speech) as lexico-grammatical categories. As a matter of fact, before deciding in what basket to put a given word, we will look at both its meaning and its syntactic behavior, and ask: (1) what is its general meaning?, (2) what is its syntactic relationship to surrounding elements?, (3) what is its function in the whole utterance?, and (4) how is it structured?

Let us first consider the three major classes (nouns, verbs, adjectives) in terms of the meaning of each of their respective members. Nouns carry the broad meaning of things, concepts and phenomena. Verbs generally refer to activities and processes, and adjectives are verbs of quality (“stative verbs”), as we will see later.

When two full words co-occur, there results a predication, a meaningful sentence, which, as briefly pointed out in 1.11, consists of two essential constituents---the “subject” announcing a topic and the “predicate” providing a comment on that topic.

In the following examples:

Trời mưa. (sky rain) ‘It’s raining.’
Tuyết xuống. (snow descend) ‘The snow is falling.’
Chó sủa. (dog bark) ‘The dog was barking.’
Com ngon. (rice delicious) ‘The meal was delicious.’
trời, tuyệt, chó, com are nouns serving as subject in each sentence, whereas mua, xuống, sửa are verbs serving (like ngon, an adjective) as predicate.

Let us next consider these two sentences:

*Cự Hoàng Xuân-Hân là một học-giá kiệt-xuất.* (greatgrandfather HXH be/equal one study-man outstanding) ‘Mr. HXH was an outstanding scholar.’

*Họ bàn-cùng-hoa dân quê.* (they poor-make people countryside) ‘They pauperized the peasants.’

The make-up of the word học-giá tells us right away that it is a noun (containing the nominalizing suffix -giá ‘person, -er’) (p. 63), just as the structure of the word bàn-cùng-hoa tells us that it is a verb (containing the verbalizing suffix -hoa ‘change, become’) (p. 65).

(2) Empty words can be subdivided into adverbs (phô-tù) and connectives (quan-hê-tù). An adverb expresses categories of tense, status or degree:

Trời sê mua. ‘It will rain.’

Trời dã mua rồi. ‘It has already started to rain.’

Tháng này mua nhiều quá. ‘It has rained so much this month.’

Cam này rát ngọt. ‘These oranges are very sweet.’

An adverb (or auxiliary) such as sê ‘shall, will’, dã ‘anterior’, rồi ‘already’, nhiều ‘much, many’, quá ‘too, excessively’, rát ‘very’ cannot serve as subject or predicate; it merely takes part in the composition of phrases as a helping word or a modifier.

A connective manifests a relationship between the two centers of an additive phrase—two words standing on equal footing (as in Giáp và Ât ‘Giáp and Ât’)---or between the center of a phrase and its determiner (as in chó của tôi ‘my dog’) or between two basic sentences (as in Trời mua // thì tôi không đi. ‘If it rains, I won’t go.’).

The connective của ‘property; of’ has usually been called a preposition (giôí-tù), and the connective và ‘and’ or thì ‘then, in that case’ is called a conjunction (liên-tù) in earlier grammars.

One class which lies on the boundary between full words and empty words is represented by such substitutes as nó ‘he, she’ --- with the usual label “pronoun”, and thê ‘to be so, thus’ --- a sort of “pro-verb”.

PARTS OF SPEECH

87
Compare Giáp luời. ‘Giáp is lazy.’ with Nô luời. ‘He’s lazy.’ Ăt cúng thé. ‘Ăt is lazy, too.’ The word nó refers to (or points at) someone in particular [the person named Giáp is called its “antecedent”], and the word thé refers to the state of being lazy. Since the class meaning is to highlight the semantic and grammatical value of a phrase—although we do not have quite a full-fledged word—the label “substitute” (dại-tử) (see 6.3) seems to be more appropriate than the old name đại-danh-tử, which merely means ‘a word that replaces a noun’.

(3) Finally, there are some words that do not quite belong with the full words or with the empty words. Indeed a word in this third class cannot serve as subject or as predicate, nor can it function as the center of a phrase or as the “satellite” of the center within a phrase. This class consists of mood markers (tiêu-tử tinh-thái) which fulfill “the role of traffic lights” [Nguyễn Kim Than 1963: 152] and which include two subclasses—“particles” (discussed in 7.3) and “interjections” (discussed in 7.4). In addition to initial particles like chính, cà, denn, those occurring as “final particles” (ngũ-khí-tử) like ș, à, ü, nhé, chiî, etc. express the speaker’s attitude: deference, surprise, doubt, irony, assertion, etc. On the other hand, vocatives, responses, exclamations, complaints, curses, etc. make up a small class of “interjections” (câm-thán-tử) like òi, cî, chà, úi chà,vation, etc.

Using criteria of meaning and of distribution, we will find it practical to subdivide the substantive class into regular nouns (with a subclass of categoricals or classifiers) and locatives or position nouns [see below].

As for predicatives, they include “functive verbs”, which can be identified by means of the preceding exhortative hây, and “stative verbs” or “adjectives”, which can be preceded by rất, but not by hây.

We will now proceed to the examination of each word class and subclass.

5.1. Nouns (danh-tử)

5.1.1 Meaning

This large, open class of substantives includes words which possess a general lexical meaning and denote concrete things as well as abstract notions.
5.1.1.1 Nouns that name persons, animals, plants or objects:
- ông 'grandfather', bà 'grandmother', cha 'father', mẹ 'mother', anh 'older brother', em 'younger sibling', hoc-sinh 'student', thày giáo 'teacher, master', Nguyễn Trãi, Đoàn Thị Điểm, etc.
- gà 'chicken', vịt 'duck', trâu 'water buffalo', bò 'ox', chó 'dog', mèo 'cat', chim 'bird', cá 'fish', dê 'goat', cừu 'sheep', hổ 'tiger', báo 'leopard', etc.
- cỏ 'grass', cây 'plant, tree', chuỗi 'banana', cam 'orange', dứa 'coconut', xoài 'mango', mít 'jackfruit', mang-cút 'mangosteen', hoa 'flower', quả 'fruit', etc.
- giường 'bed', tủ 'cupboard, cabinet, closet', bàn 'table, desk', ghế 'chair', áo 'shirt, coat', quần 'trousers', giấy 'paper', bút 'pen', bát 'eating bowl', đĩa 'dish, plate', dĩa 'chopsticks', thia 'spoon', etc.

5.1.1.2 Nouns that denote natural and social phenomena:
- trời 'sky', đất 'earth', trăng 'moon', sao 'star', ngày 'day', đêm 'night', sáng 'morning', tôi 'evening', gió 'wind', sương 'dew; frost', mưa 'rain', nắng 'sunshine',
- lúa 'cereal; rice', gạo 'uncooked rice', ngô 'corn', khoai 'sweet potato', cối xay 'rice mill', cối giã 'rice mortar', cơm 'cooked rice', sản-phẩm 'product', làng 'village', xóm 'hamlet', quán 'county', huyện 'district', phủ 'prefecture', tỉnh 'province', đoàn-thổ 'group', cơ-quan 'organ, agency', bộ 'ministry, department', etc.


5.1.2 Grammatical behavior.

A noun can occur following a numeral (một '1', hai '2', mấy = vài 'a few'), a pluralizer (những = các 'the various'), and/or preceding a demonstrative (này 'this', ấy = dò 'that', kia 'yonder'):

một / hai / mấy / vài _______ nay / ay / do / kia
những / các _______
Thus, the noun con ‘animal’ can enter such expressions as môt con, hai con, vài con, ba con này, mây con ấy, nhũng con dỗ, các con kia.

Within a simple sentence, the noun trâu ‘water buffalo’ can function either as subject (in Trâu ăn cỏ. (eat grass) ‘The water buffalo is grazing.’) or as modifier (of thit ‘meat’ in Nô thích ăn thit trâu. ‘He likes to eat water buffalo meat.’).

5.1.3 Noun subclasses.

A. Proper nouns vs. common nouns.


A personal name consists of three elements: the family or clan name (ho), the middle name (tên đệm) and the given name (tên riêng) occurring in that order --- Nguyên Văn Nam, Trần Thị Mỹ. Sometimes the middle name is absent: Lê Lợi, Nguyên Trái, Nguyễn Du, Nguyễn Khuyên, Bùi Kỳ, Nguyễn Lân. The middle name may go with the clan name to make up a compound family name: Dặng-Trần, Tôn-thất (‘royal family’), Nguyễn-Phúc, Ngô-Dinh, Nguyễn-Khoa, etc. The middle name may indicate gender: Thi is found only in women’s names, although at the beginning, it merely meant ‘family, clan’ so that Trần-thi simply means ‘(So-and-So) of the Trần family’. [Family books often mention Thị-Thuận, Thị-Thai, etc.]

Compound names such as (Dương) Quang-Hàm, (Hoàng) Xuân-Hân, (Hồ) Xuân-Hương, (Lê) Mỹ-Khuê, etc. are all literary names chosen early by the child’s parents or grandparents. It is therefore incorrect to break up such compound names as (Trần Thi) Hương-Lan ‘Fragrant Orchid’, (Nguyễn Thi) Mỹ-Hương ‘Pretty Rose’, (Trương Thị) Bach-Cúc ‘White Chrysanthemum’, (Dáng Thi) Đỗ-Quyên ‘Azalea’, (Phạm) Tưởng-Vi ‘Hedgerose’, etc. into monstrosities like Lan Hương, Hương Mỹ, Cúc Bach,
Quyen Do, Vi Tuong, etc.  [A semiliterate person may guess that Lan-Hương, spelled with the appropriate diacritics, means ‘Orchid Scent’, different from Hương-Lan ‘Fragrant Orchid’.]  

A writer often chooses a pen name or pseudonym (bút-danh, bút-hiệu), a style name or courtesy name (tự), and is given a posthumous name (tên thuy).  The poet Nguyễn Khắc-Hiệu (1888-1939) called himself Tấn-Dạ because his native province of Sơn-tây boasts of the Tấn mountain and the Đạ river.  


A proper name cannot be numerated: one cannot say for example *hai Nguyên Du, except when two individuals have the same name.  In the rare (but genuine) case of two individuals living in the same city block of Saigon in the early 1960s and having exactly the same name, a legitimate question could be  

“Đường Công-ly có hai Nguyễn Đình Hoà, ông muốn kiểm Hoà nào?”  

(road Công-ly has two NDH, gentleman want search Hoà which)  

‘There are two men named NDH on Công-ly Street, which one are you looking for?’  

Unlike generalizing common nouns (nhà-cửa ‘house + door—houses; housing’, gà-quế ‘chicken + chicken—fowl’, trâu-bò ‘water buffalo + ox—cattle), which cannot be numerated or classified, simple common nouns can take both a numeral and a classifier in the noun phrase structure [ NUMERAL -- CLASSIFIER -- NOUN ]: hai quả cam (two fruit orange) ‘two oranges’, ba tòa nhà (three seat house) ‘three buildings’.  

B. Common nouns can be divided into several subclasses: item nouns, collective nouns, unit nouns, mass nouns, time nouns, abstract nouns, categorical nouns (or classifiers), and locative (or position) nouns.
1. Item nouns. Such nouns name persons, animals, plants or objects
[(5.1.1.1)] (for instance anh ‘older brother’, chó ‘dog’, cam ‘orange’, bàn ‘table’, etc.) and fill the central position in the noun phrase with a NUM(eral) and a classifier (N’) on the left, and a demonstrative (DEM) on the right:

\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
-2 & -1 & 0 & +1 \\
\text{NUM} & N’ & N & \text{DEM} \\
\text{hai} & \text{con} & \text{chó} & \text{áy} \\
\text{two} & \text{animal} & \text{dog} & \text{that} & \text{‘those two dogs’} \\
\text{máy} & \text{cá} & \text{bàn} & \text{này} \\
\text{few} & \text{thing} & \text{table} & \text{this} & \text{‘these few tables’} \\
\text{các} & \text{quả} & \text{cam} & \text{kìa} \\
\text{plural} & \text{fruit} & \text{orange} & \text{yonder} & \text{‘those oranges over there’}
\end{array}
\]

2. Collective nouns. Unlike item nouns (danh-tù đon-thế), collective nouns (danh-tù tông-thế) like trâu-bò ‘cattle’, ruộng-nưỡng ‘fields’ cannot be preceded either by a classifier like cái, con, a numeral like hai, ba, or a pluralizer like các, những. But a collective noun like quân-chủng ‘masses’ can take a totalizer like toàn-thể ‘the entire body, the whole’.

3. Unit nouns (danh-tù đon-vi). These are nouns which further determine item nouns denoting materials that exist en masse like đất ‘earth’, bún ‘mud’, cát ‘sand’, nước ‘water’, com ‘rice’, thịt ‘meat’, rượu ‘wine’, đồng ‘copper’, sắt ‘iron’, giấy ‘paper’, mỹc ‘ink’, etc. These matters or substances have their individuality, but each mass noun has to occur in some kind of calculation or measurement, with such units as thước ‘meter’, tac ‘decimeter’, phân ‘centimeter’, lì ‘millimeter’, cân ‘kilogram’, lít ‘liter’, mâu ‘mow’, tấn ‘ton’, etc. One cannot normally say *hai sūa, *ba thit, *năm dát, but the well-formed phrases are for example một thước vái ‘one meter of cloth’, hai lít sūa ‘two liters of milk’, ba cân thit ‘three kilograms of meat’, năm mâu dát ‘five mows of land’, etc. Forms like thước, tác, phần, lì, cân, lít, mâu, tấn, etc. are measurement units of length, weight, capacity, area, etc.

There are also unit nouns used in approximate measuring, as in một năm cát ‘a handful of sand’, một ngụm rượu ‘a gulp of wine’, một hộp nước lạnh ‘a gulp of cold water,’ một đùm / nhùm műi ‘a pinch of salt’.
The difference between a container used as temporary unit of capacity measurement and the content of such a vessel is worth pointing out: *một chén nước mắm ‘a cup(ful) of fish sauce’ vs. *một cái chén ‘a cup’, *hai bát cháo ‘two bowl(ful)s of rice gruel’ vs. *hai cái bát và hai dôi dĩa ‘two eating bowls and two pairs of chopsticks’, *một b咣 ruộng ‘a gourdful of wine’ vs. *một quää b咣 ‘a bottle-gourd, a calabash’.

Some nouns denote units of time: *giờ ‘hour’, *phút ‘minute’, *giây ‘second’, etc. Ex: *giờ giờ-nghiểm ‘hour of curfew’, *phút m社会-niêm ‘minute of silence’.


Finally, a number of unit nouns started out as verbs: *một gói kéo ‘a package of candy’ (from gói ‘to wrap’), *một gánh lúa ‘a poleload of (unhusked) rice’ (from gánh ‘to carry in containers hanging at both ends of a shoulder pole’), *một ệm sách ‘an armlload of books’ (from ệm ‘to hug, embrace’), *một xâu cá ‘a string of fishes’ (from xâu ‘to string (loose items) together’).

4. Mass nouns (*đan-tữ chât-liệu). Of mass nouns, already mentioned in the preceding section, some ent special collocations containing a “count noun” which denote a unit of precise (conventional) or vague measurement: *một lượng/cẩy vàng ‘a tael of gold’, *một cục vàng ‘a lump of gold’, *một thời bạc ‘an ingot of silver’, *ba nỏ com ‘three pot(ful)s of rice’, *hai miếng thit heo (two piece meat pig) ‘two pieces of pork’, *hai mấu bánh mì (cake wheat) ‘two pieces of bread’, *một b跄 (gourd) không-khí ‘an atmosphere’, *một xe gạch ‘a cartful / truckload of bricks’, etc.

A mass noun can be followed by a specifier n.partial, áy, đó, kia: xăng n.partial ‘this gasoline’, although a categorical noun like thứ ‘variety’, loại ‘kind’ may precede it, as in Loại xăng n.partial tốt hơn. (good superior) ‘This gasoline is better’.

Its co-occurrence with a unit (count) noun can best be illustrated this way: *một con thit ‘one animal meat’, *một cái đường ‘one thing sugar’, *một cái rượu ‘one thing wine’ are ungrammatical, but *một lượng thit
94 VIETNAMESE

‘100 grams of meat’, môt càn dường ‘a kilogram of sugar’, môt côc rụu = môt ly rụu ‘a glass of wine’ are well-formed.


Besides the demonstrative specifiers này, ấy, đó, kia, nó, only the specifier này follows ban, hồi, lúc, khi as in ban này = hồi này = lúc này = khi này ‘a moment ago, a while ago, just now, Fr. tout-à-l’heure’.

Time nouns can be directly numerated as in hai ngày ‘two days’, ba đêm ‘three nights’, dám bừa ‘a few days’, mười thế-kí (= mười thế-kỳ) ‘ten centuries’, dời khi ‘a couple of times’.


7. Categorical nouns (danh-tù loai-thê). These lexemes have been given different names: classifiers, measures, counters, quantifiers, “spécificatifs”,
PARTS OF SPEECH

95

etc. They refer to natural units of things and serve to individualize them as to animateness and as to shape (in the case of inanimate, non-living things). The elements they co-occur with are the same guide-words found next to regular nouns. Their common Vietnamese label is *loại-tù,* but such terms as *tiền-danh-tù* "pre-nouns" [Phan Khôi] and *phó-danh-tù* "co-nouns" (N’ in formulas) have been proposed [Nguyễn Lân, Nguyễn Kim Thân].

In this book, the terms “categorical nouns” and “classifiers” are used interchangeably. The two big subclasses are those used for nouns denoting non-living things and those used for nouns denoting living things, the two general classifiers (N’) being respectively *cái* and *con.*

7A. These categoricals differ from item nouns in that they cannot fulfill a naming function, but must occur in a nominal phrase, whose central element is an item noun and which also contains a numeral. Thus one cannot say *hai chim* or *ba bút:* the well-formed noun phrase should be

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NUM</th>
<th>N’</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>DEM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hai con chim dó</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>two animal bird that ‘those two birds’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ba cái bút này</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>three thing pen this ‘these three pens’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The N’ *cái* may be replaced by a specific classifier referring to a given shape, substance, etc. of the non-living thing under discussion: *chiếc giày* ‘the shoe’, *quả bong-bông* ‘the balloon’, *lá thư* ‘the letter’, *bức tranh* ‘the painting’, etc. But *cái* must be replaced by the specific classifier meaning ‘roll’ in the case of *quyển sách = cuốn sách* ‘the book’.

7B. In the absence of a numeral, the N’ - N - DEM phrase refers to the particular item under discussion, with *một* ‘one’ understood: *chiếc giày nào?* ‘which shoe?’, *chiếc giày này* ‘this shoe’, *quả bong-bông ấy* ‘that balloon’, *lá thư đó* ‘that letter’, *bức tranh kia* ‘the other painting’, *quyển / cuốn sách ấy* ‘that book’, etc. When the context is clear, the N’ performs the role of the pronoun ‘one’: thus in a shoe store the phrases *chiếc nào?, chiếc này, chiếc ấy, chiếc kia* would mean respectively ‘which shoe?’, ‘this one (shoe)’, ‘that one (shoe)’, ‘the one (shoe) over there’, and *chiếc bên*
[bên ‘side’] trái would mean ‘the left shoe’ and chiếc bên phải ‘the right shoe’.

7C. Cái is sometimes used for small insects or birds, especially in literary contexts (cái kiến ‘the ant’, cái cò ‘the egret’, cái vec ‘the crane’), whereas con is also used for certain non-living things that are considered “animate”: con mắt ‘the eye’, con người ‘the pupil [of the eye]’, con dao ‘the knife’, con dâu ‘the seal, the chop’, con tem ‘the postage stamp’, con quay ‘the [spinning] top’, con đường ‘the road’, con sông ‘the river’, con đê ‘the dike’, con sào ‘the pole [for punting]’, con chèo ‘the oar’, con số ‘the digit, figure, number’, con súc-súc ‘the dice, die’, con thò-lò ‘the teetotum’, con thuyền ‘the boat [to row or sail]’, con tàu ‘the (big) boat, the ship’, con thoi ‘the shuttle’, con bài ‘the (playing) card’, etc.

7D. When the head noun (N) denotes a person, the classifier or “co-noun” (N’) would be anh, bà, bác, bắc, cậu, chị, cô, chưởng, chú, dâng, dã, em, lão, mụ, nàng, ngài, người, ông, vị, viên, quan, tay, tên, thằng, etc., as in một ông thư ký ‘one grandfather clerk,—a clerk’, một bà bắc-sĩ ‘one grandmother doctor,—a lady doctor’, một cô y-tá ‘one auntie nurse,—a nurse’, một bác thợ moc ‘one uncle carpenter,—a carpenter’, một anh tài-xẻ ‘one elder brother driver,—a chauffeur’, một nàng / cô tiến ‘a (young) fairy’, một vị anh-hùng ‘a hero’, một vị thần ‘a deity’, một viên lý-trưởng ‘a village mayor’, một thàng lùn ‘a dwarf’, một tên khủng-bọ ‘a terrorist’, etc. The classifiers ngài, vị, viên are honorific, and quan, thằng, tên, etc. are definitely pejorative. [For the use of such terms of family relationship as ông, bà, cô, bác, chú, anh, chị, etc. in address and reference as personal pronouns to show respect for age, learning and social rank, see section 6.3.2.1 on “status” personal pronouns.]. Sometimes the general classifier cái precedes the appropriate special classifier for persons in order to enhance the pejorative connotation, especially in the spoken language: cái thằng chồng em ‘that (good-for-nothing) husband of mine’, cái ông giáo-sư tôc bac [‘hair silver’] do ‘that white-haired teacher over there’. This extra cái has been called “definite article” [Trương Vĩnh Tông 1932: 23] and “superarticle” [Bulteau 1950: 21].
7E. The most frequently found classifiers for nouns denoting specific inanimate things are:

bài [poem, song, speech], bàn [music, statement, declaration], bó [set, machine, book], bông [flower], bức [letter, painting, statue], cây [candle, lamp], chiéc [shoe, chopstick, boat], cuốn [book, notebook], dao [bill, law, amulet], khẩu [gun, rifle, cannon], lá [letter, amulet], món [sum of money, gift, debt, dinner course], nén [culture, civilization, independence], nóc [house], ngón [mountain, flag], ngôi [house, grave], pho [statue, novel], quán [mountain, bomb, grenade, mine], quyển [book, copybook], tấm [photo, heart, bolt], tân [play, drama], thửa [ricefield], toà [mansion, castle, embassy], tô [sheet of paper, drawing], vở [play, opera], etc.

7F. When the classified noun denotes an abstract notion, the classifier may be cái (cái chân, cái thiên, cái my ‘the true, the good and the beautiful’) or cuộc, điều, móc, niềm, nỗi, sự, việc, etc. as in một cuộc đời ‘a life’, một mối tình ‘a love’, một niềm vui ‘a joy’, một nỗi lo-ngai ‘a concern’, một việc nhân-nghĩa ‘a matter of humankindness and righteousness’, etc. [Cf. the role of cái, cuộc, sự, etc. as “nominalizer” in 4.6.]

Some authors consider such constructions as sự lãnh-dạo ‘leadership’, nhà văn ‘writer’, nhà sử-học ‘historian’ to be compound nouns, and one of the many labels given to the numerical word under discussion is even “article” (mão-từ, quân-từ); for a detailed examination and a variety of English labels, see Nguyễn Đình-Hoài 1957: 124-152.

The general categorical cái encroaches upon some special classifiers without making much difference. ‘A receipt’ may be một tờ biên-lai or một cái biên-lai. Another example is một thanh kiếm (thanh ‘slender piece of material’), or một lưỡi kiếm (lưỡi ‘tongue, blade’), or merely một cái kiếm for ‘a sword’. A speaker may use cái before a variety of nouns.

7G. Finally, cái and a few other classifiers (denoting the number of times of an action) may serve as the cognate object of a functive verb: this type of categorical is called a “semelfactive classifier”. Used after a verb of striking, hitting, kicking and the like, or a verb of excretory functions it means ‘so many occurrences’, depending on the numeral. Classifiers other than cái are trận ‘battle, beating, scolding’, quâ ‘fist, punching’, phát
'gun shot; inoculation', nhát (dao) 'knifing, slicing', etc. Here are some examples:

- **tắm một cái** 'to take a bath / shower, bathe once'
- **ỉa** " " 'to have a bowel movement, defecate once'
- **dái** " " 'to pass water, urinate once'
- **tát/vá** " " 'to give a slap, slap once'
- **dám** " " 'to give a punch'
- **dá/dlap** " " 'to give a kick'
- **vụt** " " 'to give a whipping'

Likewise **thủi một quả** 'to punch once', **dánh một trận (dọn) [dọn 'beating']** 'to give a spanking', **măng một trận** 'to give a scolding', **dầm một nhát** 'to stab once', **ngủ một giấc** 'to take a nap', **bàn một phát** (súng) [súng 'gun'] 'to fire a (gun) shot', **chích một mũi** [mũi 'needle'] 'to give (or get) an injection', **di một chuyến** 'to take a trip', etc. with *măng một mảng* considered anomalous.

### 5.2. Locatives (phương-vị-từ)

These interesting words are position words or localizers, since they denote---literally or figuratively---the (spatial and temporal) locations of things. Items like **trên** 'space above', **duôi** 'space below', **trong** 'inside', **ngoài** 'outside', **trước** 'front', **sau** 'back', **đầu** 'head, beginning', **cuối** 'end', **giữa** 'middle', **đông** 'east', **tây** 'west', **nam** 'south', **bắc** 'north', **bên** 'side', **hướng** 'direction', **phía** 'side', **phương** 'direction', **dàng** = **mặt** 'side, face', etc. all behave like substantives [Nguyễn Đình-Hoà 1980: 112-114], so have been called “relator nouns” [Thompson 1965c: 43]. In earlier grammars they are treated as “prepositions” (giới-từ), but some recent analyses have ably demonstrated their underlying substantival value as locatives, localizers or position words [Martini 1958; Nguyễn Kim Thân 1963]. We also think that they deserve to be put in an autonomous class next to the class of regular nouns.

### 5.2.1. Those lexemes can combine among themselves, as in **phía trên, phia dưới, bên trên, bên dưới, phia trong, phia ngoài, bên trong, bên ngoài, phia trước, phia sau, phương đông, phương tây, phương nam, phương bắc, hướng đông, hướng tây, hướng nam, hướng bắc, với trong, ngoài, trước, sau** also occurring with **dàng**.
5.2.2. Having absolute meaning, they cannot be numerated (except bên, hướng, phía, phương, đang, mặt). But they freely take such a DEM like này, ấy, đó, kia: trên này ‘up here’, trên ấy ‘up there’, trên kia ‘further up there’, dưới này ‘down here’, dưới ấy ‘down there’, dưới kia ‘further down there’, trong này ‘in here’, trong ấy ‘in there’, trong kia ‘further in there’, ngoài này ‘out here’, ngoài đồ ‘out there’, ngoài kia ‘further out there’. We have seen (pp. 43-44) that bên ấy, trong ấy, ngoài ấy, trên ấy become respectively bên ‘that side, over there’, trong ‘in there’, ngoài ‘out there’, trên ‘up there’ in the Saigon dialect.

Locatives denoting the four cardinal points (đông ‘east’, tây ‘west’, nam ‘south’, bắc ‘north’) cannot take any such specifying demonstrative.

5.2.3. At first sight an item like trên, dưới, trong, ngoài may seem comparable syntactically to the preposition ở ‘at, in’ (from the verb ở ‘to be located at’).

Suppose we have a prepositional phrase like ở trong nhà ‘inside the house’. We can add an adverbial like ngay ‘right’, mãi tận, tít mãi ‘all the way’ following ở: ở ngay trong nhà ‘right inside the house’, ở mãi tận trong nhà, ở tít mãi trong nhà ‘all the way inside the house, deep inside the house’. However, no adverbial can be inserted between the locative trong and its complement, the substantive nhà.

5.2.4. Indeed each of these lexemes designates a different “portion of space”: “placed before a substantive, the latter becomes the complement of the locative: trong nhà ‘the inside of the house’, trên núi ‘the space on top of the mountain’.” “Then within a sentence the group serves as a circumstantial syntagm—‘inside the house, in the house’, ‘on top of the mountain, on the mountain’.” [Martini 1958: 341] We can add other examples: ngoài ngõ ‘out(side the house) in the alley’, ngoài biển ‘(the open space) at sea’, ngoài khoi ‘(the open space) offshore’, dưới nhà ‘the space downstairs, on the floor below’, dưới đất ‘on the ground (below),’ trước nhà ga [nhà ‘house’ + ga < Fr. gare ‘station’] ‘(the space) in front of the station’, sau nhà tắm [nhà ‘house’ + tắm ‘to bathe’] ‘(the space) behind the bathhouse’.

“When occurring after a substantive, those same words become complements of that noun: bên trong ‘the inside,—the interior’, mien trên ‘the upper region,—the highlands’.” [Martini, loc. cit.] We can add other
examples: bên ngoài ‘the outside, the exterior’, môi trên ‘the lip which occupies the space above, the upper lip’, môi dưới ‘the lip which occupies the space below, the lower lip’, ngăn trên ‘the upper drawer’, cửa trước ‘the front door’, cửa sau ‘the back door’.

5.2.5. Beside serving as “place-words”, trong, ngoài, trên, dưới, trước, sau are also used to define a period of time, and so can be called “time-words” [see Nguyễn Đình-Hòa 1971, Colloquial Vietnamese, Grammar note 13.2 on “locators”, p. 284, and Pattern Drill F, p. 283]. Some examples of temporal locatives: (nơi) trong nửa giờ [in inside half hour] ‘within half an hour’, trong vòng ba ngày [inside circle three day] ‘within three days’, trên năm tiếng đồng-hồ [space-above five sound copper-vase, i.e. water clock] ‘over five hours’, trước tám giờ [before eight hour] ‘before 8 o’clock’, sau 5 giờ 30 chiều [after 5 hour 30 afternoon] ‘after 5:30 pm’, trước kia [before yonder] ‘previously, before, formerly’, sau này [behind this] ‘hereafter, later’.

5.2.6. A locative can serve as sentence subject:

Trong trang // ngoài xanh. ‘Its inside is white; its outside is green’---from the riddle about a quid of betel prepared with a rolled betel leaf and containing some slaked lime.

Trong dom-dóm // ngoài bó đuốc. [bó ‘bundle’ + đuốc ‘straw torch’] ‘The inside is a firebug while the outside is a torch’---the saying about an impressive appearance of affluence that hides poverty and hardship.

5.2.7. The four locatives trong, ngoài, trên, dưới even acquire metaphorical meaning to refer to people or organizations as subject in the sentence:

Trên nói // dưới nghe. [nói ‘to speak’, nghe ‘to listen’] ‘(When) the upper echelon says something, the lower one listens.’

Trên dưới một lòng. [một ‘one’, lòng ‘innards; heart’] ‘The leader and his followers are of the same heart.’

Trong đánh ra // ngoài đánh vào. [inside strike exit, outside strike enter] ‘Some attacked from inside, others attacked from outside.’

Trong ấm // ngoài ấm. [inside warm, outside calm] ‘Peace reigns at home and abroad.’

Keeping in mind the administrative hierarchy, a villager refers to the office of the district chief as trên huyện, and a district chief looks up to the
office of the province chief as trên tỉnh. Conversely, a mandarin (or official) at the provincial [tỉnh] level would refer to an officeholder at the (lower) district [huyện] level as dưới huyện, and the district chief in turn would refer to the village level as dưới xã [xã ‘commune, village’].

Of course, altitude is relevant: a Saigon inhabitant speaks of the mountain resort of Dalat as trên Dà-lạt, trên ấy, trên đồi, trên kia ‘up there’, and someone standing on Mount Fan Si Pan (Hoàng-liên-sơn) would refer to the lowlands as dưới ấy, dưới đồi, dưới kia ‘down there’.

In both the colloquial language and the written language, latitude within the country is also relevant. Thus an area south of Hanoi would take the locative trong: trong Thanh-hoa, trong Huế, trong Đà-nẵng, trong Sài-gòn, or trong Trung ‘in the central part’, trong Nam ‘in the south, down south’. Somebody located in South Vietnam would refer to Central Vietnam as ngoài Trung ‘in central Vietnam’, ngoài Huế, ngoài Đà-nẵng, and to localities in former Tonkin as ngoài Bắc ‘in the north, up north’, ngoài Hà-nội ‘up in Hanoi’.

5.2.8. A further note regarding those locative nouns: the four phrases trên thư-viện, dưới thư-viện, trong thư-viện, ngoài thư-viện all mean ‘in the library’. However what is taken into consideration here is the position of the speaker vis-a-vis the library floor: the speaker says trên thư-viện when he/she is located on a lower floor, and dưới thư-vién when he/she is on an upper floor. The nominal phrase trong thư-vién means ‘in(side) the library’ with the speaker standing either inside or outside. As to the phrase ngoài thư-vién, it does not mean ‘out of the library’, but rather ‘out there, in the library’ with the speaker, for instance a college student, sitting in his dormitory room ---a relatively narrower and darker place than the library, which is a relatively more spacious and better lit place.

5.3. Numerals (số-tử)
The class of numerals, which tell you “how many and which in order”, serve as modifiers in a noun phrase. It is useful to distinguish between cardinal numbers and ordinal numbers.

5.3.1. The cardinal numbers can express a precise quantity in the decimal system (một ‘1’, hai ‘2’, ba trăm ‘300’, bốn nghìn ‘4,000’, etc.) or
only an approximate quantity (một hai ‘one or two’, một vài ‘a few’, mười lăm ‘ten to fifteen’). They may be simple numbers from one to ten (một, hai, ba, bốn, năm, sáu, bảy, tám, chín, mười) and such nouns as tám ‘dozen’, chục ‘group of ten’, trăm ‘100’, nghìn = ngàn ‘1,000’, vạn = muôn ‘10,000’, triệu ‘million’, tỷ ‘billion’.

The word đôi ‘pair, couple’ may substitute for hai ‘2’ in some expressions: mười tám đôi mười ‘18 to 20 years of age’, một đôi khi ‘once or twice, sometimes’.

Compound numbers go from eleven to one hundred: 11 mười một, 12 mười hai, 13 mười ba, 14 mười bốn, 15 mười năm, 16 mười sáu, 17 mười bảy, 18 mười tám, 19 mười chín, 20 hai mười, 21 hai mười một, 22 hai mười hai, 23 hai mười ba, 24 hai mười bốn, 25 hai mười năm, 30 ba mười, 31 ba mười một, 32 ba mười hai, 33 ba mười ba, 34 ba mười bốn, 35 ba mười năm, 40 bốn mười, 41 bốn mười một, 42 bốn mười hai, 43 bốn mười ba, 44 bốn mười bốn, 45 bốn mười năm, 50 năm mười, 51 năm mười một, 52 năm mười hai, 53 năm mười ba, 54 năm mười bốn, 55 năm mười năm, 60 sáu mười, 61 sáu mười một, 62 sáu mười hai, 63 sáu mười ba, 64 sáu mười bốn, 65 sáu mười năm, 70 bảy mười, 71 bảy mười một, 72 bảy mười hai, 73 bảy mười ba, 74 bảy mười bốn, 75 bảy mười năm, 80 tám mười, 81 tám mười một, 82 tám mười hai, 83 tám mười ba, 84 tám mười bốn, 85 tám mười năm, 90 chín mười, 91 chín mười một, 92 chín mười hai, 93 chín mười ba, 94 chín mười bốn, 95 chín mười năm, 100 mười trăm [= mười mười một 10 x 10].

In 3.6.1, we have seen the contraction of hai mười ... into hâm ......, and of ba mười ... into bâm ...... Also một ‘1’ becomes một (rising tone) in ba mười một ‘31’, sáu mười một ‘61’, etc. and mười ‘10’ becomes mười (level tone) in hai mười ‘20’, năm mười hai ‘52’, etc.

The other alternations are between năm ‘5’ and lam, nhăm in mười năm ‘15’, ba mười năm/ nhăm ‘35’, and between ruôi—preceded by a numeral—and ruơi—preceded by a non-numeral (3.6.1.1). Beginning with the forties (bốn mười, năm mười, sáu mười, bảy mười, tám mười, chín mười) if there is a following unit number, then mười may be dropped, especially in rapid speech:


There is no primary word for zero; when it is necessary to discuss this concept, it is called số không (number empty) ‘empty number’, especially in telephone numbers for instance: bốn không tám / năm tám bốn / không bốn chín tám ‘408-584-0498’.

The final head in a numerated phrase refers to the next lower level in the system: hai trăm hai means ‘220’, năm trăm hai means ‘520’, năm nghìn
hai means ‘5,200’ [cf. năm nghìn (không trăm) hai mươi ‘5,020’], and so on. The particle linh (= lè) ‘zero’ indicates that one level (or more) is skipped: hai trăm linh (or lè) hai ‘202’, hai ngàn lè (or linh) hai ‘2,002’, mốt nghìn mốt dăm lè [one thousand one night odd-number] ‘1,001 nights’, etc. Thus the house address 1650 (Công-lý Street), for example, is given out fully as mốt nghìn sáu trăm nam mươi, and the address 1605 (Taylor Drive) will be mốt nghìn sáu trăm linh (or lè) nam.

In order to designate one or several parts of a quantity or a fractionary number, the noun phân ‘part’ is placed behind the numerator and before the denominator: hai phân ba ‘two thirds’, mốt phân tu ‘one fourth, one quarter’, ba phân nam ‘three fifths’, bảy phân mươi ‘seven tenths’, tám mươi lăm phân trăm ‘85%, 85 percent’.

‘A half (1/2)’ is núa or mốt núa: Nó ăn mốt núa quả táo. ‘He ate half the apple.’ ‘Half an hour’ is núa giờ or núa tiếng đồng hồ (half sound clock). Contrast hai giờ ruồi ‘2:30, half past two’ and hai tiếng ruồi ‘two and a half hours’, with ruồi meaning ‘and a half’.

Among quantifying adverbs (mỗi ‘every’, mỗi ‘each’, and từng ‘each [in turn]’), only mỗi and từng occur in combination with mốt: mỗi (mốt) người ‘each person’, từng người (mốt) ‘each person in turn, one by one’.

The equivalents of ‘tens of’, ‘dozens of’, ‘hundreds of’, ‘thousands of’ are respectively hàng chục, hàng tá, hàng trăm, hàng nghìn, with hàng meaning ‘rows of’.

5.3.2. The ordinal numbers (số-từ thứ-tự) indicate rank and order; they require the ordinal designator thứ ‘-th’. Each of the groups thứ nhất ‘first’, thứ nhì, thứ hai ‘second’, thứ ba ‘third’, thứ bốn, thứ tư ‘fourth’, etc. occurs following the head noun that it describes: quyển thứ nhất ‘the first volume’, ngôi nhà thứ hai ‘the second house’, tháng thứ mười ba ‘the 13th month’, etc. Thứ nhì sounds more literary than thứ hai, but only thứ hai ‘the second day (after chủ nhật—‘the Lord’s day, Sunday’)” can be used for ‘Monday’.

Each of the literary equivalents đê-nhất, đê-nhi, đê-tám, đê-tư, đê-ngũ, đê-lục, đê-thất, đê-bát, đê-cửu, đê-thập, etc. precedes the head noun, thus obeying Chinese word order since the numerals occur in their Sino-Vietnamese forms: đê-nhất buồn ‘the No. One sadness’, đê-nhi dắng ‘the

When a cardinal number immediately follows a head noun, it is equivalent to an ordinal: lớp ba ‘third grade’, canh năm ‘the fifth watch of the night’, thế-kì hai mươi mốt ‘the 21st century’, tập hai ‘volume 2, the 2nd volume’, with the ordinal thứ understood.

In the late nineteenth century, time reckoning still made use of this Chinese-borrowed word thứ: giờ thứ 9 for ‘9 o’clock’, giờ thứ hai for ‘2 o’clock’, giờ thứ năm chiều for ‘5 pm’, etc. as in Trường Vĩnh Kỳ’s 1881 travelogue, reprinted in 1929 (cf. chín giờ, hai giờ, năm giờ chiều, respectively in modern Vietnamese).

A numeral can be found after độ ‘degree’, khoảng ‘space’ or chúng ‘approximation’: độ hai mươi người khách ‘approximately 20 guests’, khoảng ba mươi vài ‘roughly three meters of material’, chúng (dô) năm trăm độ-la ‘about US$500’, lởi ngàn đồng ‘around 1,000 piasters’.

5.3.3. While numbers denoting approximate quantities (dăm, dăm ba, mốt vài, vài ba ‘a few’) cannot serve as predicate, those denoting precise quantities can---when they are introduced by the copula là, as in

Trung, Nam, Bắc cùng là môt nhà cả.
(center south north likewise be one house/family all)
‘Whether central, southern or northern, we are just one same family.’

But when some characteristic (like model, age, etc.) is indicated, the copula is not needed before the numeral:

Bốn cái ghế này môt kiểu mà!
(four thing chair this one model I don’t want to repeat)
‘These four chairs are the same model, I told you.’
Cụ ấy tấm mục tử tuổi rơi.
(greatgrandfather that eight ten four year already)
‘He [the old gentleman] is already 84 (years old).’

Con gà nào ba chân hở?
(animal chicken which three feet huh)
‘Which chicken has three legs?’
5.3.4. Numerals are often given the status of a separate word class. However, their grammatical---i.e. syntactic---behavior seems to suggest that they stand somewhere between substantives, on the one hand, and predicatives, on the other hand, and can thus be called “semi-substantives”.
Chapter 6
Parts of Speech (continued)

6.0 Predicatives

In Chapter 5 we became acquainted with the subclasses of substantives (Nouns, N; and Locatives, LOC) and semi-substantives (Numerals, NUM). Typically a noun or a locative can be followed by a demonstrative specifier (DEM) like nay ‘this’, ây = dô ‘that’, kia ‘yonder’, nò ‘other’: e. g. người nay ‘this person’, nhà ây ‘that house’, đường kia ‘the other road’, có dô ‘that young lady’, hôm nò ‘the other day’, etc.

We now turn to the other class of full words (or content words) --- that of predicatives (see 5.0.C). These words can be preceded by đều ‘all’, không ‘not’, or sẽ ‘shall, will’, and also be followed by không? or chuta? to make up an interrogative sentence: e.g. Chúng tôi đều tôi, // nhưng không ăn // và sẽ về ngày. (group I/me all come but NEG eat and shall return immediately) ‘We'll all come, but won't eat and will leave right away.’ Anh ăn không? (elder brother eat or-not) ‘Do you want to eat?’ Chị ăn chưa? (elder sister eat yet) ‘Have you eaten yet?’ On the other hand, a predicative cannot take a demonstrative specifier like nay, ây, dô, kia, which only follows a noun.


The verbs of action are called functive verbs whereas the verbs of quality are called stative verbs. The former are “doing” and “action” words, and the latter describe the nature, quality, condition and state of being of someone or something.
The functive verbs are examined in the first part of this chapter (6.1), and the stative verbs (or adjectives) are taken up in the second part (6.2).

6.1 Verbs (dông-tù)

6.1.1 Meaning
The functive verbs, or just verbs, denote activities like movements, behaviors and processes. Timeless in itself, each of them refers to a specific action or a series of actions. Only the linguistic and situational context provides a clue to relative time. Our functive verbs correspond to the “momentary action verbs”, which Thompson [1965c: 218ff] sets up as distinct from the “extended state verbs”.

6.1.2 Grammatical behavior
6.1.2.1 Both kinds of verbs can freely and directly serve as predicate without là ‘to be’. The main difference between the two kinds is that only functive (i.e. real) verbs can follow the exhortative háy, and only stative verbs can be preceded by a degree marker like rát ‘very’, hoi ‘a little’, khá ‘rather’:

Anh háy ăn đi! (elder brother EXHORTATIVE eat go)
‘Go ahead and eat.’
*Háy trắng. (EXHORTATIVE white)
*Giáp rát ăn. (Giáp very eat)
Giáp rát cao. (Giáp very tall) ‘Giáp is very tall.’

6.1.2.2. A verb like ăn ‘to eat’ can be preceded by an auxiliary like cơn, vẫn, cử (marking continuity), dâ, dang, sê (marking tense), không, chẳng, chà, chua (marking negation), đúng, chó (marking prohibition), or háy (exhortative). These accompanying elements serve as “witness words” or “markers” to help us identify various members of this predicative class:

cön ăn, vẫn ăn, cử ăn,
dâ ăn, dang ăn, sê ăn,
kếm ăn, chăng ăn, chua ăn,
dưng ăn, chó ăn,
háy ăn.
6.1.2.3 Another set of witness words consists of “directional verbs” (such as ra ‘to exit’, vào ‘to enter’, lên ‘to ascend’, xuống ‘to descend’, đi ‘to go’, lại ‘to come’) which may be used as “co-verbs of direction” to further define the preceding main verb of motion, e.g. chạy ‘to run’:

chạy ra ‘to run out’, chạy vào ‘to run in’, chạy lên ‘to run up’, chạy xuống ‘to run down’, chạy đi ‘to run away’, chạy lại ‘to come running’.

6.1.2.4 A third way of classifying verbs is to look at the complement of a verb: if this complement is absent, we have a static or “intransitive” verb (like nghe ‘to listen’, biết ‘to know’, lo ‘to worry’, etc.), and if the complement is a noun which serves as the direct object, we have an active or “transitive” verb (like ăn ‘to eat’, viết ‘to write’, yêu ‘to love’, tin ‘to believe’, etc.).

6.1.3. Verb subclasses

The most common classification, which looks precisely at the various complements that may follow a given verb, divides the large class of (functive) verbs into intransitive verbs, transitive verbs and neutral verbs.

An intransitive verb (V₁) like ngủ ‘to sleep’, ngồi ‘to sit’, chạy ‘to run’, etc. is not followed by a “direct object”: N₁ / V₁

Em bé đang ngủ. (dang ‘continuous’) ‘The baby is sleeping.’
Cô bay. ‘The egret is flying.’

A transitive verb (V₂) like ăn ‘to eat’, viết ‘to write’, đọc ‘to read’, xây ‘to build’, etc. has an object which completes the signification of the head verb. N₁ being the subject of the sentence, and N₂ the “direct object” of the verb V₂, the sentence structure can be represented thus: N₁ / V₁ N₂

X. xây nhà. ‘X built a house.’
X. ăn cơm. ‘X ate his meal.’

The term “endomotivus” has been proposed for intransitive verbs and the term “exomotivus” for transitive verbs [Nguyễn Kim Thần 1977: 129], and a class in between has been called “neutral verbs”.

6.1.3.1 Intransitive verbs (dŏng-tư nội-dŏng)

An intransitive verb (Vi) like nói ‘to speak’, cười ‘to laugh’, dŏng ‘to stand’, ngồi ‘to sit’, chạy ‘to run’, nhảy ‘to jump’, bay ‘to fly’, ngủ ‘to sleep’ has been called dŏng-tư viên-y [Bùi Đức Tịnh], tự-dŏng-tư [Lê Ngọc Vương], dŏng-tư nội-huŏng [Nguyễn Kim Trân]. The activity which it expresses does not affect or relate to any object, so it does not require an object complement. Let us take the sentence Em bé dang ngủ. ‘The baby is asleep.’ If the verb ngủ ‘to sleep’ is followed by a nominal expression, then this phrase denotes the place, the time, the cause, etc. and thus serves as a circumstantial complement, e.g. Em bé dang ngủ trên đệm. (space above sofa) ‘The baby is sleeping on the couch.’ Em bé dang ngủ lúc mẹ nó té. (moment mother he fall) ‘The baby was asleep when her mother fell down.’

Some intransitive verbs may also be used like transitive verbs; they are semi-transitive, being followed by a complement, a goal:

- X. vẫn nhìn. (still look) ‘X keeps on looking.’
- X. chăm-chù nhìn cô ấy. (concentrate look young woman that)
  ‘X intently looked at her.’
- X. khóc mãi. (cry on and on) ‘X cried and cried.’
- X. khóc bà nội. (cry grandmother inside)
  ‘X cried in mourning for his paternal grandma.’

6.1.3.2 Transitive verbs (dŏng-tư ngoại-dŏng)

A transitive verb (Vi) like ăn, việt, đọc, xây has been called by such names as dŏng-tư khuyệt-y [Bùi Đức Tịnh], tự-dŏng-tư [Lê Ngọc Vương], or dŏng-tư ngoại-huŏng [Nguyễn Kim Trân]. Based on the nature of the complement, we can distinguish three different types of active verbs: verbs of action, verbs of motion and semi-active verbs.

A. Verbs of action (V_{action}). Either the action affects the object N₂ (com), as in ăn com ‘ate rice’, or that object N₂ (nhà) is a result of the action, as in xây nhà ‘built a house’. Other examples of V + N₂: uống nước ‘drank water’, mỏ cửa ‘opened the door/window’, dŏng cửa sổ ‘closed the window’, etc.
B. Verbs of motion \( (V_{motion}) \) (động-tù chuyển-dòng). A group of important verbs denote motion in a given direction. Examples are: ra ‘to exit, go out’, vào ‘to enter’, lên ‘to ascend, go up’, xuống ‘to descend, go down’, qua ‘to cross’, sang ‘to go over, come over’, về ‘to return, go back’, lại ‘to come’, đến, tới ‘to reach, arrive’ as in Học-sinh vào. ‘The students went in.’ Máy bay lên. ‘The plane went up.’

When the verb of motion takes a complement, the latter denotes a destination or a goal: X. vào lớp. ‘X entered the classroom.’ Máy bay xuống phi-trường Liên-khang. ‘The plane landed at Liên-khang Airport.’

When following a nondirectional verb of motion (‘to run, to jump, to swim’, etc.), the verbs đi ‘to go’, về ‘to go back, return,’ lại ‘to come’, đến / tới ‘to reach, arrive’, etc. may serve as co-verbs to indicate the direction of the movement:

- chạy đi ‘ran away’, chạy về ‘ran back’, chạy lại ‘ran back’,
- chạy đến ‘came running’, chạy ra ‘ran out’, etc.

X. trèo lên cây bưởi. ‘X climbed up the pomelo tree.’
X. nhảy xuống ao. (down pond) ‘X jumped into the pond.’
X. chạy ra (ngoài) thư-viện. ‘X ran out to the library.’ [5.2.6]

Sometimes ra indicates result, as in X. kiến ra rồi. (look exit already) ‘X found it.’, and the negator would precede it: kiến không ra (look NEG exit) ‘could not find it.’

In later discussions of verbal expressions, we will encounter more cases where, within a string of constituents, a coverb following the main verb \( (V-V) \) manifests the idea of result, direction and also orientation.

C. Semi-active verbs. This subclass comprises (1) such verbs of feeling as thích ‘to like’, yêu ‘to love’, ghét ‘to hate’, thù ‘to resent’, and (2) such “submissive verbs” as được ‘to get, obtain, receive’, bị ‘to suffer, undergo, sustain’, phải ‘to contract, suffer from’, chịu ‘to sustain, be resigned to’, mắc ‘to get caught’. In the pattern \( N_1 V N_2 \), \( N_2 \) denotes either (1) the object of love, hatred, etc. or (2) the experience---pleasant or unpleasant---which the subject of the sentence goes through.

The latter verbs merit some special attention. Because they carry a sense of submissiveness or passivity, the verbs bị, phải, chịu, mắc are often used to translate the “passive” construction in a western language. Actually each of them is just the head of a pattern of complementation denoting an
unpleasant experience and sometimes even qualified with the degree marker rát ‘very’. As the typical “submissive verb”, the item bị, which has been glossed as “be adversely affected” [Nguyễn Đăng Liêm 1974: 199], clearly has the lexical feature [-pleasant] [Nguyễn Đình-Hoa 1972a].

bị ‘to suffer, undergo, sustain’ : bị dói ‘was hungry’, bị đồn ‘was spanked’, bị phạt ‘was punished’, bị dân ‘got hit by a bullet’, rát bị ghét ‘was much hated’, bị vợ bỏ (suffer wife abandon) ‘(had the bad experience of) his wife left him’. This last example is the predicate of the sentence Dọng bị vợ bỏ ‘Dông’s wife left him’, whose deep structure contains an embedded sentence Dọng bị [vợ bỏ Dông] (Dông suffer wife abandon Dông).

chiều ‘to undergo, sustain, be resigned to, submit oneself to’ : chiều chết ‘suffered death’, chiều thương chiều khó (undergo wound undergo difficulty) ‘took pains toiling’.

mắc ‘to get caught’ : mắc nợ ‘was in debt’, mắc lừa ‘was duped’, mắc bẫy ‘was ensnared, was caught in a trap’, mắc mưu Giả-Cát Lượng ‘was caught in Zhuge Liang’s ruse’.

phải ‘to contract, sustain’ : phải gió ['wind'] ‘was caught in a draught’, phải lòng ['innards; heart'] có Xuân ‘fell in love with Miss Xuân’, phải tội ‘to be sinful’.

The verb được ‘to get, obtain, gain’ (also often translated by the English verb “to be”) carries the opposite feature [+pleasant], as in

dược khen ‘received compliments, was praised’, được thưởng ‘got an award, was rewarded’, được nghỉ ‘got a chance to rest, got a leave of absence’, được đi xem xi-nê (get go see cinema) ‘got [the pleasure of] going to the movies’, rất được biết ơn (very get know favor) ‘was much appreciated’, được bố mẹ vợ cho chiếc ô tô mới (get father mother wife give classifier automobile new) ‘got a new car as a gift from his parents-in-law’.

The last example is the predicate (or comment) of the sentence Nam được [bố mẹ vợ cho Nam chiếc ô tô mới], which has an embedded completive sentence ‘Nam’s parents-in-law gave him a new car.’

The label “submissive verb” is definitely better than “passive verb” [Nguyễn Đình-Hoa 1972a, Nguyễn Đăng Liêm 1974: 199], since the language does not have the passive voice as such. Indeed a sentence like
Tám được Liên yêu. ‘Tám is loved by Liên.’
really has the deep structure Tám được [Liên yêu Tám], in which the
embedded completive sentence ‘Liên loved Tám.’ gives được the feature
[+ pleasant].
That is why *Tám được yêu bởi Liên is considered an unnatural
translation of the English sentence ‘Tám is loved by Liên’, with the
preposition “by” [= Fr. par] copied as bởi.

6.1.3.3 Verbs of existence (dông-tử tồn-tai)
These verbs (V_{exist}) denote existence, appearance and disappearance. The
most common of them is certainly có, whose central meaning is ‘to exist’. With object and no subject (V + N_2) there is a predicated existence of that
object:

Có tiền. ‘There is some money.’
Có ai không hiểu, xin giở tay lên.
(exist whoever not understand beg raise hand ascend)
‘Would anyone who didn’t understand please raise your hand.’
Xưa có một ông nhà giàu ..... (formerly exist one gentleman house rich)
‘Once upon a time there was a wealthy man .......
Có ai ở nhà không? -- Không có ai hết.
(exist whoever at house or-not -- not exist whoever finish)
‘Is there anybody home? -- No one at all.’
Không có sữa đặc. (not exist milk condensed)
‘There’s no condensed milk.’
Other existential verbs are còn ‘to remain, survive; there is still .......
left’, hết ‘to be used up; there is no more .......
, mất ‘to be lost; there is
loss of .......
, moc, nói ‘to erupt’, đâm, trò ‘to sprout, bud’, as in
Còn tiền đây. (remain money here)
‘There’s some money left here.’
Còn gạo nếp không? (remain rice glutinous or-not)
‘Is there any sticky rice left?’
Không còn một đồng xu nhỏ. (not remain one coin cent small)
‘There’s not one penny left.’
Hết giấy rồi. (finish paper already) ‘There’s no paper left.’
Het đường chưa? (finish sugar yet) = Còn đường không? (remain sugar or-not) ‘Is there any sugar left?’
Mất mùa. (lose harvest) ‘There is/was a bad harvest.’

6.1.3.4 Linking verbs (V\text{link}) (dỗng-tử biến-hoa). These “verbs of becoming” denote processes of change (in form or in character), processes of conversion or metamorphosis, so suggest the semantic feature of English verbs seem, become, remain, etc. Examples are: dâm ‘to become [something worse], turn [bad]’, hoá ‘to change into’, (trở) thành, (trở) nên ‘to become’, giống ‘to resemble’, etc. with the object of the verb indicating the result of change or a temporarily acquired feature:
Con cá hoá (ra) con rồng. ‘The fish became a dragon.’
con cá hoá long ‘a fish (that has) turned (into a) dragon’
Thằng ấy hoá dài à? (boy that become crazy really?)
‘Has that guy gone berserk or something?’
Con-cái đều dâ nên người.
(children all ANTERIOR become person)
‘The children have all become useful persons.’
Ông ấy thành tien. ‘He became an immortal being.’
Tất cả các cháu đều dang trở thành những công-dân tốt.
(all plural grandchild that CONTINUOUS turn become plural citizen good)
‘All those kids are becoming good citizens.’.

6.1.3.5 Verbs of bodily movement (V\text{body})
This group of verbs denoting bodily movements is not very large, but like the English verb “to shrug” each of them would take only a given part of the body: gật ‘to nod [head]’, lác ‘to shake [head]’, cãi ‘to bend [head, neck]’, chửm ‘to purse, round [lips]’, mMm ‘to tighten [lips]’, vuông ‘to stretch [arm, shoulder, neck]’, nhún ‘to shrug [shoulders]’, nghén ‘to crane [neck]’, etc.
But in the N\textsubscript{1} + V + N\textsubscript{2} sentence Nam lác đầu ‘Nam shook his head,’ the object may be moved to the front, and with the subject (or topic) changed to đầu Nam ‘Nam’s head’ the sentence becomes Đầu Nam lác. ‘Nam’s head is shaking.’
6.1.3.6 Ditransitive verbs (V_{do}).

These ditransitive or double-object verbs are part of "sequential phrases", which are "coordinate phrases presenting situations which follow one another" [Thompson 1965c: 230] or the second of which is the result of the other. It is possible to distinguish three subgroups: verbs of giving/taking, verbs of insertion, and verbs of choosing [Nguyễn Đình-Hoà 1979: 919-949].

A. Verbs of giving and taking/receiving.

Let us first look at this sentence, in which the main verb cho 'to give' has two objects: a direct object DO (một cuốn sách 'one classifier book') representing the goal of the action, and an indirect object IO (cô bạn gái 'classifier friend female') representing the beneficiary of that action:

X. cho cô bạn gái một cuốn sách. 'X gave his girl friend a book.'

The same verb cho may occupy the second position within a sequential construction and be followed by a complement that specifies the person, thing or situation served: in other words, the "verb of giving, distributing, sending" is followed by a direct object denoting what is given, distributed, sent, etc., then by the cho-phrase to indicate the recipient (or the goal).

N₁ V_{giv} + DO + cho + Goal
Tân. gửi quà cho bố mẹ.
Tân send gift give dad-mom
'Tân sent gifts to his parents.'

The two objects may switch position:

N₁ V_{giv} + cho + Goal + DO
Tân. gửi cho bố mẹ một thùng quà to-tường
Tân send give dad-mom one carton gift huge
'Tân sent his parents a huge box of presents.'

Other examples are dưa 'to hand', tằng, biếu 'to present', giao 'to deliver', phát 'to distribute', etc.

A similar situation obtains when the main verb carries the meaning "to take, to receive, to borrow, to steal, etc." and when the word introducing the "indirect object" (or the source) is cua, a noun meaning 'property, possession, wealth'. With the formula

N₁ V_{tak} + DO + cua + Source
Nam lấy bút cua cô y-tú.
Nam take pen property cl nurse
'Nam took the pen from the nurse.'
VIETNAMESE

N1 V_tak + của + Source + DO

Nam lấy của cỏ y-tá cái bút Parker.

Nam take property cl nurse cl pen Parker

‘Nam took the Parker pen from the nurse.’

B. Verbs of insertion. This subgroup comprises such verbs as ăn ‘to push’, dút ‘to stick’, nhồi ‘to stuff’, nhét ‘to cram’, thọc ‘to thrust’, etc.

The pattern is N1 V_insert + DO + V’ + Goal as in

Tôi điền tên vào mẫu đơn.

I fill in name enter model application

‘I filled in my name on the application form.’

C. Verbs of choosing. This subgroup comprises verbs that involve the idea of evaluation, selection, election, appointment or assignment, e.g. coi ‘to regard, consider’, gọi ‘to call, name’, chọn ‘to choose, select’, tuyển ‘to select’, bầu ‘to elect’, cử ‘to appoint’, etc.

The pattern is N1 V_choose + DO + là/làm + Complement as in

(1) Họ bầu Quân làm chủ tịch.

they elect Quân do chairperson

‘They elected Quân chairperson.’

(2) Cô coi Chau là kẻ thù.

[ cô < cỏ ấy ]

she regard Chau be enemy

‘She considers Chau an enemy.’

In this last sentence pattern, the main verb seems to select a human as subject, and both its “objective” (the direct object) and its “factitive” (the complement) refer to the same entity: Quân and chủ tịch in (1); Chau and kẻ thù in (2).

All the above examples illustrate the high degree of selectivity between a specific verb and its object(s).

6.1.3.7 Quotative verbs (V_quote)
The next subclass consists of verbs of thinking, knowing and saying like nghĩ ‘think’, tưởng ‘thought wrongly’, hiểu ‘understand’, biết ‘know’, nghe ‘listen, hear’, nhớ ‘remember; miss’, tin ‘believe’, báo ‘tell, say’, tuyên-bố ‘announce, state’, etc. These verbs denote such psychological activities as “to reflect, to realize, to perceive, to feel, to announce,” etc. and the object or complement N2 expresses what affects the action:
X. nghe nhạc Việt. ‘X listens to Vietnamese music.’

X. nhớ nhà. ‘X misses his family, is homesick.’

A degree marker may modify the head verb:

X. rất nhớ nhà. (very miss family) ‘X is very homesick.’

X. rất yêu nước. (very love country) ‘X is very patriotic.’

In addition this subclass differs from other transitive verbs because its complement may be a sentence, introduced by rằng or là ‘that’, as in

X. nghĩ rằng [anh kia đúng].

‘X. thinks that the other guy is right.’

Tôi tưởng là [các anh không thích].

‘I thought (wrongly) that you fellows don’t like it.’

Tôi biết rằng [các cô nhớ nhà].

‘I know that you girls are homesick.’

6.1.3.8 Causative verbs

These “telescoping” verbs make up a sizeable subclass. Causative verbs (V_{cause}) carry such meanings as “to let, make, cause, allow, request, force,” etc. Examples are cho ‘to let, allow, permit’, để ‘to let’, làm ‘to make, render’, khiến ‘to make’, mời ‘to invite’, rủ ‘to invite [less formally]---for a Dutch treat’, xin ‘to ask, request’, yêu-cầu ‘to request’, dọi to demand’, giúp ‘to help’, ép ‘to compel’, khuyên ‘to advise’, bắt, buộc, bắt-büoc ‘to force, coerce’, ngăn ‘to prevent, stop’, cấm ‘to forbid, prohibit’, etc.

Within the pattern N₁ V₁ + N₂ + V₂, the object of the main verb V₁ is at the same time the subject of the second verb V₂, as in

Bà ấy cho họ nghỉ sớm. (lady that let they rest early)

‘She allowed them to quit early.’

Anh để tôi làm ngay bây giờ. (you let me do right now)

‘Let me do it right now.’

Nó làm chứng tôi xấu-hổ. (he make exclusive we ashamed)

‘He makes us feel ashamed.’

Họ đối anh ấy (phải) từ-chúc. (they demand he must resign)

‘They demand that he resign.’

Luật-lệ cấm sinh viên (không được) hút thuốc lá.

(law-regulation forbid student NEG get smoke cigarette)

‘The law prohibits students from smoking cigarettes.’
6.1.3.9 Verbs of volition ($V_{vol}$)

Several verbs of volition denote intention, determination, need or capability: they act like auxiliary or helping verbs in English, e.g. *can* ‘to need’, *có thể* ‘can, may’, *dám* ‘to dare’, *dinh* ‘to intend, decide’, *muốn* ‘to want’, *nên* ‘should’, *phải* ‘to have to, must’, *quyết* ‘to resolve’, *tính, toan* ‘to plan’, *du-dinh, du-tinh* ‘to plan’, etc.

Some examples:

- X. *dám nghĩ, dám làm*. (X dare think dare act)
  ‘X dares to think and to act.’

- Ông ấy *đính sang năm về hưu.*
  (gentleman that intend go-over year return retire)
  ‘He plans to retire next year.’

- Anh ấy *muốn kiến vợ*.
  (elder brother that want look-for wife)
  ‘He wants to look for a wife.’

- Mỹ *toan can-thiệp.*
  (America plan interfere)
  ‘The U.S. was about to intervene.’

- Tôi *tính mùa hè này sang Pháp chơi.*
  (I plan season summer this go-over France amuse oneself)
  ‘I plan to take a trip to France this summer.’

6.1.3.10 Identificational verb ($V_{id}$) là. One equivalent of the English copulative verb is là. This equative verb uniquely acts as the “equals” sign [=] that joins the two constituents SUBJECT and PREDICATE (or TOPIC and COMMENT) of a simple sentence, defined as a two-head construction. Examples:

- Liên là giáo viên. (L. be teacher) ‘Liên is a teacher.’
- Tấm cũng là giáo viên trưởng dở. (T. likewise be teacher school that)
  ‘Tắm is also a teacher in that school.’

- Đà-lạt vẫn còn là một thành-phố đẹp lắm.
  (Dalat still remain be one city beautiful very)
  ‘Dalat is still a very beautiful city.’

In a negative sentence, là is preceded by *không phải* ‘not correct’:

- Liên *không phải là giáo viên.* (= Không phải Liên là giáo viên.)
  ‘Liên is not a teacher.’
- Tấm cũng *không phải là giáo viên trưởng dở.*
  (T. likewise not correct be teacher school that)
  ‘Tắm is not a teacher at that school, either.’
6.1.4 *Chinese-borrowed abstract verbs*

We have seen that there are a growing number of abstract nouns borrowed from Chinese (5.1.3. B6). Likewise there are many abstract verbs of Chinese origin which are used in socio-political context, e.g. *hoc-tập* ‘to study’, *thảo-luận* ‘to discuss’, *tranh-luận* ‘to debate’, *thương-lưởng, diều-dính* ‘to negotiate’, *công-nhiên* ‘to recognize’, *phủ-quyết* ‘to veto’, *phủ-nhiên* ‘to deny’, *chap-thuan* ‘to approve’, *đồng-y, tân-thành* ‘to agree’, *phấn-dố* ‘to oppose’, *đinh-công* ‘to strike’, *tuyên-cử, bầu-cử* ‘to elect’, *bổ-nhiệm* ‘to appoint’, *thuýệt-trình* ‘to report, speak’, *xuất-duàng* ‘to go overseas’, *du-học* ‘to go study abroad’, *tốt-nghiệp* ‘to graduate’, etc.

6.2 Stative verbs = Adjectives (*tính-từ*)

In 6.1 we have examined the class of functive verbs or verbs of action, treated as just verbs. In this part, we will examine the other large group of predicatives: the class of stative verbs or verbs of quality, commonly known as adjectives (*tính-từ, hình-dung-từ*), which can take a preposed degree marker like *rất* ‘very’, *hơi* ‘a little’, *khá* ‘pretty, rather’, and which can also take a postposed degree marker like *lắm* ‘very’ or *nửa* ‘more’.

6.2.1 *Meaning*

Stative verbs form a large set of items which describe the nature, quality, condition, and characteristics of a person or a thing. A stative verb serves as modifier of a noun to denote a quality of the thing named, to indicate its quantity or extent, or to specify a person or a thing as distinct from someone or something else. Within a nominal expression, the stative verb denotes the qualitative or quantitative attribute(s) of the head noun. Within a sentence, it expresses the attribute(s) of the topic of that sentence.


In the case of a predication, these verbs are usefully glossed “to be good, bad, beautiful, competent, etc.” because in that environment they contain a “built-in” verb *là* (6.1.3.10):
'This book is good.'  
*This book is good.*

'She is very pretty.'  
*She is very pretty.*

-Henceforth the English equivalent of each Vietnamese adjective will be illustratively cited in the third-person form: “is ... (good, bad, nice, etc.)”---each time a predicative construction is discussed.

"Quantitative adjectives" are stative verbs like  
cao ‘to be tall’,  
tháp ‘to be low’,  
dài ‘to be long’,  
ngắn ‘to be short’,  
rộng ‘to be wide’,  
 hẹp ‘to be narrow’,  
xa ‘to be far’,  
gần ‘to be near’,  
nóng ‘to be shallow’,  
sâu ‘to be deep’,  
dậy ‘to be full’,  
nhiều ‘to be abundant’, etc.

Based on general meaning, some stative verbs or adjectives describe the outer features of things (color, size, shape, capacity, dimensions), while others refer to inner characteristics and status (quality, defect, skill, etc.).

6.2.2. Grammatical behavior

This word class can be described by means of several formal criteria of distribution, one of which is a negative criterion:

6.2.2.1 They can occur in the “attributive” position, e.g.  
một quyển từ điển rất tốt ‘a very good dictionary’,  
một chiếc sơ-mi xanh ‘a blue shirt’,  
một cô vợ đẹp ‘a beautiful wife’,  
hai em học sinh giỏi ‘two good students’,  
những con người văn minh ‘civilized individuals’, etc. with the modifier (tốt, xinh, đẹp, giỏi, văn minh) following the modified (từ điển, sơ-mi, vợ, học sinh, người) in accordance with Vietnamese word order.

6.2.2.2 They can occur in the “predicative” position within a sentence, optionally followed by a modifier like  
làm ‘very’, quá ‘excessively’, as in

_Học-sinh trường này giỏi làm._ [The subject has the feature (+human).]

‘The students in this school are very good.’

Ông ấy làn quá. ‘He (+human) is too short.’

Cái quần ấy ngắn quá. ‘Those pants [-human] are too short.’
or optionally preceded by a modifier or a degree marker like  
rất ‘very’,  
kha ‘rather, pretty’,  
as in

_Học-sinh trường này rất giỏi._

‘The students in this school are very good.’
Bài toán ấy hơi khó. (lesson math that a little hard)

‘That math problem is a little difficult.’

Quả cam này khá chua. (fruit orange this pretty sour)

‘This orange is pretty sour.’

The two modifiers rất and làm are mutually exclusive.

6.2.2.3 Compound adjectives (4.3.2.3) of the type trạng tình ‘pure white’, đen si ‘jet black’, thơm phục ‘fragrant’, etc. because of their absolute sense cannot take a degree marker such as rất, khá, khá, hơi, làm, quá. Nor can an absolute adjective like riêng, tư ‘private’, chung, công ‘public’, chính ‘principal, main’ in such constructions as thủ-ký riêng ‘private secretary’, cửa công ‘public property’, phó chính ‘main street’, etc. [cf. “absolute” adjectives public, private, principal, main, etc. in English].

6.2.2.4 Unlike function verbs or verbs of action (6.1), stative verbs or verbs of quality cannot be preceded by the exhortative hay ‘let us ....’:

*hay ăn, *hay khó, *hay chua are not well-formed constructions.

Contrast Con hay ăn đi daar! ‘Go ahead and eat first, sonny.’, Các anh hay nghe lời tôi! ‘You fellows, listen to my advice.’; or Ông hay đi daar! ‘Go away!’ --- all three “imperative” sentences containing hay.

6.2.2.5 Even the qualitative adjectives can be followed by a complement denoting the scope or range of the quality they depict, e.g.

rất giỏi toán (very adept math) ‘(is) very good in math’,
rất chăm học (very hard-working study) ‘(is) very studious’.

A quantitative adjective can take a complement that specifies an amount or a landmark:

cao thước tám (tall meter eight) ‘(is) 1.8 meters tall’,
dài bons mét (long four meter) ‘(is) four meters long’,
sâu mởi bố (deep ten foot) ‘(is) ten feet deep’,
gần nhà tôi làm = rất gần nhà tôi
(near house me very = very near house me)
‘(is) very close to my house’
rất xa nhà ga xe lửa
'(very far house station vehicle fire)
‘(is) very far from the railroad station’
6.2.2.6 In addition to monosyllabic adjectives, there are those which have two syllables or more:


(c) compound adjectives of the ADJ-N type: giàu-cựa ‘rich in property’, nghèo-con ‘poor in children,—has few children’, tôn-tiền ‘costly’, mát-tay ‘[of physician] skillful’, đẹp-mắt ‘honored’, dũ-da ‘has a sensitive skin that takes long to heal’, mau-môm = mau-mường ‘loquacious’, etc. (4.3.2.3A)


6.2.2.7 The comparative and superlative forms are respectively _____ hon ‘superior; more ... than’ and ______ nhất ‘first; most ...’. Examples:

X tốt hơn Y. (X good more than Y) ‘X is better than Y.’

Thằng Hải giỏi nhất lớp. (boy Hải adept most class) ‘Hải is the best student in his class.’

Thú vải này bền hơn hết. (kind cloth this durable more than all) ‘This cloth is the most durable of them all.’

Cái bút này rẻ hơn cái bút ấy. ‘This pen is cheaper than that one.’ (thing pen this cheap more than thing pen that)
6.3 Substitutes (đại-tử)

In our discussion of word classes, we have, on pp. 87-83, mentioned briefly one word class which lies on the boundary between content words and function words and which is represented by substitutes, e.g. nó ‘he, she, it’ (commonly called “pronouns”) and thì’vey ‘to be so’ (that can be called “pro-verbs”). Our statement also suggests that the label “substitute” (đại-tử) seems to be more inclusive than the old name đại-danh-tử, since this type of lexeme in Vietnamese is called upon to replace not only a noun, but also a verb phrase, an adjective phrase, or a whole predicate.

6.3.1 Meaning


Such items as ông, bà, cô, bác, chú are kinship terms whose meanings are respectively ‘grandfather, grandmother, father’s younger sister, father’s older brother, father’s younger brother.’ (see 6.3.2.2)
6.3.2 Grammatical behavior

Some substitutes are terms of address and reference and behave more like "status pronouns". Others are determinatives that replace nouns and point to specific things: they are demonstrative substitutes. Still others have interrogative, indefinite, reflexive or reciprocal meaning.

6.3.2.1 Personal substitutes (đai-tủ xứng-hô)

The first group of substitutes are used to refer to persons. Functioning as terms of address and reference, they carry not only the meaning of "substitution", but also and chiefly that of "status"; indeed they take into account the age and social status of the interlocutor.

A. Some take the pluralizer chủng ‘group of animate beings’. They are:

- **FIRST PERSON** (the speaker): tôi (servant) ‘I/me’ [term of modesty and respect], ta ‘I/me [emphatic]; we/us’ [inclusive], tao ‘I/me’ [arrogant].
- **SECOND PERSON** (the hearer): máy = mi, bay ‘you, thou [arrogant]’, comparable to French tu, toi.
- **THIRD PERSON** (the referent): nó ‘it’ [of child, animal], ‘he’ [contemptible individual].

The form tôi can be safely used in most polite situations; originally it meant ‘subject of the king, servant’.

Chúng tôi means ‘we, exclusive’, i.e. ‘he, she, they and I---but not you, the hearer’; it is also used by a speaker to refer to himself or herself alone and is thus the equivalent of the “editorial we”. When a native speaker addressing foreign friends says “nguời Việt chúng tôi”, the expression means ‘we Vietnamese’ or ‘our Vietnamese people’ [cf. French nous autres Vietnamiens]. But when the hearer is a fellow countryman, the expression should be “nguời Việt chúng ta” ‘we, inclusive’, i.e. ‘he, she, they, and you, and I’.

The form ta is commonly used by someone talking or thinking to himself/herself as in a soliloquy: lingering near the abandoned grave of Đạm-Tién, the heroine of The Tale of Kiều, said,

“Sân đây ta thấp một vài nén hương”

(ready here I light one two classifier incense)

‘While I’m here I’ll light some joss sticks.’
**PARTS OF SPEECH (CONTINUED)**

_Ta_ is used by someone who assumes a certain superiority over the hearer or the referent, for example a high official or a religious dignitary, as in the case of the late Archbishop Ngô Đình Thục.

_Ta_ also means ‘you and I’—just like _chúng ta_ ‘we, inclusive’.

The forms _tao_ ‘I’, _chúng tao_ ‘we, exclusive, _mày_ ‘you’, _chúng mày_ ‘you [plural]’, _bay_ or _chúng bay_ ‘you [plural]’ are used by an arrogant speaker within a context of familiarity, for instance when parents address their children or when an older sibling addresses younger siblings, or when people are engaged in a quarrel or heated argument, to the extent that “status personal pronouns” (see below) are not being used. As a matter of etiquette, the set of pronouns _mày, tao, mi, tó_ is considered indecent in polite society, and their use is comparable to the practice, when speaking French, of “_tutoyer_”, which consists in using the familiar and abrupt (not so considered in Canada, though) pronouns _tu_ and _toi_.

The forms _nó_ ‘he, she, it’ and _chúng nó_ ‘they’ are at the same time superior and familiar. In some situations, they sound abrupt. But actually they do not carry arrogant overtones as do the forms _tao, mày, mi, bay_ discussed above. They are used to refer generally to animals and children, but also as terms of opprobrium reserved for scornful or “unadmirable” individuals (like crooks and criminals):

_Con chó này, nó chẳng bao giờ sửa cả._
(animal dog this it not ever bark all)

‘This dog, it never barks at all!’

_Thằng Huan, nó chưa ngủ à?_
(boy Huan he not yet sleep I’m surprised)

‘Isn’t little Huan asleep yet?’

_Tôi đã nói nhiều lần // những chúng nó không nghe._
(I ANTERIOR speak many time, but they NEG listen)

‘I told them many times, but they wouldn’t listen.’

In _Tôi không thích cái áo sơ-mi ấy // vì nó không có túi._
(I NEG like classifier blouse shirt that, because it NEG have pocket)

‘I don’t like that shirt because it has no pocket,’

the pronoun _nó_ is in the singular and refers to an inanimate article of clothing.
The noun *mình* ‘body’ is a familiar substitute used in intimacy to call one’s spouse, to refer to oneself (‘I, me’) or to the group otherwise called *chúng mình* = *chúng ta* ‘we, inclusive, you and I’.

*Mình ơi có đi bờ hồ?* (darling VOCATIVE EMPHATIC go shore lake) ‘Say, honey! Do you want to go to the lakeside?’ [husband suggesting to his wife that they take a stroll to the Lake of the Returned Sword in Hanoi: from a popular folk tune]

*Mình nói chơi // mà câu tưởng thật!* (I say play, yet you thought real) ‘I said it in jest but you took it seriously.’ [to young male friend]

*Chúng mình ghé câu-lạc-bờ đi!* (we INCLUSIVE stop off club IMPERATIVE) ‘Let’s stop by the club, shall we?’

Used as complement of a verb like *giữ* ‘to guard, protect’, *hại* ‘to harm’, *mình* means ‘oneself, myself, yourself, himself, herself’.

B. Other substitutes do not take the pluralizer *chúng*. They have been called “absolute pronouns” [Thompson 1965c: 251].

Except for some (*hắn, va, y* ‘he, she’, *người ta* ‘they, people’), which signal third person referents, the remainder are literary forms that are no longer used nowadays:

- **FIRST PERSON**: *min, qua* ‘I’ [masculine], *thiếp* ‘I’ [feminine], *choa* ‘we’
- **SECOND PERSON**: *bấu, chàng* ‘you’ [the opposite of *thiếp]*
- **THIRD PERSON**: *hắn, va, y, nghị, người ta*

A monarch used the first person pronoun *Trâm* or *Quâ-nhân* ‘I, we’ to his mandarins, whom he called *khanh*. The latter addressed the king or emperor as *Bê-hạ* or *Ngài* ‘Sire, Your Majesty’. The subject referred to himself as *kể ha-thân* ‘your lowly subject’. These forms are now found only in literary works and classical plays.

6.3.2.2 Status substitutes (*dài-tử kính-ngũ*)
In formal situations (including religious ceremonies and public events), and taking into consideration factors of age, sex and relative social position—both within and beyond the family system—as well as in terms of the speaker’s (or writer’s) attitude, the forms used in address and reference are generally “honorific”. Usage is in a sense patterned after a discourse context of family members conversing—the participants being parent and child, grandparent and grandchild, older sibling and younger sibling, etc.
Kinship terminology will help work out who is talking to whom, if we keep in mind the patrilineal system characterized by the ramifications of the extended family—as opposed to the conjugal family.

In the table below we go from the third ascending generation down to the second descending generation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+3: GREAT-GRANDPARENTS</td>
<td>cu (ông)</td>
<td>cu (bà)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+2: GRANDPARENTS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- paternal</td>
<td>ông (nội)</td>
<td>bà (nội)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- maternal</td>
<td>ông (ngoai)</td>
<td>bà (ngoai)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+1: PARENTS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- f.’s elder siblings</td>
<td>bác</td>
<td>cô</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- f.’s younger siblings</td>
<td>chú</td>
<td>cô</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- m.’s elder siblings</td>
<td>cấu</td>
<td>già</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- m.’s younger siblings</td>
<td>cấu</td>
<td>dì</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EGO’S GENERATION</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- elder siblings</td>
<td>anh</td>
<td>chí</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- younger siblings</td>
<td>em (trai)</td>
<td>em (gái)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-1: EGO’S CHILDREN</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- through son</td>
<td>cháu nội (trai)</td>
<td>cháu nội (gái)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- through daughter</td>
<td>cháu ngoại (trai)</td>
<td>cháu ngoại (gái)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-2: EGO’S GRANDCHILDREN</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Kin terms from the 3rd ascending generation up (cu, ky) and from the 2nd descending one down (cháu, chát, chút, chít) display alliteration.

In some American families third person forms (instead of “you” and “I”) are used with small children: “Mom loves Dylan,” “Ike misses Daddy,” etc. By contrast this kind of “baby talk” is observed throughout the Vietnamese system of address and reference. The pair “bó-con”, for instance, is equivalent to ‘I-you’ when the father talks to his child, and ‘you-I’ when the child talks to his or her father: Xin bó cho con sūa a (beg father give child milk POLITE PARTICLE) ‘Please give me some milk, Daddy.’
**VIETNAMESE**

*Con ơ nhà ngoan, bố đi làm nhé!*
(child stay house well-behaved, father go work OK?)

‘You be good at home, Daddy goes to work now, OK?’

A child learns very early how to use the proper terms of address:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1st person</th>
<th>2nd person</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>child speaking to father</td>
<td>con</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>child speaking to mother</td>
<td>con</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>father speaking to child</td>
<td>bố / ba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mother speaking to child</td>
<td>mẹ / má</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>younger sib to elder br.</td>
<td>em</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>younger sib to elder sis.</td>
<td>em</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>elder br. to younger sib</td>
<td>anh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>elder sis. to younger sib</td>
<td>chi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Speaking to his father’s elder brother, a boy calls himself *cháu* ‘nephew’ and his uncle *bác*. The niece also calls herself *cháu*. Reciprocally, uncles and aunts return the proper appellations in kind: the elder brother of the father calls the nephew or niece *cháu* ‘you’, and himself *bác* ‘I’, and that uncle’s wife does the same, using the pair *bác - cháu* for ‘I - you’.

Likewise, if the nephew or niece speaks to father’s younger brother, the second-person term would be *chú*, and the first-person term *cháu*. When a married lady uses the pair *thím - cháu* for ‘I - you’ to a child, it is immediately known that she is the wife of the child’s “younger” uncle.

The ‘I - you’ pairs *cháu - cô* and *cô - cháu* are used respectively by a nephew/niece speaking to their father’s (younger) sister and by such an aunt. The latter’s husband is addressed as *dưỡng*.

On a child’s mother’s side, the maternal uncle is called *cậu*, and the pairs *cháu - cậu* and *cậu - cháu* apply. The wife of one’s *cậu* is called *mẹ*. As for the sister of a child’s mother, she is called *già* if older and *dì* if younger than the child’s mother.

The word *cháu* thus means ‘grandchild’, but also ‘nephew’ or ‘niece’: like *em*, the term for ‘younger sibling’ regardless of sex, it requires a secondary modifier to designate a ‘grandson’ or a ‘granddaughter’, a ‘nephew’ or a ‘niece’ (*cháu trai* or *cháu gái*) [ cf. ‘younger brother’ or ‘younger sister’ (*em trai* or *em gái*).]
The nuclear terms ông and bà referring to members of the second ascending generation (+2) when used in address do not need the secondary modifier nội ‘paternal’ or ngoại ‘maternal’. A couple of examples will suffice:

**Bà bao các cháu không nghe, // thì bà không cho xem tivi nữa.**
grandma tell pl. grandchild not listen, then grandma not give watch TV more

‘Since you didn’t listen to me, I won’t allow you to watch TV any more.’

**Mẹ cháu bao cháu mời bà sang ăn phở.**
mother grandchild tell grandchild invite grandma come-over eat noodles.

‘Mom told me to invite you to come over to have some noodle soup.’

Lovers and spouses---Vietnamese say vợ chồng ‘wife and husband’---use the pair of terms anh ‘elder brother’ and em ‘younger sister’, which mean “I - you” [boy or husband speaking] or “you - I” [girl or wife speaking].

Thus kinship terms are used as appellations or as pronouns, and to commit an error, when one addresses somebody, “is considered an impoliteness and even an insult.” [Cadière 1944: 43] Most of those terms of kinship (whose usage is examined in detail in Nguyễn Đình-Hoà 1956) are also used as “categorical nouns” (or classifiers) when the head noun denotes a person well specified by age, sex and social position: một ông thư ký ‘a clerk’, một bà bác sĩ ‘a lady doctor’, một bác thợ mộc ‘a carpenter’, etc. (cf. these and other examples cited on p. 96 above).

Since poverty is no sin, ‘an old beggar’ is individualized by the categorical ông ‘grandfather’ (một ông ăn mày)---instead of the scornful “co-noun” thằng ‘boy; contemptible guy’ saved for crooks and rascals.

As a unique feature of Vietnamese socio-linguistic usage, those same kinship terms are extended as status substitutes to persons not related to the speaker by blood or marriage, since “people from all four seas are brothers” (từ hai giai huynh-dệ ‘four sea all elder brother younger brother’),

Outside the extended family, the polite term tôi is used for the first person, but usage consists in employing certain kinship terms to address or refer to non-relatives, taking into consideration the relative age, rank and occupation of the interlocutor. Speaking to a mature couple (twenty and older) encountered the first time, a person in his or her twenties is safe to call them ông ‘sir’ or bà ‘madam’ [lit. ‘grandfather’ and ‘grandmother’]. To
VIETNAMESE

use the term cu or cô ‘great-grandparent’ would be flattery, but to designate them as anh chi ‘elder brother’ and ‘elder sister’ would be impolite [Trần, Phạm & Bùi 1943: 86]. To a married woman or a woman the same age as the speaker or older, one uses bà--unless she merits cu. To an unmarried girl or a woman from about ten years old, one uses the term cô ‘aunt’. The term anh applies to boys roughly over twelve and under twenty, and smaller children---boys or girls---will be addressed by the younger sibling term em. Kids refer to themselves as con ‘child’ or cháu ‘grandchild; nephew, niece’.

In my intermediate language class I often ask the students to figure out the relationship between a man and a woman when the latter talks to the former as follows:

“Em vợ cu là cấu chông tôi.”

Younger-brother wife greatgrandfather be maternal-uncle husband I
‘Sir, the younger brother of your wife is my husband’s cấu.’

Answer to the riddle: She is the old gentleman’s daughter-in-law.

As a person gets to know people better, some adjustment takes place, but exaggeration remains as good etiquette while the speaker humbles oneself.

The switch from ông, bà, cô to anh and chi implies better acquaintance and some intimacy, with tôi remaining the first-person pronoun.

In one case, the gradual switch to em takes place in boy-meets-girl situations, where modern life now allows traditionally forbidden social contacts between boys and girls. A man eager to pay court to a young woman would begin by calling her cô ‘aunt’ when they first met, and later change to chi ‘elder sister’ as they get to know each other better; when he finally calls her em ‘younger sister’, this is the signal that they have become sweethearts. The young lady, when she first responds to his advance, would use a cold, formal ông ‘grandfather; sir’, then much later change to a distant, brotherly anh, which would lead ultimately to an intimate anh, that can be translated ‘my darling, sweetie pie, etc.’

A popular saying deplores in the following terms the rudeness of a brazen person who gets too familiar with “superiors”: Gần chúa gọi Bụt bàng anh (near temple address Buddha as elder brother) ‘Living near the temple, he dares call Buddha “elder brother”.’
Some remarks are in order with regard to the pluralizers chúng ‘group of animate beings’ and căc ‘the various ...’ that appear in nominal expressions. While chúng is used for first-person status pronouns, căc is used for second-person status pronouns, e.g.

- chúng ông ‘we exclusive (arrogant)’, chúng cháu ‘we (your grandkids), we (your nephews/nieces)’, chúng con ‘we (your children)’, chúng em ‘we (your younger siblings)’, chúng chi ‘we (your older sisters)’, chúng anh ‘we (your older brothers)’. [The last two are found only in folk songs.] Cf. the expressions in which chúng precedes tôi, ta, tao (first person), mà, bay (second person), or nó (third person) [discussed in 6.3.2.1].


6.3.2.3 Interrogative substitutes (dài-từ nghi vấn)
These substitutes, used to ask about people or things, are the exact equivalents of English “who”, “what”, “which”, “where”, “when”, and “how”.

The word for ‘who?’ is ai? as in Ông ấy là ai? (gentleman that equal who) ‘Who is he?’, Ai đói? ‘Who is hungry?’.

The word for ‘what?’ is gì? or chi? as in Mẹ muốn xôi gì a? (mother want eat what POLITE PARTICLE) ‘What do you want to eat, Mom?’ Các ông dùng chỉ a? (plural gentleman use what POLITE PARTICLE) ‘[Waitress to customers] What are you gentlemen going to have?’

The question word for ‘which?’ is nào?, already presented as consisting of /n-/ and /nə/ (2.3.2). Examples:

Other interrogatives are **đâu** ‘where?’, **bao** ‘to what extent?’ [as in **bao giờ** ‘what time?, when?’], **bao nhiêu** ‘how much? how many?’, **bao lâu** ‘how long?’, **bao xa** ‘how far?’], **mấy** ‘how many?’, and **sao** ‘how?, in what way?, for what reason?, why?’ [2.3.2] The latter substitute is often used with **ra** ‘turn out’ or **lâm** ‘do’ (**ra sao?** lam *sao?*) to ask ‘how?’; when following **tại** or **ví** ‘because of’ (**tại sao?** **ví sao?)** it asks ‘why?’.

If the interrogative **bao giờ** ‘when’ occurs before the verb phrase, it asks about the future, and if it occurs after the verb phrase, it asks about the past:

**Bao giờ anh trở lại (turn come) Việt-nam?**
‘When are you going/coming back to Vietnam?’

**Anh trở lại Việt-nam bao giờ?**
‘When did you go/come back to Vietnam?’

The interrogative **mấy** asks about a cardinal number as well as an ordinal number: **mấy người?** ‘how many people?’, **mấy cân đường?** ‘how many kilograms of sugar?’, **mấy giờ?** ‘what time?’ or ‘how many hours?’, **trang mấy?** ‘which page?’, **tháng mấy?** ‘which month?’, **mồng mấy?** ‘which day of the month?’ [from the 1st to the 10th].

### 6.3.2.4 Predicative substitutes (đại-vị-từ)

The three forms **thế**, **vậy** (or **vậy**) ‘be/do this way, thus, so’ refer to the way something is carried out, so have been called ‘manner demonstratives’ [Thompson 1965c: 147] since they point to activities and states of affairs.

Examples:

**Con cứ làm như thế.** (child continue do like so)
‘You just do like that, sonny.’

**Anh Ba vừa đói vừa mệt. --- Tôi cũng thế.**
(elder brother Ba both hungry and tired --- I likewise be so)
‘(Brother) Ba is both hungry and tired.’ --- ‘I am, too,’ ‘So am I.’

**Giáp bất nhất thằng em. --- Ăn cũng thế.**
(G. force threaten boy younger sibling --- A. likewise does so)
‘G. bullies his younger brother.’ --- ‘A. does the same,’ ‘So does A.’

**Chị ấy bị quan /// nhưng anh chẳng nên thế.**
(elder sister that pessimist, but elder brother NEG should be so)
‘Your wife is pessimistic, but you shouldn’t be (so).’
\textit{Chi không được an nói với chồng như vậy.} (elder sister NEG get eat speak with husband like so) ‘You must not talk to your husband like that.’

\textit{Sự thật không phải thế.} (thing true NEG right so) ‘Actually it (the truth) wasn’t like that.’

\textit{Sao lại thế?} (why unexpectedly be so) ‘How come (it’s like that)?’, ‘Why so?’

\textit{Học trò của ông ấy biết vậy // nhưng ...} (student of gentleman that know so, but ...) ‘His students knew that, but ......’

\textit{Tai-nạn dó xảy ra như vậy.} (accident that occur like thus) ‘That accident happened this way ......’

\textit{bởi vì thế // cho nên} (because of thus consequently) ‘because of that, ..... [as a result]’

\textit{Vì vậy có ấy mới tự tử.} (because of thus she only then self-kill) ‘That’s precisely why she killed herself.’ = ‘She only committed suicide because of that.’

In the northern dialect, \textit{vậy} is usually replaced by \textit{nhu thế (này),} and \textit{thế} is often used alone where other dialect areas choose \textit{vậy.} The north central dialectal variant is \textit{rúa.}

\subsection*{6.3.2.5 Demonstratives (dài-từ chỉ-dính)}

We now examine some “demonstrative” substitutes which point to specific persons, things, places or things. These specifiers occur at the end of a nominal expression, as we have seen in 5.1.2 and 5.1.3: \textit{nay, này, này, ni, ấy, đó, kia, nó, này, kia.} The forms \textit{nay, này, này, ni} help point to entities that are close to the speaker or newly introduced, as in


The specifiers \textit{áy, đó, kia, nó, này} point to entities that are located far from the speaker, as in
cái bàn ấy 'that table', lúc đó 'that moment', con chó kia 'that dog over there, the other dog', hôm nay 'the other day', lúc nay 'just now, a moment ago'.

harma nay, ra áo cay nay. (eat tree whichever, fence tree that)

'Whatever tree gives you fruit, you put a fence around that same tree.'

Some substitutes help the speaker point to a place (dây 'this place, here', dây, dô 'that place, there', kia 'that place over there, farther, yonder') as an answer to the corresponding substitute that asks about a place (dâu? 'where?'). The specifier nay (this) replaces dây (here) in these two lines from The Tale of Kieu:

Nay chồng, nay mẹ, nay cha,
Nay là em ruột (y. sibling), nay là em dâu (y. brother’s wife).

'Here are her husband, her mother, her father,
'And here her sister, her brother, and his wife.'

A letter may start with nay 'this time, now' as in this example:

Nay tôi có lời về hỏi thăm ông bà vẫn luôn-luôn mạnh-khoẻ.

(now I have words return inquire visit gentleman lady always healthy)

'Just a few words to inquire about you and your wife, hoping that you have been healthy as usual.'

Other substitutes point to a time (bây giờ 'this time, now', bây giờ 'that time, then') in answer to bao giờ? 'what time?, when?'.

Still other substitutes point to a quantity (bây nhiều 'this much, this many', bày nhiều 'that much, that many', tất cả, hết thuyết, toàn-thể, toàn-bộ 'all, the whole', bày lâu 'all that long period') in answer to bao nhiều?, máy? 'how much?' or 'how many?', bao lâu? 'how long?'

6.3.2.6 Indefinites (dã-từ phiền-chi)

Appearing with high frequency are some indefinite substitutes, which are the same as those interrogatives mentioned above (6.3.2.3 & 6.3.2.5). They may not have any specific reference to any particular entity or concept. Earlier we have encountered four of those: nào 'which?', dâu 'where?', bao 'how much?' and sao 'how? why?' (2.3.2). In addition, there are the interrogatives ai 'who?', gi or chi 'what?'. When they are found in a question, or a negative sentence, or when the notion of inclusiveness or
totality is involved, their meanings are somewhat like ‘whoever, anyone’, ‘whatever, anything’, ‘whichever’, ‘wherever’, ‘whenever’, ‘however’, etc. Examples:

\textit{Ai cúng dói.} (anyone likewise hungry) ‘Everyone is hungry.’
i.e. ‘Take whoever, that person, too, is hungry.’

The presence of cúng ‘likewise, too, also’ is mandatory.

\textit{Có ai đi không?} (exist anyone go or-not) ‘Did anyone go?’
\textit{Không ai quên chuyên ấy.} (NEG anyone forget matter that)
‘Nobody has forgotten that business.’

\textit{Mẹ ăn (cái) gì cúng được.} (mother eat anything, likewise OK)
‘Anything would be fine for Mom to eat.’ [mother or another person speaking]

Again the indefinite sentence has to have cúng before the verb.

\textit{Tủ đá có gì ăn không?} (closet ice have anything eat or-not)
‘Does the ice box have anything to eat?’
\textit{(Bất cứ) cơm gì Nam cúng không thích.} (no matter rice whatever, Nam likewise NEG like)
‘Nam dislikes any kind of food.’

\textit{Ông ấy không chịu ăn gì cả.} (g Gentleman that NEG consent eat anything all)
‘He wouldn’t eat anything at all.’
\textit{Có nhà nào có điện-thoại không?} (exist house any have telephone or-not)
‘Does any home have a phone?’
\textit{Không nhà nào có điện-thoại cả // nhưng nhà nào cũng có máy lạnh.} (NEG home any have phone all, but home any likewise have machine cold)
‘Not any home has a phone, but every home has an air-conditioner.’

\textit{Hai anh có cần mua gì ở đâu không?} (two elder brother EMPH need buy anything at anywhere or-not)
‘Do you two need to buy anything anywhere?’
\textit{Tôi không đi đâu cả.} (I NEG go anywhere all)
‘I don’t go anywhere.’
\textit{Đâu cúng có karaoke.} (anywhere likewise exist karaoke)
‘Wherever (you go) there’s karaoke.’
Việt Language

'Có bao giờ anh uống vodka chưa?'
(Exist any time elder brother drink vodka yet)
'Have you ever had vodka?'

'Nhà tôi không bao giờ uống bia cả.'
(Spouse me neg any time drink beer all)
'My husband/wife never drinks beer.'

'Con có nói dồi đâu a!'
(child emphatic speak lie anywhere polite particle)
'[child to parent] 'I did not lie.'
'Tôi có nói dồi bao giờ đâu!'
(I emphatic speak lie any time anywhere)
'[emphatic] 'I have never told a lie.'

'Bao nhiêu tiền nó cùng tiêu hết.'
(However much money, he likewise spend finish)
'No matter how much money [he gets], he would spend it all.'

'Dắt bao nhiêu tôi cùng mua.'
(Expensive however much, I likewise buy)
'I'll buy it no matter how expensive it is.'

The three interrogative substitutes ai?, gì?, đâu? can all take the pluralizer nhưng and even be reduplicated when they have the "indefinite" meaning: nhưng (ai) ai 'whoever [plural]', nhưng (gi nhưng) gì 'whatever [plural]', nhưng (đâu) đâu 'wherever'.

Each indefinite substitute can occur in a special construction which contains its correlative, e. g.

'Cửa ai này đúng.' (Property whoever, that-same-person use)
'Anyone uses their own possession [toothbrush, towel, pen, etc.]'

'Mạnh ai này chạy.' (Strong whoever, that-same-person run)
'It was a sauve-qui-peut.' 'It was a stampede.'

'Ước gì được này.' (Wish whatever, get that-same-thing)
'Whatever you wish for, you get it.'

'dọn-dep đâu vào đấy' (Arrange wherever into that-same-place)
'to arrange things and put them where they belong'

'Cha nào con này.' (Father whichever, child that-same-person)
'Like father, like son.'
6.3.2.7 Reflexive and Reciprocal. When the subject and the object of a (transitive) verb are co-referential, i.e. when they relate to the same entity, the noun or substitute is repeated, with tự ‘self’ optionally preceding the verb:

- Minh (tự) khen minh. (one self praise body [“self”])
  ‘One compliments oneself.’
- Nó (tự) làm hai nó. (he self do harm him)
  ‘He harmed himself.’
- Cô ấy tự huỷ-hoại thân mình. [= thân cô ấy]
  (young lady that, self destroy body self) (= body young lady that)
  ‘She herself destroyed her own body.’
- Tôi tự đánh máy lấy. (I self strike machine self)
  ‘I did the typing myself.’

The mutual relationship is expressed by the reciprocal substitute nhau ‘(with) each other, (with) one another’, e.g.
- yêu nhau ‘love each other’,
- hiểu nhau ‘understand one another’.
- Hai bà cãi nhau. (two lady argue each-other)
  ‘The two ladies had an argument.’
- Hai thằng đánh nhau. (two boy beat each-other)
  ‘The two boys had a fight.’
- Anh ấy kiện nhau với ông chú.
  (brother that sue each-other with CLASSIFIER boss)
  ‘He filed a lawsuit against his boss.’
Chapter 7
Parts of Speech (continued)

7.0 Function words.
In the two preceding chapters, we have examined four classes of full words (thuc-từ) --- Nouns and Locatives (5.1 and 5.2), Numerals (5.3), Verbs (6.1 and 6.2), and Substitutes (6.3). In this chapter, we will examine the remaining word classes, the so-called empty words (hút-từ) --- Adverbs, Connectives, Particles and Interjections. The full words, or content words (see 5.0), are sometimes called “contentives” in English grammar, whereas students and teachers of English refer to the non-content words as function words, or “functors”. In European linguistics, the traditional dichotomy was between “sémantèmes” and “morphèmes”. In order to avoid the misleading idea that semantically morphèmes are devoid of meaning, André Martinet [1961] proposed an umbrella term “monème” for the equivalent “morpheme” used in American linguistics, and the term “lexème” for those units (like chant-) that possess full meaning (‘to sing’), saving the term “morphème” for those units that have only grammatical meaning.

In Vietnamese, the non-content words, or “morphèmes” (hút-từ), are not “empty” at all. With the exception of Final particles, which English does not have, all the “function words” (Adverbs, Connectives, Interjections) are indeed comparable to English adverbs, auxiliaries, negators, intensifiers, prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections. Vietnamese functors all possess, or did possess, some lexical meaning, which in time has faded away, and when a functor is used in a larger context, e.g. within a nominal or verbal expression, the grammatical (i.e. syntactic) meaning will be made clear, as explained in a monograph solely devoted to “empty words” in modern Vietnamese [Nguyễn Anh Quê 1988]. We will successively examine adverbs in 7.1, connectives (prepositions and conjunctions) in 7.2, final particles in 7.3, and interjections in 7.4.
7.1 Adverbs (phó-tụ)

This word class includes lexemes which accompany a content word and serve to modify the meaning of that head word either in a nominal or verbal expression. They have been given other Vietnamese names such as trẳng-tụ, trảng-tụ, phụ-tụ.

7.1.1 Meaning

An adverb has apparently lost all or part of its lexical meaning: unlike a noun or a verb, it does not name or indicate an action, nor does it describe the state or nature of persons or things. Unlike a numeral, it does not count people or things. Unlike “pronouns”, it is not a term of address or a substitute for a noun denoting someone or something. Whatever grammatical meaning an adverb may have depends on the head verb: for example, dâ, sê, đăng, với, rôi, etc. serve as tense markers for a verb like ăn, as in dâ ăn, sê ăn, đăng ăn, (vớja) mỗi ăn rôi (compare English has eaten, will eat, is eating, just ate). The negators không, chẳng, etc. mark negation when they occur before the head verb ăn, as in không ăn, chẳng ăn ‘did not eat’, ‘is not eating’, ‘would not eat’, etc. A degree marker like rát, khá, hói, etc. may precede a stative verb like no ‘full [from eating]’, whereas another type like lâm, quá, etc. may follow any verb, as in rát no, no lâm, no quá to indicate satiety at the dinner table, or ăn lâm ‘ate a lot’, tập quá ‘exercised too much’, etc. Since it expresses notions of time, degree, confirmation, comparison, etc. it manifests a relation between the content of the utterance and reality.

However, while performing a given grammatical, i.e. syntactic, role within a phrase, an adverb cannot in itself create a sentence.

7.1.2 Subclasses

7.1.2.1 Plurality and totality. A head noun may be preceded by những, cách ‘[pluralizer]’, mỗi ‘every’, mỗii ‘each’, từng ‘each individually’.

There is a difference in scope between the two plural markers những and cách. The former is not any more “literary” or any less “common” than the latter, as Thompson has stated [1965c: 180]. Actually the Chinese loanword cách ‘the various …..’ means that all members of a given set are involved; we have seen that it serves as pluralizer for second-person status pronouns, as in cách ông ‘you gentlemen’, cách bà ‘you ladies’, cách anh ‘you guys’, cách cháu ‘you kids’, etc. (6.3.2.2).
In addition to pluralizing those kinship terms used as terms of address, it also pluralizes all other nouns, e.g. các người em có ấy (plural classifier younger-sibling young lady that) ‘[all] her younger siblings’, các cô con gái ông bà Nam (plural classifier child female gentleman lady Nam) ‘[all] Mr. and Mrs. Nam’s daughters’, tất cả các nước tư bản (chủ nghĩa) (all plural country capital -ism) ‘all the capitalist countries’, etc.

On the other hand, những ‘some, several (of the same variety)’ implies that only certain units of the total possible number are referred to. Indeed it is used when the head noun (in plural) is followed by a determiner, e.g. những quyển từ điển nói trên (plural roll dictionary speak above) ‘the above-mentioned dictionaries’,

những lý do khó chấp nhận (plural reason difficult accept) ‘reasons difficult to accept’,

những ngày giáp Tết (plural day next to Tết) ‘(some of) the days close to Tết, i.e. the final days of the lunar year’,

những (cái) máy tính mới toanh (plural classifier machine calculate new intensifier) ‘the brand-new calculators’,

những (cái) máy tính vừa mua tuần trước (plural classifier machine calculate just buy week before) ‘the calculators bought just last week’,

những công nhân làm ca đêm (plural worker work shift night) ‘those workers on the graveyard shift’.

The descriptive [relative] clause may be explicit:

những (cái) máy tính [ (mà) nhà trường vừa mua tuần trước ] (which house school just buy week before) ‘the calculators which the school just purchased last week’.

The noun phrase for ‘those students (whom) you met yesterday’ would be những (người) sinh viên [ (mà) anh gặp hôm qua ] (plural classifier student whom you meet day past).

One more example will further illustrate the contrast between these two items các and những:

Xin các ông, các bà giữ chỗ trước! (beg các gentleman các lady retain seat beforehand) ‘Ladies and gentlemen, please make reservations in advance.’ vs. những ông bà (nào) [ chưa giữ chỗ ] (những gentleman lady whichever not yet retain seat) ‘those of you ladies and gentlemen who haven’t made reservations’.
The meaning “nothing but ....” has been mentioned in 3.7.5.2 for
*nhưng ........ là ........, as in *nhưng xoài là xoài! ‘so many mangoes!’,
nhưng muỗi là muỗi! ‘so many mosquitoes!’

The pluralizer *những also marks insistence if it precedes a numerated
phrase, as in *Chính ẩn những tâm bát cơm. (*Chính eat as much as eight
bowlful rice) ‘Chính ate as many as eight bowls of rice.’ *Loi hơn vợ
những muỗi tuổi. (*Loi superior wife as much as ten year) ‘Loi is as much as
ten years older than his wife.’

Contrast *Hiên (chỉ) ăn có hai bát cơm. (*Hiên only eat EMPHATIC two
bowlful rice) ‘Hiên ate only two bowls of rice.’ *Ich (chỉ) hơn vợ có hai
tuổi. (*Ich only superior wife EMPHATIC two year of age) ‘Ich is only two
years older than his wife.’

Finally, (chỉ) *những is used to reinforce a verb of feeling or emotion,
as in *Ông bà ấy chỉ những mong ước [con cái thành-công trên đường đời]
[gentleman lady that only nothing-but hope for children succeed on path life).
‘That couple have only one hope---that their kids will succeed in life.’

As already pointed out in our discussion of numbers (5.3.1), *mỗi
emphasizes the totality of a category while *mỗi carries the distributive
meaning: *mỗi ngày ‘every day (up to now)’, *mỗi ngày ‘each day’; *mỗi
lần ‘every time (so far)’, *mỗi lần ‘each time, each occurrence’; *mỗi năm
‘every year (up to now), *mỗi năm ‘each year’; *mỗi khi ‘every time in
the past, as usual’, *mỗi khi ‘each time’; *mỗi việc = *mỗi chuyên
‘everything, every business/matter’, *mỗi việc ‘each business, each matter,
each event’.

*Mỗi hôm, tôi dậy muộn // những hôm nay tôi dậy sớm.
(every day I rise late, but day this I rise early)
‘I usually get up late every day, but today I got up early.’
*Tất cả mỗi người đều sinh ra bình-dàng.
(all every person all be born out equal)
‘All people were created equal.’
*Mỗi buổi sáng, uống ba viên. (each half-day morning, drink three tablet)
‘Take three tablets each morning.’
*Mỗi cô một vẻ. (each young lady one appearance)
‘Each of the girls has her own beauty.’
Nguyệt-liễm là tiền hối-phi dòng mỗi tháng [= hàng tháng].
(month-dues be money association-fee pay each month)
‘Monthly dues are association fees that you pay each month.’
Mỗi (một) người đóng 200đ. (each one person pay 200 dong)
‘Each person pays 200 đòng.’
Mỗi (một) bàn ngồi mười người. (each one table sit ten person)
‘Each banquet table seats ten guests.’
Mỗi giờ 65 dặm. (each hour 65 mile) ‘65 miles per hour.’
Mỗi năm ra hai số. (each year issue two number)
‘[of a publication] Two issues per year.’
mỗi ngày mỗi nghèo (each day each poor) ‘poorer each day’
mỗi lúc một nhanh (hơn) (each instant one fast more)
‘faster and faster every moment’
Mỗi người một ý. (each person one idea)
‘Each person has his/her own idea.’
Từng ‘each (in turn)’ adds the notion of individual entities following one another and taken separately: từng người (một) ‘each person in turn, one by one’, từng trang (một) ‘page by page’, dịch từng chữ (= tự) một ‘to translate word for word, to translate literally’, phân-công từng người phụ-trách từng việc (divide each person in charge each task) ‘following a division of labor, each person is assigned an individual task,’ Ông bà ấy lo cho chúng tôi từng li từng tí. (gentleman lady that take care for us each millimeter each bit) ‘They took care of us down to the smallest detail.’ Công-an lực-soát từng nhà một. (public security search each house one)
‘The public security agents thoroughly searched each and every household.’

[The schematic diagrams in 5.1.2 and 5.1.3(B) show the structure of the simplest noun phrase containing những or cac. More detailed schematic descriptions of the nominal construction are given in Chapter 8.]

7.1.2.2 Contrast, comparison, continuity and uniformity. Within a verbal expression, the head verb is also surrounded by adverbial elements. One type of modifying elements manifest concepts of contrast, comparison or uniformity: some of those elements are placed before the nuclear verb, hence the term “pre-verbs”, and others follow the nuclear verb, hence the term “post-verbs”. When their positions are plotted out, one can also see that a few adverbs are mutually exclusive while others can appear in combination.
A. The preposed adverb cüng is often glossed ‘also’, but our teaching experience tells us that a better equivalent is ‘too, likewise’, since this item occurs in both affirmative and negative sentences, e.g.

Tội ăn mì. --- Anh ấy cüng ăn mì.
‘I ate noodles.’ --- ‘He also ate noodles.’

[= Anh ấy cüng thế. ‘So did he.’ or ‘He did, too.’]

Tội không ăn cơm. --- Anh ấy cüng không ăn cơm.
(I NEG eat rice --- he likewise NEG eat rice)
‘I didn’t eat rice.’ --- ‘He didn’t (eat rice) either.’

[= Anh ấy cüng thế. ‘He neither.’]

The use of cüng is obligatory when the sentence contains an indefinite substitute (or pronoun) (6.3.2.6) :

Ai cüng mệt. (whoever likewise tired) ‘Everyone was tired.’

Người nào cüng được thưởng. (person whichever likewise get reward)
‘Everybody was rewarded.’

Cuốn nào cüng được. (roll whichever likewise OK)
‘Any one of them (books) will be OK.’

Ngày nào họ cüng cãi nhau.
(day whichever they likewise argue each other)
‘They quarrel every day.’

Côm gì tôi cüng ăn. (rice whatever I likewise eat)
‘I will eat any kind of food.’

Di đâu cüng vậy (= thế) thôi.
(go wherever likewise thus/so only)
‘Wherever one goes, it’s the same.’

The adverb cüng can also serve to attenuate an affirmation and thus put forth the nuance of relativity generously accorded to someone or something as a second best choice, e.g.

Cam của bà này cüng ngọt đây chứ!
(orange property lady this also sweet there don’t you agree)
‘This lady’s oranges are sweet OK, don’t you think?’ [ they are not that bad after all, are they? ]

Con vẽ cái nhà thế’ cüng đẹp rờ.
(child draw classifier house thus, also beautiful already)
‘[mother to child] The way you drew that house is pretty, too, sonny.’
Có chị cũng không xấu lầm.
(classifier elder sister also not ugly very)
‘The older sister is not that ugly-looking (after all).’

B. The adverb dèu ‘equally, all, as well’ expresses the notion of equality and uniformity among several actions or states of affairs, so with this affirmative sense, it does not occur with an indefinite construction.

Compare

Ai cũng dói. (anyone likewise hungry) ‘Everyone was hungry.’ and
*Ai dèu dói.

Cô nào cũng bị ướt. (young woman whichever likewise suffer wet)
‘Every girl got wet.’ and *Cô dèu bị ướt.

Consequently the subject noun or object noun is accompanied by such an element as moi, các, tất cả:

(Tất cả) moi người dèu dói. (all every person equally hungry)
‘Everybody was hungry.’ ‘All were hungry.’

(Tất cả) các cô dèu bị ướt. (all classifier girl equally suffer wet)
‘Every girl got wet.’ ‘All the girls got wet.’

The notion of totality can also be maintained through the use of correlatives ai .... näy .... , nào .... näy:

Ai näy dèu dói. (whoever that-same-person equally hungry)
‘Each and every person was hungry.’

Cô nào có näy dèu bị ướt. (girl whichever girl that-same-person equally suffer wet)
‘Each and every girl got wet.’

Furthermore such a sentence may have both cũng and dèu, e.g.

Ai cũng dèu dói (cả) = Моi người cùng dèu dói.
(whoever also equally hungry all) (every person also equally hungry)
‘Everybody was hungry.’

Cô nào cũng dèu bị ướt (cả).
(girl whichever also equally suffer wet all)
‘Every girl got wet.’

C. The three adverbs văn, cũ, còn share one semantic feature: they indicate that an action or a state of affairs goes on without ending or changing or that it occurs repeatedly.

Suppose someone continues to complain without interruption about his boss:
Nam continue complain on and on about classifier boss.

‘Nam insistently complains [= keeps complaining] about his boss.’

Other examples:

Toi strike wake he two three time, yet he still continue sleep.

‘I tried to wake him up a few times, but he went right on sleeping.’

When an action is not completed, but still continues even to the time specified or implied, the preposed adverb is còn or hãy còn, as in

Nó still asleep.

Lúc that I still small not-yet know anything all.

‘At that time I was still little and knew nothing at all.’

The pair vẫn còn translates the idea of ‘still’ even more forcefully: to the question Dào này anh chỉ còn tập quyền thái-cực không? (period this elder brother elder sister still practice pugilism taichi or-not) ‘Have you two been practicing taichi these days?’ the answer could be Ván còn, vẫn tập đều. (still, still practice regularly) ‘Yes, (we still have) regularly.’

To the question Ván còn thứ đấy chưa? (still test there I-presume) ‘Are you still testing [that gadget]?’ the answer could be

Vâng, chúng tôi cũng vẫn còn đang thử mới ngày.

(yes we exclusive likewise still continuous test each day)

‘Yes, we are still testing (it) every day.’ [About dang, see section 7.1.2.4A.]

With còn expressing the idea of some additional action, the sentence often starts with the expression ngoại ra ‘furthermore, moreover’:

Ngoài ra, tôi còn phải rửa bát, quệt nhà (nși).

(outside out I still must wash eating-bowl sweep house additionally)

‘In addition, I also have to wash dishes and sweep the floor.’

When expressing a contrast, còn (như) translates the segment ‘as to, as for’, e. g.

Bố tôi vẫn khỏe // còn (như) mẹ tôi thì ốm luôn.

(father me still strong, remain like mother me then sick often)

‘My father is well as usual; as for my mother, she is often sick.’
Toi ban lam. Con anh, (thế nào?)
(I busy very, as for elder brother how)
‘I’m very busy. How about you? [= And you?]’
Since the adverb cù (see van cù above) indicates that the action or state of affairs goes on without any change, the head verb may be followed by the postposed adverb mãi or hoài ‘on and on’, as in
Chi áy cù khóc (mãi).
(she continue cry on and on)
‘She kept on crying.’
Chuyen dó, ông cù kể đi kể lại hoài.
(story that he continue tell go tell come on and on)
‘That story, he keeps telling it repeatedly.’
Sometimes, an action takes place at regular intervals, as in
Cù độ mười phút, ông ấy lại phải vào buồng tắm.
(continue about ten minute he again must enter room bathe)
‘Every ten minutes or so he has to go to the bathroom.’
[See below about the use of lai.]
In an imperative sentence, cù has the force of ‘go ahead and ...’, as in
Chị (hay) cù mua đi, rè dạy.
(elder sister EXHORTATIVE continue buy IMPERATIVE cheap there)
‘You go ahead and buy it—it’s a real bargain (believe me).’
D. The two adverbs lai and nũa ‘again, more’ may be used singly or together to express the idea of recurrence or resumption.
Trời lai mưa (nũa) rỗi. (sky again rain more already)
‘It’s raining again.’
Nó lai rớt hỡ? (he again flunk huh) ‘Did he flunk again?’
California lai động đất (nũa) à!
(California again shake earth more really?)
‘Another earthquake in California?’
There is a difference between lai and lai. The phrase lai viết means ‘wrote again, resumed writing (after an interruption)’, and the sequence viết lai means ‘rewrote, wrote [something] over [because the writing was not done right the previous time]’.
Other examples: lai nói ‘talked again, resumed talking’ vs. nói lai ‘repeated, said it once more’; lai sơn nhà ‘again painted the house,'
resumed painting the house’ vs. son nhà lại ‘repainted the house [because the rain had washed off the first coat].

Ông đã không cho tôi thuê nhà lại còn đe dọa đánh tôi nưa.

(he ANTERIOR NEG let me rent house yet still threaten beat me more)

‘He not only had refused to rent the apartment to me, but even threatened to beat me up.’

(On còn ‘still, even’, see 7.1.2.2C; on dã ‘anterior’, see 7.1.2.4D.)

In this last example about landlord and tenant, the postposed adverb nưa seems to have the core meaning ‘more, further, also, in addition’.

More examples:

Con dôi /// thì ăn nưa đi.

(child hungry then eat more IMPERATIVE)

‘Eat some more—since you’re hungry.’

Mời ông bà dùng cơm nưa đi chú!

(invite gentleman lady use rice more IMPERATIVE I insist)

‘Please have some more food.’

Câu uống bia nưa nhé!

(maternal uncle, drink beer more OK?)

‘[host to young friend] Some more  beer?’

Ông Thanh biết uống cả với-ca nưa.

(gentleman Thanh know drink even vodka additionally)

‘Mr. Thanh can drink even vodka.’

Nó có thể ăn thêm hai bát cơm nưa.

(he has ability eat add two bowlful rice additionally)

‘He can eat two more bowls of rice.’

Hai người chết /// và ba người nưa bị thương.

(2 person dead and 3 person additional suffer wound)

‘Two dead and three others injured.’

[....... *và ba người khác bị thương (and 3 person different suffer wound) sounds like a bad translation of the preceding English sentence.]

The preposed lại may carry another meaning: the action is against some warning or contrary to some expectation (logical, esthetic or moral), e. g.

Ai lại đi son cái nhà màu vàng khá như thế!

(who contrary-to-taste go paint CL house color yellow very like so)

‘How could anyone paint a house in that (awful) yellow color?’
Me dā bāo khöng // sao con łąi làm thế?
(mom ANTERIOR say no, why child contrary-to-warning do so)
‘[mother to child] I already told you not to. How come you went ahead and did it?’

Cái kéo này, mế dựng đề cắt vài. Sao con łąi dem ra cắt các-tông?
(CL scissors this, mom use to cut cloth, why child contrary-to-warning bring out cut cardboard)
‘[mother to son] I use this pair of scissors to cut cloth. Why are you using it to cut cardboard?’

7.1.2.3 Negation and confirmation. The negatives constitute a highly special adverbial class (khöng, chăng, chá ‘no, not’, chưa ‘not yet’), each member of which immediately precedes the head verb (or head noun). Examples:

Töi khöng ān // vi tôi chưa dói.
(I not eat because I not yet hungry)
‘I’m not eating because I’m not hungry yet.’

Anh ấy khöng (hề) goi dây nói cho ai // mà cừng chăng (hề) hỏi thẳm bả mẹ ở trong Nam.
(he not ever call wire talk give anyone and likewise not ever ask visit classifier mother at inside south)
‘He never telephoned anybody, and never inquired about his mother in the south, either.’

Thu khöng nói-nãng gi cả.
(Thu not speak-REDUPL anything all)
‘Thu did not say anything.’

Thành khöng cao, khöng tháp.
(Thanh not tall not short)
‘Thành is neither tall nor short.’

Ông Quang khöng vợ, khöng con.
(gentleman Quang no wife no child)
‘Mr. Quang has no wife, no children.’

A (stronger) literary equivalent of khöng is chăng ‘definitely not’:
Phương chăng nói, chăng ràng.
(Phương not speak not say)
‘Phương wouldn’t say a word.’

Chăng tham ruộng cá, ao liền / Tham về cái bút, cái nghiên anh dỗ.
(not greedy ricefield big pond adjoining / greedy about CL writing brush CL inkstand CL student)
‘I don’t care for large fields and twin ponds / Only care for the scholar’s writing brush and inkstand.’ [a proverb]

Tôi mê quá, nên chẳng thiêt ăn-uống gì cả.
(I tired much, so not care eat-drink anything all)

‘I’m so tired, so wouldn’t be interested in any food.’

The variant cha occurs frequently in colloquial speech: Chá thêm! (not crave) ‘I’m not craving (for) it.’ Chá cần! (not need) ‘I don’t care.’

Besides occurring before an indefinite substitute like ai, gi, đầu, máy, bao nhiêu (6.3.2.6), e.g. không ai ‘nobody’, không đâu ‘nowhere’, không máy ‘not much, not many’, the common negative preverb can enter a double negative construction such as

Ta không thể không rót nước mắt
(we not able not drop water-eye)

‘We could not help shedding tears’.

Không phải tôi không biết. (not correct I not know)

‘It’s not that I didn’t know.’

The equivalent of an English yes-or-no question uses the sequence có ……. không? e.g. Anh có cần tiền ngay bây giờ không? (you EMPHATIC need money right now or not) ‘Do you need money right now?’

The interrogative sentence Chỉ thích không? ‘Do you like it?’ as a type of choice-question (seeking a yes-or-no answer) started out in the form

Chỉ có thích hay (là) không thích?
(you EMPHATIC like or not like)

That explicit question ‘Do you like it or don’t you like it?’ has been step by step reduced to

Chỉ có thích hay (là) không?, then to

Chỉ có thích không?,

and finally the emphatic có is deleted. [hay (là) is a connective commonly known as the conjunction of coordination ‘or’.]

The preposed negative chẳng becomes chẳng when used as a final question particle, e.g. Cô ấy không thích chẳng? (she not like I wonder)

‘Could it be that she doesn’t like it?’, ‘I wonder if she doesn’t like it.’

The construction “not only ..., but also ...” is featured in this sentence:

Bộ quần áo này không những (= chẳng những) đẹp mà còn rẻ nữa.
(set pants coat this not only pretty but also cheap additionally)
‘This suit of clothing is not only nice-looking, but also inexpensive.’

*Không những (= chẳng những) trẻ con, mà cả người lớn cũng thích phim đó.* (not only young kid, but even person big too like movie that)

‘Not only children, but adults also enjoy that movie.’

Lately the sequence *không những* ‘not only’ is sometimes replaced by *không chi,* but not by *chẳng chi.*

To indicate that an action has not yet taken place, the adverb *chưa* is used before the verb, e.g. *chưa đến* ‘hasn’t arrived yet’, *chưa đợi* ‘isn’t hungry yet’, *chưa đỗ thủ tài* (pass flower-talent title) ‘hasn’t passed the high school exam yet’, *chưa bắt đầu* (catch head) ‘hasn’t started yet’, etc. Thus there is a difference between *không có con* ‘have no children, cannot have children’ and *chưa có con* ‘have no children yet’.

The adverb *chưa* may also precede an indefinite, as in *Chưa ai tới cả.* (not yet whoever arrive all) ‘Nobody has shown up yet.’ *Chưa bao giờ có hiện tượng ấy.* (not yet whenever exist phenomenon that) ‘Never has there been such a phenomenon.’

One construction often found in poetry contains a predication with *chưa* ..... followed by another predication with *đã* ..... [see 7.1.2.4C]. It expresses two shades of meaning. In sentence (1), one action may not have happened before another action takes place, as in

(1) *Chưa dỗ ông nghề đã de hàng tổng,*  
   (not yet pass CL doctor ANTERIOR threaten whole canton),
   an idiomatic expression referring to someone “who threatens his village community even before he passes his doctoral examination”.

But the two actions may also quickly follow each other, as in the literary context of sentence (2)---two lovers’ separation happening right after their being reunited:

(2) *Chưa vui sum-hop đã sầu chia-phôi.*  
   (not yet joyful reunion already sad separation)
   ‘No sooner had they been reunited in joy than they already felt the sorrow of parting’ [The Tale of Kiều].

The word *chưa*? can serve as a final particle to end another type of question, that also expects a yes-or-no answer, about a past action or state “concerning which there is expectation on the part of the speaker that, even if it has not yet happened, it may still happen” [Emeneau 1951: 210].
Luc do, ong da goi day noi cho so canh-sat chu? 
(moment that you already call wire-talk for office police or-not-yet) 
‘At that time, had you telephoned the police yet?’.

Indeed like co ..... khong?, the discontinuous expression da ..... chu? 
asks whether an action has taken place yet, and the question 
Con da uong thuoc hay (la) chu uong thuoc? 
(child already drink medicine or not-yet drink medicine) 
‘[mother to child] Have you taken your medicine (or not) yet?’

undergoes successive deletions until da itself can be left out:

> Con da uong thuoc hay (la) chu?
> Con da uong thuoc chu?

To such an “already-or-not yet” question (using the conjunction hay or hay la), the answer may be

Thua me, con da uong roi a. 
(report mom, child anterior drink already polite particle) 
‘Yes, mom. I have already.’

[and abbreviated to (Thua me) da a, or roi a.] 
or in the negative Thua me, con chu (uong) a. (report mom, child not-yet drink polite particle)

In a simpler, much less formal situation, only the question particle chu? is used, as in Xong chu? ‘Finished yet? Done yet?’, Ngu chu? ‘Have you fallen asleep yet?’, Doi chu? ‘Hungry yet?’, etc.

Some more examples of such questions and answers:

‘Have you understood?’ ‘Yes, I have.’ ‘No, I haven’t.’

‘Is this enough?’ ‘Yes, this is enough.’ ‘No, not enough.’

Finally, in order to seek the agreement or sympathy of the hearer regarding something which the speaker himself feels is obvious, the sentence may also have that final particle: Dep mat chu? ‘[sarcastically] Aren’t you ashamed (yet) ?’ [On compound stative verbs, see 6.2.2.6(c) ]

The preverb co is used to emphasize a confirmation, as in 

X co an (‘eat’) hoii-l. ‘X did take bribes.’ 
[cf. X an hoii-l. ‘X took bribes.’]
7.1.2.4 Tense and modality. Adverbs placed before the head verb to serve as tense and modality markers are dang, vua, (vua) moi, sap, se, da, and those placed after the head verb are xong, roi.

Actually if the speaker wants to specify the time when an action takes place, a sentence adverbial (“tomorrow afternoon”, “now”, “next week”, “yesterday”), followed by a comma pause, begins the sentence, e.g.

Chiều mai, con phải thi. (afternoon tomorrow, child must take exam) ‘I must take a test tomorrow afternoon.’

Bay giờ, tôi ra thư-viện đây. (now I go out library here) ‘I’m going to the library now.’

Tuan sau, họ don nhà sang Oakland. (week after they move house go over Oakland) ‘They’re moving to Oakland next week.’

Hôm qua, anh ấy gửi điện-tin rồi. (day past he send telegram already) ‘He already sent a telegram yesterday.’

But when the speaker wants to be explicit, an adverb may be used before the head verb to mark past, present or future tense.

A. To mark (present, past or future) continuous tense, the adverb dang (= duong) precedes the head verb, e.g.

Ông ấy dang đi trên đường đến sở.

(he CONTINUOUS go on road reach office)

‘He is (or was) on his way to the office.’

Khi nào chị dang nau pho // thi xin chị gọi em đến xem nhé!

(time whichever elder sister CONTINUOUS cook pho, then beg elder sister call younger sibling come watch OK?)

‘[Next time] (when) you cook beef noodle soup, please call me so that I may watch you going through the process, will you?’

B. When the speaker wants to indicate explicitly that an action has been completed, the adverb da is placed before the head verb.

The notion of anteriority is basic (for either past or future time):

Ông đa quên chuyên dò roi hay sao! (you ANTERIOR forget story that already or how) ‘Have you forgotten that already?’
Chúng tôi đã biết ngay từ đầu.

(we ANTERIOR know right from head)

‘We had known it right from the start.’

Hôm qua, lúc tôi mở cửa, thì họ đã ăn cơm xong rồi.

(day past, moment I knock door, then they ANTERIOR eat rice finish already)

‘Yesterday, when I knocked at the door, they had already finished their dinner.’

Mai, tâm giờ anh đến thì tôi đã lên máy bay rồi.

(tomorrow eight hour you arrive then I already go up plane already)

‘Tomorrow, when you come at eight, I will already have boarded the plane.’

Both đang and đã have been linked to Indonesian sedang and sudah, respectively, in an attempt by Gregerson [1991: 81-94] to raise the possibility of an Austronesian origin for those aspectual preverbs.

When occurring as a final particle, the lexeme đã also signals that the head verb denotes a circumstance viewed as completed prior to some other circumstance.

Chúng ta hãy nghỉ một lúc đã.

(we inclusive EXHORTATIVE rest one moment first)

‘Let’s rest a while first [before we do anything else].’

Để tôi còn xem đã: tôi chưa muốn mua với.

(let me still see first, I not-yet want buy hurry)

‘Let me have a look first. I don’t want to buy [it] in a hurry.’

In đã 20 năm rồi..... ‘(it has been) twenty years already’, the adverb đã emphasizes a stretch of time.

The use of đã in conjunction with chưa has been discussed in 7.1.2.3.

C. To indicate that an action will likely take place in the future, the head verb is preceded by the adverb sẽ: whereas đã can be glossed ‘anterior’, the focus of sẽ is ‘subsequent’. But like đã, the element sẽ is not obligatory, since in the sentence

Tháng sau, tôi qua Pháp ăn cưới con gái ông Hữu

(month behind I cross-over France eat wedding daughter gentleman H.) the time expression tháng sau indicates that the speaker will go over to France only next month (to attend Mr. Hữu’s daughter’s wedding).
The use of *sē* would indeed be redundant, since futurity is already clearly marked.

D. When an action is imminent, i.e. when it approaches the moment of the utterance or a moment in either the past or the future, then the adverb *sáp* or *sáp sūa* ‘about to, on the point of’ precedes the head verb, as in

*Sáp mūa rōi.* (about rain already) ‘It’s going to rain [right away].’

*Em sáp khâu xong rōi a.*
(younger sister about sew finish already POLITE PARTICLE)

‘I’m about to finish this sewing task.’

*Máy bay sáp xuông.* (plane about descend)

‘The plane is about to land.’

*Khi ấy, tôi sáp qua Mỹ du-học.*
(time that I about go over America study)

‘I was then on the point of going to study in America.’

*Nó dang sáp ở Pháp về // thì cô ấy đi lấy chồng.*
(he CONT about in France return, then CL gal go take husband)

‘He was just coming back from France when the gal got married.’

*Khi nào ông bà sáp về nước // thì xin cho tôi biết.*
(whenever gentleman lady about return country, then beg let me know)

‘When you (two) are about to go back home, please let me know.’

More examples:

*Mời bác ngồi chơi, ba cháu đi làm sáp về rōi a.*
(invite uncle sit play, dad nephew go work about return already POLITE PARTICLE)

‘Please sit down. My dad will soon be back from work.’

*Anh Sơn sáp (sūa) lấy vợ.* (elder brother S. about take wife)

‘Son is about to get married.’

*Com sáp chín rōi.* (rice about ripe already)

‘The rice will be done soon = Dinner is almost ready.’

However, if there is a time expression like *chóc nūa, chût nūa, lát nūa* (moment additional) ‘in a short while’, etc. then *sē* will be used instead of *sáp (sūa)*, and the last three examples will be changed as follows:

*Mời bác ngồi chơi, ba cháu đi làm, chût nūa sē về a*

‘...... My dad will be home from work in a little while.’
Anh Sơn dùng mới ngày mưa sẽ lấy vợ.
(brother Sơn exact ten day additional will take wife)
'Sơn will get married in exactly ten days.'

Năm phù mưa, cơm sẽ chín.
(five minute additional, rice will ripe).
'The rice will be done in five minutes.'

E. The idea of "recent past" is rendered by means of the adverbs vua and mới ‘only just, right now, recently’ used singly or in combination, e. g.

Chúng cháu vua mới ăn cơm xong ā.
(group nephew just recent eat rice finish POLITE PARTICLE)
'We [your nephews/nieces/grandchildren] just finished eating.'

Tôi vua (mới) buông dĩa buông bát // thi công-an / ãp vào.
(I just put down chopstick bowl then public security storm enter)
'I had just laid down my bowl and chopsticks when the public security agents stormed in.'

Anh ấy mới (vừa) bước chân ra ngoài.
(he just step foot exit outside)
'He just stepped outside.'

Sometimes, mới (and not so much vua) is used to emphasize the idea of restriction, e.g. Năm 1966 tháng Huấn mới lên bốn. (year 1966 boy Huấn just go up four) ‘Huấn was only four years old in 1966.’

Sinh-viên mới được nghỉ hè có ba tuần.
(student just get rest summer only three week)
'The students started their summer vacation just three weeks ago.'

Frequently the restrictive sense is expressed when the predication containing mới ‘then and only then—not before’ follows another proposition which is advanced as its prerequisite: the sequence of the two semantic units in the sentence---“the order of mention”---parallels the order in which events in the outside world occur, as in

Qua nửa đêm, nó mới về. (past half night he only-then return)
'It was past midnight before she got home.'

Bây giờ, tôi mới biết. (now I only-then know)
'lt’s only now that I know it.'

Hôm qua, mới xong. (day past, only-then finish)
‘Only yesterday was it completed.'
Sang năm, nó mới có thể nộp đơn,
(go-over year he only-then have ability submit application)
‘Only next year can he apply.’
Trẻ con làm xong bài // mới được xem tivi.
(kid do finish lesson only-then get watch TV)
‘The kids may not watch TV until after they’ve finished their homework.’
Chín tiếng nữa mới đến Đài-bắc.
(nine hour more only-then reach Taipei)
‘Only in another nine hours will we get to Taipei.’
Thế mới hay chưa! (thus only-then interesting don’t you see?)
‘That’s really interesting [if that’s the way it is]!’
The construction containing the preverb mới can be appropriately used when in a similar situation English prefers the sequence “not .... until” or “not ...... unless”, e.g.
Ông trả tiền // (thì) tôi mới đi.
(you pay money then I only-then go)
‘I won’t leave until you pay me.’
Có biên-lai // mới lấy được sơ-mi.
(exist receipt only-then take get shirt)
‘You can’t get your shirts until you produce the receipt.’
Anh phải nộp phạt // thì cảnh-sát mới cho anh lái xe về.
(you must pay fine then police only-then let you drive car return)
‘The police won’t let you drive your car away until you pay the fine.’
F. In a narration, the adverb bèn or lien ‘then and there’ precedes the head verb, e.g.
Nói xong, ông Viên bèn đứng dậy, bước ra khỏi phòng họp.
(speak finish, Mr. V. then stand rise step out away-from room meet)
‘So saying, Mr. V. (immediately) got up and walked out of the conference room.’
G. Another time adverb, tung ‘has (once) .....-ed in the past’, follows đã ‘already’ in the affirmative, and chưa ‘not yet’ in the negative, e.g.
một phong-cảnh chưa tung thấy (one landscape not-yet experience see)
‘a landscape never seen before’
Tôi chưa từng nếm thử trái đó.
(I not-yet experience taste kind fruit that)
‘I’ve never tasted that kind of fruit.’
Bố cháu đã từng dạy học ở Ha-oai.
(father me have experienced teach study in Hawaii)
‘My dad has taught in Hawaii.’
Hai cụ ấy đã từng phải ăn bữa rau, bữa chó"
(two greatgrandparent that have experienced must eat meal vegetable meal rice gruel)
‘That old couple have had to alternate their meals between vegetables and rice gruel.’
Tôi đã từng lấy cua đó. (I have experienced take course that)
‘I have taken that course.’

Note: this adverb từng [< từng-trái ‘to be experienced, seasoned’] is not to be confused with the pluralizer từng ‘each (in turn)’ (7.1.2.1).

In addition to the preverbs discussed above, the adverb rồi ‘(definitely) over and done with; already’ occurs after the head verb, so can be called a “postverb”. It marks a terminated action or condition, as in Tôi ăn rồi. (I eat already) ‘I’ve already eaten.’ Tôi ăn xong rồi. (I eat finish already) ‘I have finished eating.’ Nhớ rồi. (remember already) ‘(I) remember.’ Xong rồi. (finish already) ‘The task is finished.’ Mấy giờ rồi? (how many time already) ‘What time is it (already)?’

But sometimes there is a subtle nuance of modality: Ông ấy đã về rồi. (he ANTERIOR return already) may mean ‘He has gone back.’ or ‘He has come back.’ whereas Ông ấy đã về. means ‘He’s back [from errand].’

Moreover only the context can tell whether the action or condition is in the past or in the future. Examples:
Xuân về rồi. (spring return already) means ‘Spring is back already.’
But Mai, chúng tôi đã về Mỹ rồi. (tomorrow we ANTERIOR return America already) means ‘Tomorrow we’ll be going back to the U.S. already.’

7.1.2.5 Order and prohibition. Commands and injunctions in many languages use the imperative mode. But in Vietnamese, a command is structured just like a statement, so that such a sentence as Anh xách cái túi này. (you carry CLASSIFIER bag this) may mean ‘You’ll carry this bag.’, ‘You carried this bag.’ as well as ‘Carry this bag, will you?’
The preverb *hay* is often said to mark an order or a command. But actually it can also be glossed ‘let’s be sure to ......’, ‘one should ......’, ‘we’d better ......’ and thus advance an exhortation or suggestion when it is placed before the head verb with or without a subject:

- *Con hay nín dĩ!* (child EXHORTATIVE stop-crying IMPERATIVE)
  ‘[parent to child] Stop crying!’

- *Hāy ngoi dāy!* (EXHORTATIVE sit there) ‘Sit there (first)’

It is more often used “in prayers” [Lê Văn Lý 1960: 237] and in formal situations than in everyday language:

- *Hāy vāng lơ cha mẽ!* (EXHORTATIVE obey word father mother)
  ‘Obey your parents!’

- *Hāy noi gưng ngā chĩ-sī cāch-māng Phān Bội-Chāu!* (EXHORTATIVE follow example classifier scholar revolutionary PBC)
  ‘(Let’s) follow the example of PBC the revolutionary scholar!’

- *Chūng ta hāy châm-chĩ hóc-hành!* (we EXHORTATIVE diligent study)
  ‘Let’s study diligently!’

- *Chĩ hāy cān-thān nhē!* (elder sister EXHORTATIVE careful OK)
  ‘Be careful!’

The preverbs *chô* or *dúng* ‘don’t’ correspond to English negative imperatives: the dissuasive meaning applies to whatever follows, e. g.

- *Anh chô (cō) uōng rōu.* (elder brother PROHIBITIVE drink wine)
  ‘Don’t drink alcohol.’ ‘You shouldn’t drink alcohol.’

- *Chô vĩ thāi-bāi mà nān lông.* (PROHIBITIVE because fail and discourage heart)
  ‘Don’t be discouraged because of failure.’

- *Dúng di māy bay; di xe dō rē hom mà khōng nguy-hiensem.* (PROHIBIT go plane; go vehicle-ferry cheap more and not dangerous)
  ‘Don’t go by plane. The bus is cheaper and not dangerous.’

- *Khōng sāo dāu! Con dúng sō.* (not matter anywhere, child PROHIBITIVE afraid)
  ‘It’s nothing. Don’t be afraid.’

- *Ta dúng (nēn) kēi-lūn vōi-vāng.* (we inclusive PROHIBITIVE should conclude hurry)
  ‘Let us not jump to any conclusion.’
Xin đừng ai hiểu lầm tôi.
(beg PROHIBITIVE anyone understand error me)
‘Please don’t anybody misunderstand me.’
Chúng ta hãy đừng quên lời tròi-trắng của cụ Tù.
(we EXHORTATIVE PROHIBITIVE forget words last-will of elder T.)
‘Let us not forget Mr. Tù’s last words.’

The verb đi ‘to go’ may also appear as final particle in an imperative sentence with the sense of ‘Go ahead and ....’, as in
Bé ngủ đi! Mẹ vào bây giờ.
(little sleep IMPERATIVE, mom enter now)
‘Go to sleep! Mom will be in soon.’
Con hãy vào bếp rửa tay đi dâ.
(child EXHORTATIVE enter kitchen wash hand IMPERATIVE first)
‘Go wash your hands in the kitchen first.’

There are also cần ‘need to’, nên ‘appropriate, necessary, should’, phải ‘must, ought to, have to’ --- all three regular verbs that some authors analyze as preverbs denoting desirability or obligation, e.g.
Chúng mình cần đê-dánh tiền để mua xe.
(we inclusive need save money in-order-to buy vehicle)
‘We need to save money to buy a car.’
Có lẽ, mình nên đợi đến sang năm, anh a!
(exist reason, we inclusive should wait arrive go-over year, older brother POLITE PARTICLE)
[wife to husband] ‘Maybe we should wait until next year, honey.’
Chê! Tôi phải ra bưu điện trước năm giờ.
(die, I must exit post-office before five hour)
‘Whoops! I must go to the post office before 5 o’clock.’

In the negative, không cần ... means ‘doesn’t need ...’, không nên ...
‘should not ...., must not ....’, and không phải ...
‘doesn’t have to ....’

7.1.2.6 Degree. The language has several degree markers, some of which are preverbs (rất ‘very’, khá ‘rather’, khi = hoi ‘a little’) and others are postverbs (lâm ‘very’, quá ‘excessively, too’). Here are examples of stative verbs being modified by one of those adverbs:
rất đẹp ‘very pretty’, khá đẹp ‘rather pretty’, đẹp lâm ‘very pretty’,
dep quá ‘so pretty’, dài quá ‘too long’, khá dài ‘a little too long’, hoi
khó ‘a little difficult’, khó quá (xá) ‘excessively difficult’, cực hay ‘extremely interesting’, cực kỳ ngô-nghinh ‘very very cute’. The pairs rất and lẩm, rất and quá are mutually exclusive (6.2.2.2).

Several other markers may either precede or follow the head verb:


Degree markers can also occur before verbs of feeling and knowing such as yêu ‘to love’, ghét ‘to hate’, thích ‘to like’, thương ‘to feel sorry for’, nhớ ‘to miss’, biết ‘to know’, etc. Thus one can say Tôi rất ghét những người dối-dục giả. (I very hate plural person virtue false) ‘I intensely hate hypocrites.’ Bà rất thù tên Sở-Khanh đó. (she very resent classifier S-K that) ‘She deeply resents that Casanova.’

On the other hand, being a degree marker, the preverb rất does not allow the head verb to have a quantifying complement: *rất rộng năm mâu (very wide five mows), *rất rộng mênh-mông (very wide immensely).

7.1.3 Ordering and co-occurrence of adverbs

The co-occurrence patterns of preverbal auxiliaries is extremely interesting as well as complex. Such authors as Emeneau (1951), Nguyễn Kim Thần (1963; 1975), and Thomas (1981) have analyzed the relative ordering of those elements within the verbal expression. The last two analysts provide useful charts that detail possible sequences and co-occurrences. For teaching purposes I have used such sequential phrases as cùng sẽ còn đau (likewise shall still hurt), cùng vẫn còn đau (likewise still still hurt) ‘will still hurt’, vẫn còn đang kêu đau (still still continuous holler hurt) ‘still complaining right now about the pain’, cùng sẽ không đau (likewise shall not hurt) ‘won’t hurt either’, cùng vẫn không đau (likewise still not hurt) ‘still does not hurt’, sẽ vẫn còn đau (shall still still hurt) ‘will still hurt’, sẽ không còn đau (núa) (shall not still hurt further) ‘won’t hurt any more’, etc.

Of all the sixteen or so positions found to the left of the nuclear, i.e. main, verb (dau ‘to hurt’ in the preceding examples), cùng ‘likewise,
too, also’ occupies the one furthest from the verb, and dang sáp ‘now about
to’ occurs closest to the verb.

7.2 Connectives (quan-hề-từ)
Members of this word class manifest grammatical relations between words or
between syntagms, i.e. phrases. They are divided into two subclasses:
(a) those which link a complement to its preceding head word: cua ‘of’,
do ‘by’, etc.; and
(b) those which link two items of equal ranking: và ‘and’, với ‘together with’, hay ‘or’, hoặc ‘or’, nhưng ‘but’, mà ‘yet’, với ...... với ...... ‘both ...... and ......’, càng ...... càng ...... ‘the more ...... the more ......’, nếu ‘if’, hé ‘as sure as’, mà ‘which, that’, etc.
The former are usually known as “prepositions”, and the latter are
usually labeled “conjunctions”.

7.2.1 Prepositions (giới-từ)
These connectives express possession, means, direction, etc. with the
“object” denoting the owner, the tool, or the direction, etc., and the whole
expression is called a prepositional phrase, e.g.
sách cua tôi (book property me) ‘my book(s)’, nhà bằng gạch
(house by-means-of brick) ‘brick house’, bằng den ở Lớp 4 (board black
in class four) ‘the blackboard in Grade 4’, đi với hai cô em (go together
with two CL younger sibling) ‘went with two younger sisters’, đau bởi
ghen (hurt because-of jealous) ‘suffering from jealousy’, chết vì bệnh
ung-thú (die because-of disease cancer) ‘died of cancer’, etc.
As can be seen in the above examples, a preposition itself cannot serve
as a constituent of a syntagm (= phrase), and only a prepositional phrase
(underlined in each example above) can serve as a grammatical constituent
that has a definite meaning: possession, material, location, accompaniment,
cause, etc.
The most frequently used prepositions are: cua ‘of; from; by’; bằng
‘of, by means of, by, in’; với ‘to, together with, against’; về ‘about,
on’; đến ‘about, on, over’; ở ‘at, in, from’; tài ‘at, in, because of’;
vi ‘because of, on account of’; từ ‘from’; để ‘(in order) to’; do ‘from, by, because of’; bởi ‘because of, by’; cho ‘to, for; until’.

Note: These items are prepositions proper, some of which are in the first instance full words—nouns (e.g. cua ‘property, wealth, asset’) or verbs (e.g. đến ‘to arrive, reach’). They are kept separate from position words such as trên, dưới, trong, ngoài, trước, sau, etc. which denote spatial and temporal locations, and have been treated (in 5.2) as a class of “locatives” or position words (phương-vi-từ): the latter lexemes behave more like nouns (5.2.1 to 5.2.8), so merit to be placed in an autonomous class of substantives although at first sight their equivalents are prepositions in English.

On the other hand, verbs of motion (Vmotion) such as ra ‘to exit, go out’, vào ‘to enter’, lên ‘to ascend, go up’, xuống ‘to descend, go down’, etc. (6.1.3.2B) may occur following a non-directional verb of motion like chạy ‘to run’ to indicate the direction of the movement: in such compounds as chạy ra ‘ran out’, chạy vào ‘ran in’, chạy lên ‘ran up’, chạy di ‘ran away, ran off’, chạy về ‘ran back’, etc. Some earlier grammars have treated these items as prepositions, too, but we treat them as coverbs (V) of direction (6.1.2.3; 6.1.3.2B). In other expressions such as kiếm ra ... (find exit) = tìm thấy ... (look find) ‘found [a lost object after looking]’, nghe thấy ... (listen hear) ‘heard [as a result of listening]’, mua được ... (buy get) ‘was able to buy [something cheap]’, đâm phải ... (step suffer) ‘stepped on [thorn, nail]’, we have V-V’ compounds in which the coverb V’ manifests the idea of RESULT. Likewise, in the sentence Bà ấy ôm lấy đứa con. (she hug take CL child) ‘She hugged her child.’ the coverb V’ lấy expresses the idea of ORIENTATION. [Nguyễn Đình-Hòa 1972.]

7.2.2 Conjunctions. (liên-từ).
A conjunction joins or connects words, phrases or sentences. There are two kinds of conjunctions: coordinators and subordinators.

7.2.2.1 Conjunctions of coordination: these join two elements of equal footing (nouns, phrases, sentences), expressing several different meanings:

- Addition or reunion: và, với ‘and’ as in Hoa và con gái ‘Hoa and her daughter’; học và hành, học với hành ‘to study and to practice’; cá với nước ‘fish and water’; cùng, cùng với ‘together with’ as in thầy cùng với trò ‘master and student’;
• Alternative: *hay, hay là* 'or' as in *mai hay* (lì) mới 'tomorrow or the day after', *hoặc* 'either or' as in *sinh-vién độc-thân* hoặc có vợ (student single or have wife) 'single or married students'; *hoặc* *cho vay hoặc cho hân* (either give borrow or give definitive) = *cho vay hay cho hân* 'either as a loan or as a gift'. However, only *hay* can be used in a choice-question: *Anh có định ra sân bay hay không?* (you EMPHATIC plan exit field-fly or not) 'Do you plan to go to the airport?';
• Consequence: *nên* = *cho nên* 'as a result', *nên chi* 'so', *thành thuế* 'as a consequence, as a result', e.g. *Tôi không cần-thân // nên bi móc túi.* (I not careful so suffer pick pocket) 'I wasn’t careful, so they picked my pocket.';
• New argument or progression in reasoning: *và, và lại, và chẳng* 'besides, moreover, in addition', *huống chí, huống hở* 'all the more reason'; 'much less';
• Opposition, variance or restriction: *nhưng, nhưng mà,* *song* 'but, yet', *song le* 'however'; *chữ* 'but (not) ...'; *tuy nhiên* 'however, nevertheless';
• Transition: *còn Như* 'as for .....';
• Purpose: *hậu,* *ngô hậu* 'in order to'; *kéo,* *kéo lại,* *kéo mà* 'lest';
• Acquiescence supported by an explanation: *hên chi,* *tháo nào* 'no wonder', e.g. *Cô ấy không buộc dây an-toàn. --- Hên chi bị chết!* (she not tie belt safe -- no wonder suffer die) 'She did not buckle up her seat belt. --- No wonder she was killed!' )

*Note:* Some lexemes serve both as prepositions and conjunctions.

7.2.2.2 Conjunctions of subordination: traditionally these are said to join a “subordinate” predication and its “main” predication (cf. 11.2.3):
• Cause and effect: *vì,* *bội,* *bội vì,* *vì ràng,* *tại,* *tại vì* .... (cho) nên ..... 'because ..... as a result or consequently .....'; *sở dĩ ..... là vì ..... the reason why ..... is because .....'
• Purpose: *để,* *để cho* 'in order that .....'
• Consequence: *đến nơi* 'to the point that ..... so ..... that .....'
• Comparison: *cùng như,* *dương như* 'as if...'; *thể nào..... thế áy.*
• Time: *khi,* *lúc* '(at the moment) when .....'; *đang khi/lúc* 'while .....'; *trong khi* 'while .....'; *trước khi* 'before .....'; *sau khi* 'after .....'
• Concession: *dù,* *dâu,* *mặc đâu,* *dâu (ràng),* tuy (ràng) 'though, although' with the main clause introduced by *nhưng* 'but'.
• Supposition: *giá* (mà), *giá nhu*, *ví nhu*, *giá sử* ‘suppose’,
• Condition: *néu* (nhu), *ví bằng*, *ví dìu*, *ví thù*, *nuốt bằng* ‘if...’, *hể* ‘as sure as’. In a compound sentence, if the subordinator is *néu*, *hể*, *giá*, *giá sử* (condition, supposition), the main predication is introduced by *thì* ‘then, in that case’, e.g. *Néu tôi không làm // thì ông Ninh trước làm quan-trưởng.* ‘If I am not mistaken, [then] Mr. Ninh was formerly a district chief.’ (*trước làm* ‘previously make)
• Expressing a preference: *tha* ‘had rather ......’ as in

\[
\text{Thà làm quỷ nước Nam còn hơn làm vương đất Bắc}
\]

(rather make demon country south still better make king country north)

‘I’d rather be a demon in Vietnam than being a prince in China.’

*Thà chết chủ không đầu hàng.* (rather die but not surrender)

‘Rather die than surrender!’
• Quotation: *rang* ‘that ....’ introduces a completive predication and follows a verb of saying and thinking (*nói* ‘say’, *biết* ‘know’, *nghi* ‘think’, *tưởng* ‘thought wrongly’, *mong* ‘hope’, *tin-tưởng* ‘believe’, *xác-nhận* ‘confirm’, *nhấn mạnh* ‘emphasize’).

7.2.3 Both subclasses of connectives (prepositions and conjunctions) can be considered *syntactic* functors, whereas adverbs (preverbs and postverbs) discussed in 7.1 can be viewed as *lexical* functors.

7.3 Particles (*tiểu-tử tính-thái*)

The language has a number of particles which convey the speaker’s attitude and may occur at the beginning or at the end of a predication. The final particles are often called *ngữ-kí-tú*, but we have chosen the term *tính-thái-tú* for both the initial and final particles, to be distinguished from *cảm-thân-tú*, the interjections.

7.3.1 Initial particles

Such items as *chính*, *dịch* ‘it is precisely ......’, *cả*, *dền cả*, *ngay* ‘even ....’ are used to emphasize a following word or a phrase, e.g. *Chính hân giết vọ* ‘(It was precisely) he (who) killed his wife.’ *(Dền)* *cả ông thấy nó cùng chịu thua luôn.* (even CL teacher he likewise concede defeat then) ‘Even his master had to give up.’
7.3.2 Final particles

These “emotive” particles are used at the end of a predication to express the speaker’s attitude, mind set or mood (questioning, negation, insistence, surprise, doubt, humility, politeness, etc.):

- **à** -- mild surprise, questioning: *Chỉ quên rỗi à!* (you forget already I’m surprised) ‘Have you forgotten already?’
- **a** -- politeness: *Thưa bà dùng món gì a?* (report lady, use dish what POLITE PARTICLE) ‘What would you like to have?’
- **chăng** -- suspicion: *Em bé buồn ngủ chang?* (young sibling small feel-like sleep I wonder) ‘Is the baby sleepy [by any chance]?’
  
  Bà vợ nó biết chang? (CL wife he know I wonder) ‘Could it be that his wife knew? I wonder.’
- **chữ** -- certainty, hope, assumption: *Bác vẫn mạnh khỏe chút a?* (older uncle still well strong I presume POLITE PARTICLE) ‘You’ve been well as usual, I presume.’
  
  Anh có ăn được mắm tổm không? --- Được chút! (you EMPHATIC eat able fermented shrimp or-not -- can certainly) ‘Can you eat shrimp paste? ---Yes, certainly!’
- **chưa** -- “yes-or-not yet” question: *Thầy giáo đã tới (hay) chưa?* (teacher ANTERIOR arrive or not-yet) ‘Has the teacher arrived yet?’ (see 7.1.2.3)
- **co** -- variant of *kia*.
- **dää** -- an action or state must be completed before something else can take place: *Khoan dää!* (hold it first) ‘Wait (before doing that)’ (see 71.2.4B).
- **dâu** -- strong negation: *Tôi (có) muốn dâu!* (I EMPHATIC borrow anywhere) ‘I did not borrow it.’ Cős ấy không đi dâu! (she not go anywhere) ‘She’s not going, don’t insist!’ (see 6.3.2.3)
- **dây** -- “personal touch” particle (Blood 1958) used in a question that has an interrogative substitute (*ai, gì, dâu*) or a predication that is admitted rather grudgingly: *Anh nói chuyện với ai dây?* (you talk story with who there) ‘Who were you talking to (just now)?’
  
  Con đang làm gì dài? (child CONTINUOUS do what there) ‘Honey, what are you doing (there)?’
  
  Bài đó cũng được dây // nhưng có vài lỗi ấn-công. (article that also ok there, but exist a few error printer) ‘That article is OK, but it has some typographical errors.’
• **di** -- imperative: *Học núa di!* (study further IMPERATIVE) ‘Study some more!’ *Chúng ta dì ān dì!* (we inclusive go eat IMPERATIVE) ‘Let’s go eat, shall we?’

• **há, hử** -- mild surprise: *Tôi há?* (me huh) ‘You mean me?’ *Đến lượt tôi há?* (arrive turn me huh) ‘My turn?’ *Sao các cháu lại chơi bóng trong nhà há?* (why plural grandchild contrary-to-rule play ball inside house huh) ‘Why are you kids playing ball inside the house?’

• **không** -- “yes-or-no” question: *Anh có bận không?* (you EMPHATIC busy or-not) ‘Are you busy?’

• **kia** -- preference: *Nó thích so-mi màu xanh kia!* (he like shirt color blue instead) ‘He likes a blue shirt instead [of white, for instance].’

• **mà** -- insistence: *Tôi đã bảo mà!* (I ANTERIOR tell EMPHATIC) ‘I told you!’

• **nào** -- intimate offer or urging: *Chỉ để em rửa rau cho nào!* (elder sister let younger sibling wash vegetables give come-on) ‘Let me wash the vegetables for you, elder sister.’

  *Con đánh lại bài đó cho Bác Hường nghe đi nào!* (child beat over song that give aunt H. listen IMPERATIVE come-on) ‘Play that song again for Auntie Hường, sonny.’

• **nghe** -- authoritative command: *Nhớ khóa cửa nghe!* (remember lock door hear) ‘Remember to lock the door, (do you) hear?’

• **né** -- questioning the extent: *Làm sao né? / vậy?* (do how thus) ‘What’s the matter?’

• **sao** -- Saigon variant of surprise particle à?

• **thay** -- exclamation of the “lo and behold” type: *May thay!* ‘Luckily! How lucky!’

• **thề** -- questioning the extent: *Làm sao thề / vậy?* (do how thus) ‘What’s the matter?’

• **vì** -- surprise: *Chỉ có sâu trăm đô-la thời vì!* (only exist six hundred dollar that’s all, really?) ‘Only $600? [I expected more]’
VY-- acceptance of a second best choice:
Hét màu xanh da trời rồi. ---Thế thì tôi lấy màu xanh lá cây VY!
(finish color xanh skin sky already--so then I take color xanh leaf
tree as a second choice)
‘There are no more blue ones left.--- Then I’ll take a green one.’

VOI-- appeal: Khiêng hổ tôi VOI! (carry help me with) ‘Please carry
this for me.’ Cуш tôi VOI! (save me with) ‘Help! (I’m in danger)’

7.4 Interjections (câm-thân-tù)
These have been described as “vocal signs that translate a sensation either
affective or acoustic” [Lê Văn Lý 1960:198]:
• vocatives -- hoi, oí!, é!, như! ‘hey, I say’
• responses -- vang, đa, bùm ‘yes’ [polite],̄, phải ‘yes’ [neuter]
• exclamations -- ô!, ô! ‘oh’, ô hay!, ô hay!, ô kia! ‘hey, wait a minute’,
ô!, chà! [surprise], ô!, a ha! [joy], ô!, ô!, ô! ‘ouch’, ê ô! ‘yukky’,
hô! ô!, than ô!, chao ô! ‘alas’, ô chà! ‘wow’, trời dạt! ‘heaven (and
[pain, fear], hũ!, hũ!, hũ! [anger], ô!, lèu lèu! [derision], tôî-
nghiêp! [pity] .

7.5 Multiple class membership. Let us conclude this chapter on function
words by noting that several of those functors cross class boundaries and
fulfill more than one function in the grammatical apparatus. Indeed some
lexemes may belong to one word-class in a given context, but also function as
members of another word-class in a different context. This phenomenon
(“class conversion”) has caused some early grammarians to say that
“Vietnamese has no parts of speech.”

A. Content word ===> Function word
Some content words (= full words) become function words (= empty words).
• cûa -- An item like cûa belongs to both the noun class and the preposition
class: thần giữ cûa (deity guard wealth) ‘guardian spirit for wealth’,
cûa quy (property precious) ‘valuable asset’, giê thóni cûa (kill
person rob property) ‘killing people and seizing property’ vs. sách cûa
tôi (book of me) ‘my book(s)’, trâu bò cûa dân lăng (water buffalo ox
of citizen village) ‘cattle that belong to the villagers, the villagers’ livestock’.

- cho -- The lexeme cho is a verb in cho con tiền (give child money) ‘gave their son/daughter some money’, but a preposition in gửi tiền cho con (send money to child) ‘sent money to their son/daughter’.

- tren -- Likewise, tren in leo lên tren (climb ascend space-above) ‘climbed to the top’ is a locative (noun), but tren in leo lên tren núi Tam-dao (climb up on mountain Tam-dao) ‘climbed up Mount Tam-dao’ is a connective (= preposition).

B. Verb ===> Noun


- Many disyllabic verbs of feeling can also be used as nouns, e.g. cảm-nghi ‘to feel and think’ > ‘feeling’; lo-lång ‘to worry’ > ‘worry’ (cf. những cảm-nghi ‘feelings’, nhiều lo-lång ‘many worries’).

- Some verbs like gói ‘to wrap’, bó ‘to tie’ can give such unit nouns as một gói thuốc lá ‘a pack of cigarettes’, một bó củi ‘a bundle of firewood’.

- There is definitely some overlapping between nouns denoting tools and verbs denoting actions accomplished by means of those tools: cày and cái cày ‘to plow’; ‘plow’, bua and cái búa ‘to harrow’; ‘harrow’, cào and cái cào ‘to rake’; ‘rake’, cuóc and cái cuöc ‘to hoe’; ‘hoe’, hái and cái hái ‘to reap’; ‘reaping sickle’, cua and cái cua ‘to saw’; ‘saw’, duc and cái dúc ‘to chisel’; ‘chisel’, etc.

C. Stative verb ===> Noun

Such compound adjectives as khó-khăn ‘difficult’, vãl-vã ‘hard’, vui-mưng ‘glad’, hạnh-dién ‘proud’, sung-suông ‘happy’ can also be used as nouns when preceded by cái, sự, nỗi, niêm, e.g.

những sự khó-khăn ban đầu ‘the initial [time head] difficulties’, bao nhiêu nỗi vãl-vã ‘so many hardships’, một niêm hạnh-dién ‘a pride’, etc.
In recent writings, certain authors omit such nominalizers as $sú$ ‘affair, business’, $nóí = nìém$ ‘feeling, sentiment’, etc., and such noun phrases as the following are often found in newspapers and magazines:

những khó-khăn ban đầu của người tì-nạn (plural difficulty period-head of person flee-disaster) ‘the refugees’ initial difficulties’, những lo-âu của bác cha-mẹ (plural worry of rung father-mother) ‘the parents’ worries’, etc.

D. Noun $\implies$ Stative verb

- $bụi$ ‘dust’ $\implies$ ‘dusty’; $khói$ ‘smoke’ $\implies$ ‘smoky’; $vàng$ ‘gold’ $\implies$ ‘yellow’; $dá$ ‘stone’ $\implies$ ‘stingy’; $gạo$ ‘rice’ $\implies$ ‘studious’; $sách-vô$ ‘book and copybook’ $\implies$ ‘bookish’; $đểu$ ‘pole carrier’ $\implies$ ‘crooked, roguish, knavish’; $tây$ ‘west’ $\implies$ ‘western, French(-like)’; $quý-tộc$ ‘aristocracy’ $\implies$ ‘aristocrat’; $tư-bản$ ‘capital’ $\implies$ ‘capitalist’; $nhà-quelle$ ‘countryside’ $\implies$ ‘boorish’; $đạo-dúc$ ‘virtue’ $\implies$ ‘virtuous, ethical’; etc.


Chapter 8
The Noun Phrase

8.0 Phrase structure
After studying the various parts of speech, we will now look at the different ways they combine with one another to make up a larger unit, called phrase (or syntagm).

But we will first discuss briefly the four basic patterns of grammatical grouping: (1) modification, (2) complementation, (3) predication, and (4) coordination. Examples are:

(1) Modification. In a modification pattern, the central (or nuclear) grammatical unit, called “modified”, governs another grammatical unit called “modifier”, which as a satellite may precede or follow the central unit. For example, the head noun bo ‘bovine’ may be followed by a qualifier like sua ‘milk’, or duc ‘male’, or cai ‘female’, resulting in bo sua ‘milch cow’, bo duc ‘bull’, bo cai ‘cow’. The same noun may be preceded by one modifier or more, as in mot con bo cai ‘one cow’, a phrase containing the numeral mot ‘one’ and the categorical noun N’ (= classifier) con ‘animal’. The sequence may further contain a specifier called “demonstrative” like nay ‘this’, ay ‘that’---which occurs at the end---so that this expression, called a NOUN PHRASE, now reads

mot con bo cai nay [NUM + N’ + N + DEM] ‘this one cow’

[cf. the examples on pages 92 and 95]

(2) Complementation. A verb may occur alone (ve ‘returned’, nghe ‘listened’, ngu ‘slept’) or it may be followed by an item called its “complement” as in .... thay mot con bo cai. ‘..... saw a cow’, in which the verb of perception thay ‘to see’ is followed by the object of that perception---‘one unit of the female bovine species’.
The structure of such a VERB PHRASE can be much more complex, with several kinds of complement.

(3) Predication. The verb phrase in (2) would make up a meaningful sentence if it is preceded by a partner called "subject", and this resulting larger sequence represents the third pattern—a predication: Tôi thấy một con bò cái. 'I saw a cow.' Likewise Tôi về quê. 'I went back to my native village.' Tôi nghe mải. (continuously) 'I listened and listened.' Tôi ngủ luôn (without interruption) mê dài dòng-họ. 'I slept through ten hours.'

(4) Coordination. Two words, two phrases, or two sentences are conjoined. hai với hai ‘two and two’
Nam và vợ ‘Nam and [his] wife’
hai con bò dục (male) và một con bò cái (female) ‘two bulls and one cow’
Tôi về phòng và ngủ luôn mê dài dòng-họ.
(I return room and sleep uninterrupted ten sound clock)
'The return my room and slept through ten hours.'
Tôi muốn về quê // nhưng xe đạp hỏng.
(I want return native village, but vehicle-kick out of order)
'I wanted to go back to my village, but my bike broke down.'

8.1 The noun phrase (danh-ngữ)
8.1.0 We will first examine the pattern of modification in a noun phrase (NP) in this chapter, leaving the pattern of complementation in a verb phrase (VP) to the next chapter. As for the pattern of predication involving a subject (or topic) and a predicate (or comment), it will be studied in Chapters 10 and 11, in which different sentence structures are discussed. All three major patterns may contain constituents that display a pattern of coordination.

Before going on to look at the structure of a noun phrase as a pattern of modification, it is important to distinguish between compound nouns and noun phrases. Examples of compound nouns are bò sữa (cow milk) ‘milch cow’, gà mẹ (chicken mother) ‘mother hen’, xe đạp (vehicle kick) ‘bicycle’, máy bay (machine fly) ‘airplane’, máy kéo (machine pull)
'tractor', 'diary talk' 'telephone', 'pants shirt' 'clothes',
'copper vase' 'watch, clock', 'crop REDUP' 'crops',
'foot sky' 'horizon', 'eggplant sour' 'tomato', 'person live' 'servant', etc. [see 4.3.2.1].
A noun phrase [= nominal expression], on the other hand, involves a relationship of modification,
with the head (or nuclear) constituent, a noun, modified by the other---called
"modifier". A noun can be modified by a noun, a substitute, a locative
(noun), a numeral, a verb, an adjective (= stative verb), a demonstrative,
or even a "relative clause". Examples:

- **NOUN-NOUN**: ‘kilogram of sugar’, ‘liter of milk’,
  ‘bowl of rice’, ‘cup of tea’; ‘pack of cigarettes’,
  ‘pig sty’; ‘flock of birds’, ‘group of workers’,
  ‘hand of bananas’, ‘cloud-like hair’,
  ‘Dutch milk cows’, ‘the village of Châu-khê’.

- **NOUN-SUBSTITUTE**: ‘my village’, ‘his/her school’.

- **NOUN-LOCATIVE**: ‘the upper floor’,
  ‘the lower lip’, ‘finger middle’
  ‘the outside’.

- **NOUN-NUMERAL**: ‘top grade [in primary school],
  ‘fifth lunar month, May’, ‘inside back cover’.

- **NOUN-VERB**: ‘boiled chicken’,
  ‘barbecued chicken’, ‘rare beef’,
  ‘raw vegetables’, ‘the return trip’,
  ‘rugged life’, ‘a new bicycle’,
  ‘cheap clothes’.

- **NOUN-DEMONSTRATIVE**: ‘this lady’, ‘that gentleman’,
  ‘day yonder’ ‘day before yesterday’, ‘day that’ ‘one day’.

- **NOUN-PREPOSITION-NOUN**: ‘mom’s chicken’,
  ‘wish want’ ‘my wishes’, ‘the weather in Hanoi’,
  ‘duty towards one’s family’, but ‘my elder brother’,

- NOUN-RELATIVE CLAUSE: chiêc dōng-hô [ (mà) chû tôi vûa gûi cho tôi ] (which uncle me recently send give me) ‘the watch (which) my uncle just sent to me’, chiêc ăo [ mõi may tûân trûc ] (recently sew week before) ‘the dress just tailored last week’, con ăo [ (mà) anh cho tôi mùûm ] (which you give me borrow) ‘the knife you lent me’.

8.1.1 In his early grammar of Vietnamese, Emeneau [1951: 84-85] provides the following schema of a (fairly complex) noun phrase:

“A numerated substantive phrase [= our NOUN PHRASE, NP] contains (1) a numerator [= our NUM], which precedes the noun with its classifier [= our N’], if it is a classified noun; or (2) a demonstrative numerator [= our DEM], which follows the noun with its classifier, if it is a classified noun; or (3) both a numerator and a demonstrative numerator.”

“If the noun in a numerated phrase is followed by an attribute [= our ATTRIBUTIVE] and a demonstrative numerator, they occur in that order, no matter what the length of the attribute may be.”

Thus, at the center of a NP, there is a head noun [N] surrounded by determiners, some of which precede N, and others follow it.

The preposed determiners are often single items that belong to those word classes with closed membership whereas the postposed determiners are quite a few and sometimes occur in combinations.

The preposed determiners, which express the idea of totality, or quantity, or a categorical, occur to the left of the head noun [N, position 0], in precise positions represented respectively by -3 (tât câ ‘all-all’), -2 (nàm ‘five’), -1 (chiêc ‘CLASSIFIER’), vis-à-vis 0 (ăo-dài) in the phrase tât câ nàm chiêc ăo-dài ‘all five dresses’. [ăo-dài is a compound noun ‘upper garment + long’].

The postposed determiners, which describe such attributive features as material, size, quality, possession, etc. occur to the right of the head noun, represented by +1 (lua), +2 (xanh), +3 (mõi may tûân trûc), +5 (cûa tôi), respectively:

tât câ / nàm / chiêc / ăo-dài / lua / xanh / mõi may tûân trûc / cûa tôi
(all-all five N’ VN dress silk blue newly sew week past of me)

‘all the five blue silk dresses of mine that were tailored last week’.
Compare the following three NPs containing a demonstrative in slot +4 in the boxed formula:

- **het thày / cá / bạ / y-tá / giạ / áy**
  - (all plural N’ nurse old that)
  - ‘all those old nurses’

- **sáu / ngôi / nhà / gạch / đó**
  - (six N’ house brick that)
  - ‘those six brick houses’

- **cá / hai / cuốn / từ-diện / Việt-Anh / nay / cửa nó**
  - (all two N’ dictionary Viet-Engl this of he)
  - ‘both of these [two] Vietnamese-English dictionaries of his’

‘all those logical recommendations by the speaker’

**STRUCTURE OF THE NOUN PHRASE**

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<td>hợp-lí</td>
<td>đó</td>
<td>cửa</td>
<td>X.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8.1.2 Position zero (0)

A) A noun phrase (NP) may consist of a single noun filling the central slot 0, without any determiner preceding or following it, e. g. chim ‘birds’ in Chim sa. ‘Birds sweep down.’, cá ‘fishes’ in Cá lăn. ‘Fishes dive.’, hoa ‘flowers’ in Hoa cười. ‘The flowers smile.’, du-du ‘papayas’ in Du-du ngọt quá. (sweet too) ‘The papayas are so sweet.’, công-nhân ‘workers’ in Cổng-nhân dinh-công rỗi. (stop-work already) ‘The workers already went on strike.’, sinh-viên ‘college students’ in Sinh-viên đang Vấn thi. (presently
The students are busy with their exams. Each NP serves as subject of a sentence.

B) A noun phrase may also consist of a head noun surrounded by determiners. Thus the nuclear slot 0 may be filled by an item noun (p. 92), a collective noun (p. 92), an abstract noun (p. 94), or a locative (pp. 98-101). Which preposed or postposed determiner may occur depends on the subclass to which the head noun belongs. When the filler is an item noun, it may be surrounded by all the determiners, e.g.

- *qua du-du chin nay* (fruit papaya ripe this) ‘this ripe papaya’
- *cai hai con chimse do* (all 2 N’ sparrow that) ‘both of those sparrows’
- *may con ca nho xiu nay* (a few N’ fish small tiny this) ‘these few tiny fishes’
- *sau bong hoahong kia* (6 N’ rose that) ‘those six roses over there’
- *tai-ca sau mujoi nguoi cong-nhan do* (all sixty N’ worker that) ‘all those sixty workers’

A collective noun like *quan-chung* ‘the masses’, *nhan-loai* ‘mankind’ can take only such a quantifier as *toan-the* ‘the whole, the entire’: *toan-the* *nhan-loai hieu-hoå* (love peace) ‘the whole peace-loving mankind’.

An abstract noun like *de-nghi, y-kiêh, quan-niêm*, etc. cannot be preceded by a N’ or by a unit noun: *tai-ca nhung de-nghi hop-li* / *hop-ly do* cua dien-gia ‘all those logical recommendations by the speaker’.

A locative noun cannot be preceded by any determiner, and it can be followed only by a demonstrative specifier, as in *trên ay* (space-above that) ‘up there’, *trong nay* (inside this) ‘in here’, *truoc kia* (space-in-front that) ‘formerly’, *sau nay* (space-behind this) ‘from now on, later’.

Sometimes a categorical (or classifier, N’) may serve as the head, when the category involved is obvious: at the shoe store, when the customer says (1a) *Toï khong thich doi nay*, (pair this) ‘I don’t like this pair.’, the context tells us that the customer means (1) *Toï khong thich doi giay nay*, (pair shoe this). In other words, the classifier N’ ‘pair’ in (1a) has assumed the role of the central N. Likewise, *doi den = doi giay den* (pair [shoe] black) ‘the pair of black shoes’.

8.1.3 Position -3

In slot -3, the outermost position, may occur such substitutes denoting totality (6.3.2.5) as *cå, tai-ca, helt thay, toan-the, toan-bo* ‘all, the whole
THE NOUN PHRASE

..., the entire ....’ (the head noun is a collective noun like quan-chúng ‘the masses’, nhân-loại ‘mankind’, or an abstract noun like dè-nghi ‘suggestion, recommendation’, y-kien ‘idea, opinion’, quan-niệm ‘concept’, as in the examples in 8.1.2B above).

toàn-thể nhân-loại hiếu-hoa ‘the whole peace-loving mankind’
tất cả những dè-nghi hợp-lí đó của diễn-giá
‘all those logical recommendations by the speaker’

8.1.4 Position -2
The fillers in slot -2 can be:
-- a cardinal numeral like một ‘one’, hai ‘two’, ba ‘three’, etc. or vài, vài ba ‘a few’, dăm, dăm bảy ‘five or seven, several’;
-- a quantifying substitute like bao nhiêu, mấy ‘how much, how many’, bấy nhiêu ‘this much, this many’, bấy nhiều ‘that much, that many’; or
-- a pluralizer like cac, những ‘the various’, or mọi ‘every’, mỗi ‘each’, từng ‘each in turn’, etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>NUM</th>
<th>N’</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>DEM</th>
<th>POSSESS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-3</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

tất cả tám cái ghế bày mấy kia
mấy con cái nhỏ xíu này
sấu bông hoa hồng tươi mát kia
60 người công-nhán do
hết thấy các bà y-tá* già
những dè-nghi** hợp-lí độ của X.

(all eight N’ chair rattan yonder)
(a few N’ fish small tiny this)
(six N’ rose fresh-cool yonder)
(sixty N’ worker that)
(all plural N’ nurse old)
(plural suggestion rational that of X.)

*bà y-tá refers to an older nurse, as opposed to cô y-tá, which refers to a younger nurse (cf. the discussion of categorical nouns, N’, or classifiers):
when the head noun refers to a person, the appropriate N’ is one of those kinship terms used as honorific classifiers, age being a pertinent factor.

**de-nghi** is one of those non-classified nouns, so needs no N’.

**Note:** Cardinal numerals and pluralizers in -2 are mutually exclusive.

8.1.5 Position -1

The fillers in slot -1 can be:

- a classifier N’ like *con* [for nouns denoting living things], *cái* [for nouns denoting non-living things], or *chiéc, döi, quyên, cuön, búc, người, tâm, tô, lá, cây, quả, ngon, viên*, etc. [for nouns denoting inanimate things with specific shapes or other attributes] (see 5.1), e.g.  
  *một con cá ‘a fish’, một cái ghế ‘one chair, a chair’,*  
  *một chiéc giày ‘a shoe’, một döi giày ‘a pair of shoes’,*  
  *một quyên/cuön sách ‘a book’, một búc tranh ‘a painting’,*  
  *một người nhà ‘a house, a building’, một tâm màn ‘a curtain’,*  
  *một tô giấy ‘a sheet of paper’, một lá cờ ‘a flag’,*  
  *một cây nến ‘a candle’, một quả núi ‘a mountain’,*  
  *một ngon döi ‘a hill’, một viên gạch ‘a brick’*  

- a classifier N’ like *người, ông, bà, cô, bác, cấu, anh, bậc, vi, viên, tên, gã, thằng*, etc. for nouns denoting persons in terms of age, sex, social rank, familiarity, etc., for example:  
  *một người bạn ‘a friend’, một ông quan ‘a mandarin’,*  
  *một bà hiệu-trưởng ‘a school principal’, một cô y-tá ‘a nurse’,*  
  *một bác nông-phu ‘a farmer’, một cấu học-sinh ‘a schoolboy’,*  
  *một anh tài-xế ‘a driver’, một bác hiền-triệ ‘a philosopher,’*  
  *một vị anh-hùng ‘a hero’, một vien tri-huyên ‘a district chief’,*  
  *một ông ăn may ‘an old beggar’, một tên giấc ‘a rebel’,*  
  *một gã tiêu-phu ‘a woodsman’, một thằng ké tròm a burglar’*  

- a classifier N’ for nouns denoting units of measurement like *thuộc, cân, mét, lít, tạ, mâu, mó, düm*, etc. (see 5.1.3B), for example:  
  *ba thuốc lua ‘three meters of silk’, ba kí đường ‘3 kilos of sugar’,*  
  *ba lít xăng ‘3 liters of gasoline’, ba tạ gạo ‘3 quintals of rice’,*  
  *ba mâu ruộng ‘3 mows of ricefield’, ba düm muối ‘3 pinches of salt’,*  
  *ba mó rau cài ‘3 bunches of mustard greens’, etc.*
• a classifier N’ for nouns denoting quantities held by specific containers or vessels like nồi, bát, chảo, chén, cốc, tách, ly, thia, etc., for example:

- hai nồi com ‘2 pot(ful)s of rice’, ba bát com ‘3 bowls of rice’,
- một cháo mì xào (noodle stir-fry) ‘a wok of stir-fried noodles’,
- vài chén rượu ‘a few cups of wine’, hai cốc sữa ‘two glasses of milk’,
- một tách trà ‘a cup of tea’, một ly cà-phê sữa đá (coffee milk ice) ‘a glass of iced coffee with condensed milk’,
- bốn thia nước mắm (liquid salted-fish) ‘four spoonfuls of fish sauce’
- máy muồng bột ngọt (powder sweet) ‘a few spoonfuls of MSG’, etc.

Cf. noun phrases referring to individual utensils, pots and pans, cups and glasses: hai cái nồi ‘two pots’, ba cái bát ‘three eating bowls’, một cái chảo ‘a wok’, vài cái chén ‘a few cups’, hai cái cốc ‘two (empty) glasses’, một cái tách ‘a coffee cup’, một cái ly ‘an (empty) glass’, bốn cái thia/ muồng ‘four spoons’.

There may also be a separate slot that immediately precedes -1 (N’), which merits some discussion. Its only filler is cái, which occurs within the nominal expression thus: cái + N’ + N + DEM.

When discussing this lexeme in detail in his monograph devoted to the NP, Nguyễn Tài Cẩn [1975b: 239-250] gives the following examples:

- cái chiếc (single piece) bàn nầy ‘this table’
- cái quả (fruit) nui nầy ‘this mountain’
- cái cây (tree) bút nầy ‘this pen’
- cáibecue (panel) thư nầy ‘this letter’

in which the element cái serves to emphasize and individualize the particular object which is talked about. Before him, grammarians have also pointed out that this “article” cái “serves to explain more clearly or to reinforce the meaning of a noun” [Trần, Pham & Bui 1943: 52].

About this lexeme, which had been called “definite article” [Trường Vĩnh Tông 1932: 23] and even “superarticle” [Bulteau 1953: 21], the three co-authors cited above add that it serves “to attract the reader’s attention to the head noun” as in

- Việc này lỡ-thỡ lâm. ‘This business is very embarrassing.’
- Cái việc này lỡ-thỡ lâm. ‘This particular business is very embarrassing.’ [Trần, Pham & Bui 1943: 52]
To Lê Văn Lý [1960], cái in this usage has “the value of a ‘definite’ or ‘demonstrative’ word” as in

*Cái con dao anh cho tôi mượn, nó thật sắc.*
(cái living thing knife you give me borrow, it real sharp)
‘The knife (which) you lent me is really sharp.’

*Cái người thợ may đến sáng ngày đầu rồi?
(cái person artisan sew arrive morning day, where already)
‘Where is the tailor who came this morning?’

*Cái con ngựa ấy chạy nhanh thật.
(cái living thing horse that, run fast real)
‘That horse over there runs really fast.’ [1960: 213]

Indeed the role of this polyvalent lexeme cái is to individualize, to single out a particular item—denoted by a classified noun—*(cái cuốn sách này ‘this book here’), or a particular conventional unit *(cái ít sữa này ‘this liter of milk’), or even a particular kind of material—denoted by a mass noun *(cái mực này ‘this ink’).*

Moreover, when preceding the appropriate “special classifier”, this “extra” general classifier adds—with the help of intonation—a pejorative connotation to such utterances as the examples given on p. 96:

*Cái ông giáo sư tóc bạc đó có ba bà vợ rồi đây.
(cái man teacher hair silver that have three woman wife already there)
‘That white-haired teacher over there has (no less than) three wives.’

*Cái thằng chồng em nhỏ chẳng ra gì.
(cái guy husband younger-sibling he not turn-out anything)
‘That husband of mine is good for nothing.’

*Note:* The “restrictive” elements to the left of the head noun are content words, which often occur singly and can be listed exhaustively, whereas each of those “descriptive” elements that follow the head noun belongs to an open class and sometimes can itself occur as the head of a short phrase.

8.1.6 Positions +1, +2 and +3
As shown in the box below, the positions to the right of the central position (0), occupied by the nuclear or head noun, can be filled by nouns, functive verbs, stative verbs, substitutes or numerals, that describe various attributes of the head noun, for example material, color, size, quality,
order, demonstrative, possession. Before slot +4 (DEM), the three slots +1, +2 and +3 perform their own functions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>-1</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>+1</th>
<th>+2</th>
<th>+3</th>
<th>+4</th>
<th>+5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N’</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
<td>MATERIAL</td>
<td>COLOR</td>
<td>OTHER</td>
<td>DEM</td>
<td>POSSESS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1) **chiec ao-dai lua xanh moi may nay cuatöi**

(2) **cái ghe may moi mua ay**

(3) **ngöi nha gach to-tuong**

(4) **canh nån**

(5) **huyen**

(6) **ong huyen**

(7) **nöi toi ra doi**

(8) **khi me toi mat**

(9) **cäu sinh-vien**

In example (1), slot +1 is filled by *lua* ‘silk’, a noun denoting material. Slot +2 is filled by *xanh* ‘blue, green’, an adjective denoting color. Slot +3 is filled by *mói may* ‘recently tailored’---a (reduced) determinative clause.

8.1.7 Positions +4 and +5
If we include slots +4 (nay ‘this’) and +5 (cua toi ‘of mine’), we have a nominal phrase in which every position is filled:

(1) **chiec l ao-dài l lua l xanh l moi may l nay l cuatöi**

‘this newly-tailored blue silk dress of mine’

Example (2) does not have anything in slot +2 or slot +5. Slot +1 is filled by *may* ‘rattan’, a noun denoting material. The filler in slot +3, *mói mua*, means ‘(which someone) recently purchased’, and we have:

(2) **cái l ghe l may l moi mua l ay** ‘that newly bought rattan chair’

In example (3), the head noun *nha* ‘house’ is preceded by its classifier *ngöi* ‘edifice, throne’ in the N’ slot, and followed by three descriptive qualifiers:
the noun *gạch* ‘brick’ denoting material (slot +1), the adjective *tố-tường* ‘huge’ describing size (slot +2), and a further attributive *ba nó vưa mồi tậu* (dad he just recently buy) ‘[that] his dad just bought’, which is the equivalent of a reduced (embedded) relative clause in English.

As a matter of fact, the connective *mà* was needed in the early 20th century to translate the “relative pronoun” *qui, que, dont, où* in French. This usage is considered artificial [Bulteau 1953: 197; Nguyên Quí-Hùng 1965: 426-427] since normally in both the spoken and written forms the use of this item is not obligatory:

(3) *ngôi l nhà l gạch l to-tường l [mà] ba nó vưa mồi tậu*

‘the huge brick house [which] his father just bought’

The short noun phrase in example (4) consists of a non-classified time noun *canh* ‘night watch---one of the five segments of a night reckoned in rural Vietnam’ followed by the (ordinal) numeral *thứ năm* ‘fifth’: *canh thứ năm* > *canh năm* means ‘the fifth watch’.

In modern usage, *năm giờ* means ‘5 o’clock’ --- and also ‘five hours’ (cf. the expression *giờ thứ năm* [hour fifth] used in the 19th century for ‘5 o’clock’ [see 5.3.2], but nowadays only for ‘the fifth hour’).

Example (5) is another short noun phrase made up of *huyện* ‘district’, a non-classified noun denoting an administrative unit, followed by *dó* ‘that’, a demonstrative: *huyện dó* ‘that district’. [Fillers of slot +4 are demonstratives (DEM) *này, ấy, dó, kia, nó*.

In example (6), however, the central noun *huyện* means ‘district chief’ instead, so is preceded by the “polite” classifier (N’) *ông* ‘grandfather; gentleman’, reserved for officeholders: *ông huyện dó* ‘that district chief’.

Examples (7), (8) and (9) share the same structure as examples (1), (2) and (3). Their respective meanings are *nơi << tôi ra đi>>* (place I go-out world) ‘the place (where) I was born’, *khi << me tôi mất >>* (time mother me lost) ‘the time (when) my mother died’, *cậu sinh-viên << anh gặp hôm nọ >>* (boy student you meet day other) ‘the student (whom) you met the other day’.

Compare the attributive in examples (1) and (2):

(1) *chiéc l áo-dài l lụa l xanh < mồi may >,*

where the determinative *mồi may* means ‘which somebody recently made’---another reduced “relative clause” serving to modify the head noun *áo-dài*;
THE NOUN PHRASE

(2) cái / ghe / máy < mới mua >,
where the determinative mới mua means ‘which somebody has recently purchased’—another reduced “relative clause” serving to modify the head noun ghe.

Thus the connective (= preposition) mà, optionally used only when the head noun is followed by several modifiers, has been erroneously treated as a “relative pronoun” [Tran, Pham & Bui 1943: 193], e.g.

(7) nơi << tôi ra đời >> = nơi (mà) tôi ra đời ‘the place where I was born’

(8) khi << mẹ tôi mất >> = khi (mà) mẹ tôi mất ‘(the time) when my mother died’

(9) câu sinh-viên << anh gặp hôm nay >> = câu sinh-viên (mà) anh gặp hôm nay ‘the student (whom) you met the other day’

(10) người << tôi kính-trọng nhất >> = người (mà) tôi kính-trọng nhất ‘the person (whom) I respect most’

(11) cái con dao << anh cho tôi muốn >> = cái con dao (mà) anh cho tôi muốn ‘the knife (which) you lent me’

[This and the following example are from Lê Văn Lý (1960: 213).]

(12) cái người thở may << đến sáng ngày >> = cái người thở may (mà) đến sáng ngày ‘the tailor who came this morning’

(13) chiếc ô-tô << cảnh sát khám thây ma-tuy >> = chiếc ô-tô (trong đó) cảnh sát khám thây ma-tuy ‘the car in which the police (searched and) found drugs’

(14) chính sách << vì dó Pháp mất mặt >> ‘the policy because of which France lost face’

The last two examples (13) and (14) use a compound connective (respectively, trong đó ‘in that place, in there, wherein’, and vì dó ‘because of that’) to express the relationship between the embedded clause and the antecedent of the relevant connective (respectively ô-tô ‘car’ and chính sách ‘policy’).

Sentence (14) can also be paraphrased as (14a) cái chính sách << (mà) đã khiến Pháp mất mặt >> (cái policy which ANTERIOR cause France lose face) ‘the policy which caused France to lose face’.

When the determinative clause (in slot +3) denotes the agent of the action which affects the head noun, the connective do is used, as in
one delegation led by Professor NXY

Slot +5 can be filled by a prepositional phrase that contains a connective like cúa ‘of’, về ‘about’, đến ‘concerning’, cho ‘for’, followed by its object—a noun phrase.

The connective (or preposition) cúa (7.2.1) links a complement to the head noun, as in sách cúa tôi ‘my book(s)’. But when the possessive relationship is obvious, it may be omitted, as in cọ tôi (aunt I/me) ‘my aunt’, tóc mẹ (hair mother) ‘Mom’s hair’, chân bàn (leg table) ‘table leg’, lưng ghế (back chair) ‘chair back’, cửa sông (mouth river) ‘estuary’, etc. And when there is a verb immediately in front of it, then cúa must be used: bộ yêu cúa con ‘my dear daddy’, ý muốn cúa chúng tôi ‘our wish’, niềm vui cúa ho-hàng ‘the joy of relatives’, tiếng nói cúa lương tâm ‘the voice of one’s conscience’, etc.

The connective cúa can replace do when the idea of ownership is apparent within the (embedded) determinative clause, e.g.

(16) quyền từ điển [cúa / do tôi soạn ] (N’ dictionary of/by I compile)
	‘the dictionary which I compiled’

(17) cây ổi [cúa anh Hiền trong năm kia] (tree guava of brother Hiền plant year yonder)
	‘the guava tree which Brother Hiền planted the year before last’.

In the next chapter we will see that cúa is also used as a connective in a verb phrase (to introduce what is the source of a gift or a loan).
Chapter 9
The Verb Phrase

9.0 The verb phrase (đồng-ngữ)
Like the structure of a noun phrase (NP), the makeup of a verb phrase (VP) consists of a central position and a number of slots preceding and following that central position. The central or nuclear position (slot 0) may be occupied by a single verb (v), or by a verb surrounded by determiners which occur in several positions to the left and to the right of that head verb.

The nature of each of the various verb classes (6.1.3) affects the structure of a particular verb phrase. For instance, while Nỗ chạy. is a complete utterance meaning ‘He runs, He jogs.’, Tôi tưởng ‘I thought wrongly.’ is an incomplete sentence, unless it can be expanded into Tôi tưởng (rằng) nỗ văn chạy (I thought that he still run) ‘I was under the impression that he is still jogging (these days).’ Such utterances as *Nỗ chạy rằng. or *Nỗ rất chạy. are ungrammatical, as opposed to Nỗ rất mê., a well-formed sentence containing a stative verb and meaning ‘He is very tired.’

In Chapter 6, we have learned that chạy ‘to run’ is an intransitive verb (6.1.3.1), that tưởng is a “quotative” verb of thinking whose complement is introduced by rằng ‘that’ (6.1.3.7), and that only stative verbs (like mê) and verbs denoting psychological states (like yêu ‘to love’, thích ‘to like’) can be preceded by rất ‘very’---a degree marker. On the other hand, verbs denoting an activity like chạy ‘to run’, đi ‘to walk’, đứng ‘to stand’, nói ‘to speak’, hỏi ‘to ask’ do not take a degree marker.

Also, a linking verb denoting change (like hoá, thành ‘to become’) (6.1.3.4) cannot occur without a complement whereas a verb of existence (like có ‘to exist’, còn ‘to remain’) (6.1.3.3) can occur with or without an object --- or subject.

We will now look at the various determiners, first those occurring to the left, then those occurring to the right of the head verb.
9.1 Preverbs. The determiners that precede the head verb could be called "preverbs". Below are examples of preverb subclasses.

9.1.1. Preverbs may be adverbs that denote the following aspects:

9.1.1.1. Confirmation: `cô 'do, does, did' in `Tôi cô trả lời rồi.' (I EMPHATIC pay words already) 'I did answer [the invitation].'; `chi 'only' in Nœ chi nói thời. (he only talk stop) 'He only talks.'

9.1.1.2. Negation: `không, chẳng, chà 'not' in Tôi `không / chẳng / chà thích. 'I don’t like [it].'; `chưa 'not yet' in Họ chưa trả lời. 'They haven’t answered yet.' (7.1.2.3)

9.1.1.3. Tense: `dang 'in the process of', `đã 'anterior', `sẽ 'future', `sắp 'immediate future', `vừa mới 'recent past', `từng 'experience' in `đang ăn 'is eating', `đã đến rồi 'already arrived', `sẽ mua 'will buy', `sắp (sua) `lấy vợ (about to take wife) 'will get married soon', `vừa mới bán 'just sold (recently)', `từng ở Nœ-Uóc = Niu-Oóc (experience reside New York) 'has lived in New York.' (7.1.2.4A through G)

9.1.1.4. Time: `hay 'often' in `hay ăn chừng lớn 'of infant] to eat often and grow fast'; `năng 'frequently' in `năng đi năng lại (di 'go', lại 'come') 'to frequent'; `thường 'generally' in `thường dùng xe điện (use vehicle electric) 'usually takes the streetcar'; `bỗng 'suddenly, unexpectedly' in Trời bỗng mưa to (sky suddenly rain big) 'It suddenly rained hard. '; `chợt 'suddenly, unexpectedly' in Em (younger sister) `chợt đến (arrive), `chợt đi (go) 'You come and go just like that.'; `thịnh-thoảng 'now and then' in Tôi `thịnh-thoảng mới gặp anh ấy (only-then meet young man that) 'I see him once in a while.'; `lâu-lâu (long REDUPLICATION) 'every now and then' in Cô `lâu-lâu mới viết thư (only-then write letter). 'She only writes once in a blue moon.', etc.

9.1.1.5. Comparison, uniformity and continuity: `cùng 'likewise, too, also' in `cùng thích mì 'also likes noodles', `cùng `không thích mì (likewise not like noodle) 'does not like noodles either'; `đều 'equally' in (cùng) `đều thích món phở (likewise equally like dish phở) '[they] all like beef noodle soup'; `cùng 'together' in `cùng học một trường (together study one school) '[they] study at the same school'; `vẫn 'still', `cứ 'continues to', and `còn 'still' occurring in combination in `vẫn cứ ngủ 'went on sleeping', `vấn `cứ hút thuốc lá 'continues to smoke cigarettes [despite
warning], hãy còn đang ngủ ‘is still asleep’, vẫn còn uống rượu ‘is still drinking alcohol’ (7.1.2.2A through C).

9.1.1.6. recurrence or resumption: lại ‘again’ in Trời lại mưa nữa (sky again rain additional) ‘It is raining again’, Hỏ ngû một lúc rồi lại làm (they rest one moment then again work) ‘They rested a moment, then resumed working’, Mẹ dâ bảo không được ăn kẹo, sao con lại cắn ăn? (mother anterior say not allowed eat candy, how child contrary-to-expectation continue eat) ‘[mother speaking to child] I told you not to eat candy, why did you go ahead and do it (despite my warning)?’ (7.1.2.2D).

9.1.1.7. order or prohibition: hãy ‘exhortative’ in Hãy nín đi! (EXHORTATIVE stop-crying IMPERATIVE) ‘Stop crying!’; chớ or đừng ‘prohibitive’ in Chớ (cô) uống rượu! (PROHIBITIVE EMPHATIC drink alcohol) ‘Don’t (you) drink alcohol.’ Đừng quên lời mẹ dặn! (PROHIBITIVE forget words mother advise) ‘Don’t forget what Mom told you.’ (7.1.2.5).

9.1.2. Preverbs may be auxiliary verbs denoting possibility, probability, ability or volition. Examples are:

có thể ‘(have ability) ‘can, may’ in có thể làm nổi (do capable ‘can do it’); chịu ‘suffer, undergo’ in chịu thua (lose) ‘conceded defeat’; định ‘intend’ in định học luật (study law) ‘plans to study law’; toán, tính ‘plan’ in Tôi toán/tính qua nhà Bác Cà chơi. (go-over house uncle big play) ‘I thought of going to First Uncle’s house for a visit.’; dám ‘dare’ in Cháu không dám hỏi chú (nephew/niece not dare ask younger paternal uncle) ‘[child to uncle] I did not dare ask you.’; dạnh ‘be resigned to’ in Ông ấy dánh bộ cả tủ sách lại. (gentleman that resign leave all closet-book behind) ‘He reluctantly left his entire library behind.’; nỡ ‘have the heart to’ in Sao anh nỡ bỏ em? (how elder brother be as cruel as drop younger sister) ‘(Darling) how can you have the heart to abandon me?’; muốn ‘want’ in Anh ấy không muốn làm như thế, nhưng ….. (fellow that not want act like so, but …) ‘He did not want to act that way, but ……’; cần ‘need’ in Con cần suy-nghi thêm. (child need think-think add) ‘You need to think it over.’; phải ‘must, have to’ in Tôi phải rời khỏi nơi này. (I must leave away-from place this) ‘I must leave this place.’; nên ‘should’ in Em nên nghe chị. (younger sibling should listen to elder sister) ‘[older sister to younger sister] You had better listen to me.’; quyết ‘resolve, be
determined’ in Chàng quyết (chị) phục-thù cho cha (he resolve will avenge for father). ‘He resolved to avenge his father.’ etc.

9.1.3. Preverbs may be degree markers that help identify stative verbs or adjectives: rất ‘very, quite’, khá ‘rather, pretty’, khá ‘a little too ....’, hơi ‘a little’, quá ‘excessively’, etc. (9.7.2.2) These same markers may also precede verbs of feeling and knowing like yêu ‘to love’, thích ‘to like’, ghét ‘to hate’, nhớ ‘to miss’, sợ ‘to fear’, mê ‘to love passionately’ (rất yêu, rất thích, rất ghét, rất nhớ, quá yêu, quá sợ, quá mê, etc.).

9.1.4. Preverbs may also be some fixed expressions like càng ... càng .... ‘more and more’ as in càng nghe càng thích ‘the more I listen, the more I like it.’; [càng] ngày càng .... ‘more .... every day’ as in [càng] ngày càng lớn mạnh ‘grows bigger and stronger every day’; mỗi ngày một .... ‘more ..... each day’ as in mỗi ngày một tiến-bỗ ‘more progressive each day’.

9.2 The relative positions of preverbs. The determiners that precede the head verb occur in specific order. The table below shows the relative positions of some frequently used preverbs:

### POSITIONS OF PREVERBS

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<th>cứng</th>
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<th>vẫn</th>
<th>sẽ</th>
<th>rất</th>
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<th>hay</th>
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Some preverbs are difficult to classify, but roughly speaking, those which are farthest from the head verb show tense, time, etc., and those marking negation and prohibition tend to come closer to the head verb. As already mentioned in 7.1.3, efforts have been made to examine possible sequences and co-occurrences [Nguyễn Kim-Than 1963 & 1975; Thomas 1981]. The negators không, chẳng, chưa ‘not’, chưa ‘not yet’, chờ and dừng ‘do not’, for instance, are mutually exclusive. So are dâ ‘anterior’ and vẫn ‘still’, although dâ may appear after cùng ‘also’ or đều ‘all’.

In addition to several possible sequences listed in 7.1.3, we can mention that in modern journalistic style one interesting construction includes all three “tense markers” dâ, đang and sẽ in that order:

    Chúng tôi dâ, đang và sẽ giúp các bạn đẩy lui nạn nghèo-khó và dột-nát.

(we exclusive ANTERIOR PRESENT and FUTURE help plural friend push retreat disaster poor-poor and ignorant-ignorant)

‘We have helped you, we are helping you, and we will help you push back the scourge of poverty and ignorance.’

The pair of adverbs vẫn and thường ‘usually, habitually’ may co-occur, and it is reversible: Tôi vẫn thường = thường vẫn tập bơi vào buổi sáng. (I usually practice swim enter half-day morning) ‘I usually practice swimming in the morning.’

9.3 Postverbs. The determiners that follow the head verb could be called “postverbs”. They present a more varied picture, particularly with regard to various objects or complements that a member of one given verb subclass calls for. There are three possibilities: either the complement must immediately follow the head verb, or it may require a connective, or the situation may be indifferent.

9.3.1. There is no connective:

A. The verb is transitive and takes a direct object as in ăn cơm ‘ate dinner’, học bài ‘studied the lesson’, đánh Pháp dưới Nhật ‘fight the French and expel the Japanese’ [Vietminh slogan], trồng cây gây rừng ‘plant trees and start forests’, viết sách ‘wrote a book’, mặc áo ‘wears a shirt’, giết vợ ‘killed his wife’, thích mùa thu (season autumn) ‘likes autumn’, sợ lạnh ‘fears the cold weather’, yêu nước ‘loves one’s country’, tặng bạn ‘presents [something] to one’s friend’, viết bütün
writes in pencil', nhân tiền 'received money', vay tiền 'borrowed money', mượn dao 'borrowed a knife', bị tên 'was hit by an arrow', phải lòng 'fell in love with', etc.

B. The verb of motion takes a complement which denotes a goal, a destination as in đến trường 'reached the school', đi chợ 'went to the market', về nước 'went back (to one's) home (country)', sang Thái-lan 'went over to Thailand', qua cầu 'crossed the bridge', lên phòng ngủ trên gác (ascend room-sleep space-above upper-floor) 'went up to the bedroom upstairs', lên Đà-lạt 'went up to Đà-lạt', xuống ga-ra 'went down to the garage,' ra thư viện (go out library) 'went out to the library', ra Hà-nội (go out Hanoi) 'went up to Hanoi [from further south]', vào phòng tắm (enter room bathe) 'went into the bathroom', vào Huế (enter Huế) 'went down to Huế [from further north]', etc.

C. The situational complement denotes state, manner, frequency, scope, result, as in nằm đất 'lay on the floor', ngủ mần 'slept under a mosquito net', ăn chậm 'ate slowly', kêu to 'shouts loudly', ăn no 'ate until full', tô hồng 'painted it red', ra ngoại-quốc mấy lần (go out foreign country a few time) 'went abroad several times', tắm một cái (bathe one time) 'took a bath', đến trước (arrive before) 'arrived first', về nhì (return second) 'came second in the race', chồn song 'buries alive', Tù-Hải chết đứng. 'Tù Hài died standing', tìm ngược tìm xuôi (look upstream look downstream) 'hunted far and near', ở hai tháng 'stayed two months', mua năm 'subscribed annually', etc.

D. The coverb denotes result, direction or orientation, as in nghe thấy (listen perceive) 'heard [sound]', kiểm ra (search out) 'found', tìm thấy (look find) 'found [a lost object]', tạo nên (create result) 'created', thuê được nhà rẻ (rent gain house cheap) 'was able to rent a cheap house', lấy phải vợ xấu (take suffer wife ugly) 'married an ugly wife', giảm phải gai (step suffer thorn) 'stepped on a thorn', chạy ra chạy vào (run exit run enter) 'runs in and out', gửi về (send return) 'sent back', cấp cho (grant give) 'grants to, gives to', ôm lấy đứa bé (embrace take classifier small) 'hugged the child', etc.

E. The complement denotes causality, as in chết bệnh 'died of illness', chết đói 'died of hunger, starved to death', chết bom 'died in a bomb raid', chết đạn 'died of a bullet', chết rét 'died of cold', etc.
F. The complement is a postposed adverb like lâm ‘much’ (ân lâm ‘ate a lot’), quá ‘too, excessively’ (lâm quá ‘worked too hard’), nǐa ‘again, more, further’ (lâm nǐa ‘did it again’), rỗi ‘already’ (lày rỗi ‘took it already’), nổi ‘finish up’ (dích nổi ‘finished the translation’), ngay ‘right away’ (việt ngay ‘wrote it right away’), liën ‘immediately’ (lâm liën ‘did it right away’), hän ‘definitely’ (bọ hän ‘gave up entirely’), dā ‘first’ (nghi dā ‘rest first’), häng ‘first’ (nghi com häng ‘eat dinner first’), luôn ‘often; immediately; to a full extent’ (nói luôn ‘talks incessantly’, sān có dip, lēn luôn Đa-lạt (available exist opportunity ascend right away Dalat) ‘took advantage of a chance to go up to Dalat’), māi /hoåi ‘continually, on and on’ (khóc māi /hoåi ‘kept on crying’), dān ‘gradually’ (uơng dān ‘drinks little by little’), etc.

[The reduplicated forms of the last three terms—luôn luôn ‘constantly’, māi māi ‘for ever’, and dān dān ‘gradually’—are movable adverbs like tuyệt ‘super’, quá ‘too, excessively, so’, hêt súc ‘utterly’, vō cúng ‘extremely’: they may either precede or follow the head verb.]

G. The complement denotes denial, prohibition or failure to notice, with such verbs as tür-chōi ‘to refuse’, bác-bọ ‘to reject’, cuf-tuyệt ‘to turn down’ (tür-chōi [không cho] tăng lương ‘refuse not give increase salary’—denied [somebody] a raise’), cām ‘to forbid’, ngān-cān ‘to prevent’ (cām [không duệc] hút thuốc lá ‘forbid not get suck drug-leaf’—‘prohibited [somebody] from smoking’, ngān-cān không cho vào thư-viện ‘prevent-stop not allow enter library’—‘stopped [somebody] from entering the library’), quên ‘to forget’ (quên [không] ghi vào số địa-chi ‘forget not note enter book address’—‘forgot to write it down in the address book’).

[Under French rule, one sign often found in the capital city of Hanoi spelled out CAM KHONG DUOC DAI (the grammatical equivalent of DEFENSE D’URINER). Lý Toét, a cartoon character from the countryside, read the four romanized words the way he was taught to read Chinese characters—from right to left—and argued with the agent de police that at that particular wall people “can pass water (since) there was no forbidding”: dái duệc không cám! The gendarmerie should have made the sign read unambiguously CAM DAL.]

9.3.2. There must be a connective:

A. The complement indicates accompaniment, association or opposition, as in ở nhà với mẹ ‘stays home with his mother’; học với ông
Carjat ‘studied with Mr. Carjat’, nói với bạn ‘speaks to one’s friend’, đến với đồng-bào ‘comes to one’s countrymen’, trở về với Tổ-quốc (turn return with fatherland) ‘returns to one’s fatherland’, tuyên-bó với cử-tri ‘announced to the electorate’, vui-thú với vợ con ‘enjoys home life with his wife and kids’, trái với nguyên-tắc ‘contrary to the principle’, thành-công với hai bàn tay trắng ‘succeeded with two (hand white) empty hands’, Trường Chu Văn An đấu với Nguyễn Trần: ‘Chu Văn An High School (fight with) is playing against Nguyễn Trần’, etc.

B. The complement indicates an objective to pursue: ān cho nó ‘ate until one is full’, kiểm cho ra, kiếm bằng được (search until out, search equal obtain) ‘try to find it at all costs’; lấy cho kỹ/bằng được (marry until equal obtain) ‘married [her] at all costs’.

Such a construction as Lấy bút chỉ màu (pen-lead color) mà vế! ‘Use a color pencil to draw [it]!’ or Lấy xe đạp của bố (bike property dad) mà đi chỗ! ‘Use daddy’s bike to go to market!’ employs the connective mà with the meaning ‘(in order) to’ following an (imperative) predication which contains the “disposal verb” lấy ‘to take, use’.

Note: Some compound idioms exist without the connective: nói dúa ‘said jokingly’, (bốn mơn) ān chơi (four dish eat play) ‘the four assorted appetizers’ [cf. Fr. amuse-gueules].

C. The complement indicates the second term of a simile: ān như bò ngon cỏ (eat like ox gulp grass) ‘to eat gluttonously’, làm như bèn ‘to do easily as in play’, đề như thò ‘to reproduce like rabbits’, etc.

D. The object of the connective của is the source of a gift, a loan, when it follows a verb of taking, borrowing, stealing, seizing, etc., as in lấy của ông nội nhiều tiền (take property grandfather-inner much money) ‘took a lot of money from his paternal grandfather’; vay của bà hàng xóm một bát đường (borrow property lady-hamlet one bowl sugar) ‘borrowed a bowl of sugar from the lady next door’; mượm của thư viện hai cuốn tiểu-thuyết (borrow property book-house two roll novel) ‘borrowed two novels from the library’; năm 1862 Pháp chiếm của Việt-nam ba tỉnh miền đông (year 1862 France seize property Vietnam three province region east) ‘in 1862 France seized the three eastern provinces of Vietnam’.

E. The complement indicates location, point of departure or focus: làm việc ở ngay thủ đô ‘works right in the capital city’, ở Nha-trang ra (live
Nhatrang exit) ‘came up from Nha-trang’, xây-dựng tại Hải-phòng ‘builds in Hải-phòng’ (cf. xây-dựng Hải-phòng ‘builds up Hải-phòng’), phát-triển ở miền duyên-hải ‘develops in the coastal area’ (cf. phát-triển miền duyên-hải ‘develops the coastal area’), tin ở sự ủng-hỗ của quần-chủng ‘believed in the support of the masses’.

F. The complement indicates motivation: ra tranh-cự với quyên-loại cá-nhân (exit run-election because of interests individual) ‘ran (in the election) because of personal interests’, lừa em ruột vì/tại tham cửa (dupe younger sibling innards because of covet property) ‘cheated his own sibling because of greed’, làm việc vì lợi-ich chung (do job because of usefulness common) ‘works for the sake of the common good’.

G. The complement indicates the topic presented or discussed: nói chuyện về truyện nôm (talk-story about tale vernacular) ‘spoke about the narratives in nôm verse’, thảo luận về thơ lục-bát (discuss about poetry six-eight) ‘discussed poetry in the lục-bát meter’.

H. The complement indicates attention or concern: để ý đến (place mind reach) ‘pays attention to’, chú-ý tôi (concentrate reach) ‘concentrates on’, chưa đếm-ngó gì đến việc học của con-cái (not glance-look whatever reach business study property children) ‘never takes a look at his kids’ schoolwork’.

I. The complement indicates some reason: bỏ nhà ra đi intentional co vợ kinh-khủng đố (leave house exit go because of classifier wife terrible that) ‘left home because of that terrible wife of his’; thất bại tại cái chính-sách bất-nhurst đố (fail because of classifier policy not-one that) ‘failed because of that inconsistent policy’, Kế-hoạch đố vở là tại chúng nó. (plan tumble-break be because group-he) ‘The plan collapsed because of them.’

J. The complement indicates an origin: giành độc-lập từ tay người Pháp (wrest single-stand from hand person France) ‘wrested independence from the French’, sửa từ đầu đến cuối (correct from head to end) ‘to revise from beginning to end’; thổ tự trong dấy lòng (utter from inside bottom heart) ‘to express [feeling] from the bottom of one’s heart’.

K. The complement indicates the beneficiary: nấu cho lũ con (cook give band child) ‘to cook for one’s children’, chế tạo cho người già (make-create give person old) ‘to manufacture for the benefit of older people’, việt
cho bac tiieu-hoc (write give level small-study) ‘to write [books] for the primary level’.

L. The complement indicates some purpose: sонg de huong-thu (live in order to enjoy) ‘lives to enjoy things’, ra tranh-cu de phuc-vu dong-bao (exit run in order to serve compatriot) ‘ran (in the election) in order to serve his countrymen’.

M. The complement indicates the origin of an action or an attitude: do bon phia danh vao (originate four side strike enter) ‘attacked from four directions’, do oc ky-thi (originate brain discriminate) ‘because of discrimination’, do tru-thuc lanh-dao (originate intellectual lead) ‘led by intellectuals’ [this preferred to lanh-dao boi tru-thuc, translationese for the French construction containing the preposition par ‘by’; see below].

N. The connective boi ‘because of, on account of’ is used to indicate the cause or motive: boi mau ghen kinh-khung cua ba vong (because blood jealous terrible property classifier wife) ‘because of his wife’s terrible jealousy’; gia-dinh tan-nat boi tinh me co-bac cua anh ay. (family demolished because of habit addicted chess-silver property fellow that) ‘The family got broken up because of his addiction to gambling.’

Usually the complement indicates the actor, the doer, the agent: sang-lap boi nguoi A-dong ‘founded by (people Asia east) Asians’, (nuoc ta) bi cai-tri boi thuc-dan Phap trong hon 80 nam. (country we/us suffer govern by colonialist France in more eighty year) ‘Our country was ruled by French colonialists for over eighty years.’ [The active forms (do) nguoi A-dong sang-lap and Thuc-dan Phap cai-tri nuoc ta trong hon 80 nam are considered more natural than the “passive” form, cf. 6.1.3.2.]

Lately, this boi-construction is tolerated in scientific discourse when used in definitions, e.g. “Khoi la phan khong-gian gioi-han boi mot mat kep kin.” ‘A volume is a portion of space bound by (one surface closed) a closed surface area.’; “Goc la mot hinh tao boi hai nua duong thang cong xuat-phat tu mot diem.” ‘An angle is a figure formed by two straight half-lines (together originate from one point) diverging from a common point.’ [Tu-dien tieng Viet 1994]

O. The complement indicates the content of a belief or an opinion: tin la that ‘believes that [something] is true’ (cf. tin that ‘truly believes’), biet la han ‘knows that [it was] him’ (cf. biet han ‘knows him’).
9.3.3. A connective may be used or not:

A. The complement is a place or a time: *năm (ở) trên giường* ‘lies in [on] bed’; *ngồi (ở) đây* ‘sits [in] here’; *bị té (vào) ngày thứ sáu 13* (suffer fall enter day-sixth 13) ‘fell down on a Friday the 13th’; *giờ dạ (vào) lúc 2 giờ sáng* (turn uterus enter moment two hour morning) ‘[of expectant mother] started going into labor at 2 am’.


But the connective is mandatory if a direct object, too, is present, as in *nói chuyện (talk story) bằng tiếng Pháp* ‘talks in French’; *ăn cơm (eat rice) bằng dùng* ‘eats rice with chopsticks’; *đi San José (go San José) bằng xe buýt* ‘goes to San José by bus’; *chữa ung thư (cure cancer) bằng thuốc nam* ‘cures cancer by Vietnamese herbal medicine’; *nuôi con (nourish child) bằng sữa mẹ* ‘breastfeeds her baby’; *tắt ruộng (irrigate ricefield) bằng gầu sòng* ‘irrigates the ricefield using the tripod scoop’; *nhìn tôi bằng cặp mắt nghi ngờ* (look at me by-means-of pair eye suspect) ‘gave me a look of suspicion’, etc.

C. The complement is the content of thought or speech, as in *nói rằng* .... ‘said that ......’, *nhăn mạnh (press strong) rằng ......* ‘emphasized that ......’, *nhăn răng ......* ‘thinks that ......’, *tín tưởng rằng ......* ‘believes that ......’, *xác nhận rằng ......* ‘confirmed that ......’. *Chị ấy bảo (rằng) Thanh-Tùng được nhận rói.* (elder sister that say that Thanh-Tùng get accept already) ‘She said that Thanh-Tùng had been admitted.’; *Chúng tôi ngờ rằng (rằng) ông ấy chưa có vợ* (we exclusive thought that gentleman that not-yet have wife) ‘We thought (wrongly) that he is not married.’

D. The complement indicates the recipient or the provider (“the indirect object”) and the verb is one of giving (*cho, tặng, biểu*) or receiving (*lấy, vay, muốn*)---a “double-object” or “ditransitive” verb---[see 6.1.3.6A]: e.g. *tặng bạn sách* ‘presented his friend with books’ [= tặng sách cho bạn],
"muốn anh ca-vát 'borrowed a tie from (his) elder brother' [= muồn ca-vát cúa anh].

E. The complement of a causative verb (làm ‘to make’, khiển ‘to cause’) follows the object of that verb: làm bố mẹ buồn ‘makes his dad and mom feel sad’, khiển mọi người lo ‘caused everyone to worry’, etc.

Other frequently used causative verbs (Vcause) [6.1.3.8] are cho ‘let, allow, permit’, để ‘let’, mời ‘invite’, rủ ‘invite for a Dutch treat’, xin ‘ask, request’, yêu cầu ‘request’, đời ‘demand’, giúp ‘help’, ép ‘compel’, khuyên ‘advise’, bắt, buộc, bắt buộc ‘force, coerce’, etc. They are sometimes called “telescoping” verbs since the object of the main verb V₁ is at the same time the subject of the second verb V₂.

Several verbs denoting prohibition or opposition (cấm ‘prohibit’, ngăn ‘prevent, stop’, ngăn-cấm ‘forbid, prohibit’) that we already mentioned in section 6.1.3.8 above, can also be included among the large subclass of causative verbs.

F. The “factitive” complement of a verb of choosing—a “double-object” or “ditransitive” verb [6.1.3.6C]—occurs following the direct object (DO) and the copula là/làm, in accordance with this formula:

\[
\begin{align*}
& V_{\text{choose}} + \text{DO} + \text{là/làm} + \text{COMPLEMENT} \\
& (Cô) \quad \text{coi} \quad \text{Châu là kẻ thù.} \\
& \quad \text{she regard} \quad \text{Châu be enemy} \\
& \quad \text{‘She considers Châu an enemy.’} \\
& (Ho) \quad \text{bầu} \quad \text{Quân làm chủ tịch.} \\
& \quad \text{they vote} \quad \text{Quân do chairman} \\
& \quad \text{‘They elected Quån chairperson.’}
\end{align*}
\]

Since the “ditransitive” verb at the central position expresses the idea of evaluation, selection, election, appointment or assignment (e.g. coi ‘to regard, consider’, gọi ‘to call, name’, chọn ‘to choose, select’, tuyển ‘to select’, bầu ‘to elect’, cử ‘to appoint’), its object and its complement are co-referential, i.e. refer to the same entity [cf. Engl People call him a crook].

G. The head verb is a verb of insertion—another “double-object” or “ditransitive” verb [6.1.3.6B]—which denotes a limited movement and is followed successively by its direct object (DO), a coverb of direction (V’), and its complement (which denotes the destination of that movement).
The pattern is as follows:

\[ V_{\text{insertion}} + \text{DO} + V' + \text{COMPLEMENT} \]

(Ânh) thọc tay vào túi.
He stuck his hand into his pocket.

(Nó) nhét quá cam vào bì.
He forced the orange into his bag.

(Tài-xé) đẩy ô-tô vào ga-ra.
The chauffeur pushed the car into the garage.

(Hân) gi súng vào tai vợ.
He pressed the handgun against his wife’s ear.

9.4 The complement may be placed either before or after the head verb.

9.4.1. Several adverbs of manner like sê, khê, tham may either precede or follow the head verb they modify: sê / khê nói = nói sê / khê ‘speaks softly’, tham nghĩ = nghĩ thâm ‘thinks silently’, etc. Others always precede the head verb as in trimest (surreptitiously) nghĩ, thiết (hypothetically) nghĩ, thiên (shallow) nghĩ—all expressions used by a speaker modestly expressing his opinion: ‘(I) humbly think, in my shallow opinion’, etc.

9.4.2. Other adverbs of manner, most of them disyllabic Chinese loanwords, may also either precede or follow the head verb, e.g. nhẹ nhàng, nhờ nhẹ ‘[speak] softly’, hoàn-toàn ‘entirely, completely’, tuyệt-dội ‘absolutely’, tương-dội ‘relatively’, thích-cực ‘actively, positively’, etc. in hoàn-toàn tin-tưởng = tin-tưởng hoàn-toàn ‘to have full confidence’; tuyệt-dội trung-thành = trung-thành tuyệt-dội ‘to be absolutely loyal’; thích-cực làm việc = làm việc thích-cực ‘to work actively’; etc.

In journalistic style, it is possible to use the phrase một cách (one fashion/manner) _____ ‘-ly’, Fr. ‘-ment’ to express manner: trình-bày một cách rõ-ràng ‘presents clearly’, truyền-bố một cách hồn-xعق ‘rudely stated’, một cách kiên-nhanh ‘patiently’, etc.
9.4.3. An adverb of time or duration can also be movable: suôt dồi vâi-vâ = vâi-vâ suôt dồi ‘worked hard all one’s life’; tròn dồi hi-sinh = hi-sinh tròn dồi ‘made sacrifices throughout her life’.

9.4.4. When the complement denotes frequency or a certain amount per time unit, it may also be placed either before or after the head verb:

ăn mới ngày một bữa thòi (eat each day one meal stop) = mới ngày ăn một bữa thòi (each day eat one meal stop) ‘eats only one meal a day’;
Hội Từ-diên-học Bắc-Mĩ họp hai năm một lần (society lexicography north America meet two year one time) = hai năm họp một lần (two year meet one time) ‘The Dictionary Society of North America meets once every two years’;
Báo Ngày Nay ra hai tuần một số (newspaper “Today” come out two week one number) = hai tuần ra một số (two week come out one number) ‘The newspaper Ngày Nay is published every two weeks’.

9.5 Finally there is a unique construction in which as many as three actions are recounted in chronological order: the first verb is usually đi ‘to go’, the second verb denotes whatever activity takes place at the destination of the first movement, then the third verb (always về ‘to return’) denotes the opposite direction of that first movement---hence the label “round-trip phrase” (nghĩa khú-hồi) [Điệp Quang Ban 1992: 74]. Examples are:

dì bòi ‘swim’ về ‘came back from swimming’
dì hoc ‘study’ về ‘returned from school’
(mói) đi chơi ‘play’ Việt-nam về ‘just returned from a Vietnam trip’
(vvla) đi thu-viên ‘library’ về ‘just came back from the library’
(dâa) đi đên ‘reach, arrive’ nhà chú về (rồi) ‘already’
‘already back from Uncle’s house’
The first verb can be any other verb, as in
chay ra cheg Bến-thành (mói) về (bằng xe-ch-lô) (run exit market Ben-thành just return by-means-of pedicab)
‘just came back from Bến-thành Market by pedicab’
dúa vợ đi mỹ-viên (vla mới) về (lead wife go beauty-salon recently just return)
‘just came back from taking his wife to the beauty parlor’
tién bàn ra sân bay về (lúc nây) (see-off friend exit field-fly return moment this)
‘came back a while ago after seeing his friend off at the airport’

vào Sài-gòn ra (rõi)
(enter Saigon exit already)

‘already came back up from Saigon’

lên Đà-lạt xuống (hôm qua)
(ascend Dalat descend day past)

‘came down from Dalat yesterday’

9.6 The positions of postverb determiners present more variety than in the case of determiners surrounding a head noun.

Following are some possible sequences:

..... rõi cùng sê chí (thất-bái)
(then likewise shall only lose)
‘will then only fail, too.’

..... rõi cùng đều sê (hội-hận)
(then likewise all shall repent)
‘will all be sorry, too.’

..... rõi cùng vân sê lại (thất-vọng)
(then likewise still shall again disappointed)
‘will still be disappointed again, too.’

..... rõi cùng sê không chí (đau buồn)
(then likewise shall not only hurt-sad)
‘likewise will not only be grieved.’

Auxiliary verbs like phái, chiu, nõ occur after the above markers:

không phái trả ‘does not have to pay’
chăng chiu thua ‘did not concede defeat’
không nõ giết ‘did not have the heart to kill’

Postposed determiners sometimes occur in a fixed order, sometimes do not:

Tôi khuan mãi từ Sơn-tây về đây cho anh đấy!
(I carry continue from Son-tay return here give you there)

‘I lugged this all the way from Sơn-tây down here for you.’

Tôi nghi mãi không ra đáp-số.
(I reflect continue not come-out answer-number)

‘I thought and thought but could not figure out the answer.’
Nó ba chân bốn cẳng chạy thẳng về nhà.
(he three leg four leg run straight return house)

'He ran straight home as fast as his legs could carry him.'

But there is more freedom when the head verb has a V' (coverb) as directional complement: the equivalent of 'took home two dictionaries' could be mang / hai quyên tù-diên / về nhà or mang / về nhà / hai quyên tù-diên. However, when the direct object is only a noun (like sách 'book, books') instead of a [longer] noun phrase (like hai quyên tù-diên 'two + roll + dictionary'), then the only order allowed is mang / sách / về nhà 'took the book(s) home'.

9.7 The adjectival phrase (tính-ngữ)
The verb phrase whose head verb is one of quality (or a stative verb, i.e. an adjective) also offers an interesting picture with regard to various possible determiners occurring before or after that adjective.

9.7.1 Structure of the adjectival phrase.
9.7.1.1 First, whether a stative verb or adjective has an absolute meaning or not is the relevant factor.
A. An absolute stative verb does not take a degree marker. Examples of absolute adjectives are đức 'male', cái 'female', so 'of baby] first born', riêng, tều 'private', chung 'common', công 'public', chính 'main, principal', and such compound adjectives as chắc nịch 'very firm', trắng tinh 'pure white', xanh ngát 'dark green', tím bấm 'black and blue', thơm phúc 'especially fragrant', rậm ri 'murmur-like', ri rào 'rustling', etc. [6.2.2.3] Forms such as *rất chung (very public), *rất chính (very main), *hoi thơm phúc (a little fragrant especially) are ill-formed.
B. A stative verb with relative meaning can take a preposed degree marker like rất, khá, chí, hồi, cuc, cuc ki, or a postposed degree marker like làm, quá, núa [6.2.2] . Examples of relative adjectives are tốt 'good', xấu 'bad, ugly', đẹp 'beautiful', hay 'proficient, interesting', giỏi 'good, competent', đỏ 'red', to, lớn 'big, large; great', nhỏ, bé 'small, little', cao 'tall', thấp 'short, not tall', lớn ['of person] short', dài 'long', ngắn 'short, not long', khó 'difficult', dễ 'easy', (sung) sung 'happy', khó (sợ) 'unhappy, miserable', dễ chịu 'comfortable', etc., which may appear
with a degree marker as in rất tốt, hoi xâu, khá dài, khá dể, suồng lâm, khó quá, khó nữa, etc.

9.7.1.2 Second, some adjectives can take a complement but others cannot:

(1) Those mentioned in (A) above (đục, cái, chính, phụ, công, tự, trăng tinh, thom phúc, rỉ rào, mủm mủm) do not take a complement: Đây là con đường chính. ‘This is the main road.’ Cái này là chính, cái đó là phụ. ‘This piece is the principal element, that one is secondary.’ The sequences *rất chính (very primary), *rất phụ (very secondary), either in attributive function or in predicative function, are ungrammatical.


9.7.2 Preposed determiners.
With the exception of the prohibitive preverbs dùng, có and hay, the modifiers or adverbs placed before a stative verb are the same as those that may precede a functive verb. [The admonition by Hồ Xuân-Hương (1772-1822?) in one of her poems—Dùng xanh như lá, bắc như voi “Don’t be green as a leaf or white as slaked lime!” is a case of poetic licence.] The permitted determiners express the following:

9.7.2.1 Negation and confirmation, as in có ốm (EMPHATIC sick) ‘is sick’, không ốm (not sick) ‘is not sick’, chăng ốm-dau gì cå (not sick-sick whatever all) ‘was not sick at all’, chỉ ốm lần nào (not sick time any) ‘was not sick once’, không báo giờ ốm (not whenever sick) = chưa ốm báo giờ (not-yet sick whenever) ‘has never been sick’ [with the head adjective in boldface type].

9.7.2.2 Degree, as in rất nghèo ‘very poor’, khá giàu ‘pretty wealthy’, khá dài ‘a little long’, hơi khó ‘a little too difficult’, quá tò-mò ‘too inquisitive’, cực tốt ‘extremely good’, cực-kí quan-trọng ‘extremely
important’, hêt súc rác-rôî ‘extremely complicated’, hoàn-toàn sai-lâm ‘entirely erroneous, completely wrong’, etc.

9.7.2.3 Tense and aspect, as in Giáp dã khoè. (ANTERIOR strong) ‘Giáp has been better in health’, Giáp dã khoè chua? (ANTERIOR strong yet) ‘Is Giáp feeling better yet?’ Át dang ôm. (CONTINUOUS sick) ‘Át is presently) sick’, Tân (vân) còn ôm. (still sick) ‘Tân is still sick’, Cả lôp vân im-lảng. (all class still silent quiet) ‘The whole class was still quiet’, Họ sê giâu. (they shall rich) ‘They will be rich’, Bà Bînh chua mạnh hân. (lady Bînh not-yet well completely) ‘Mrs. Bînh has not completely recovered yet’, etc. (cf. 7.1.2.4)

9.7.2.4 Uniformity, as in Đông nghèo; Tây cùng nghèo. ‘Đông is poor, Tây is also poor.’ Nam cùng không giàu-có gì. (Nam likewise not rich-have whatever) ‘Nam is not rich either.’ Hai bèn nội ngoại cùng nghèo. (two sides inner outer together poor) ‘The parents on both sides are poor.’ Cả hai vợ chồng đều khéo. (all two wife husband equally skilled) ‘Both husband and wife are skillful.’ etc.

9.7.2.5 Progression, as in Bác lại càng kiêu-ngạo hơn. ( even all-the-more arrogant superior) ‘Bác is even more arrogant’, (càng) ngày càng thất-vọng (more day more lose-hope) ‘more and more disappointed’, (môî) ngày một hùng-cuông (each day one powerful-strong) ‘more powerful each day’, etc.

9.7.3 Postposed determiners.
The postposed complements that can follow an adjective consist of three kinds: those that follow the adjective directly, those that are introduced by a connective, and those that may or may not be present.

9.7.3.1 The complement directly follows the head adjective.
A. The complement is a functor whose function is that of a degree marker, as in hay làm ‘very interesting’, hay quá ‘so interesting’, (vể sau sê còn) hay nūa (return afterward shall still interesting additionally) ‘will be even more interesting toward the end’, (sê còn) nghèo mãi (shall still poor continuously) ‘will continue to be poor’, dep tuyêt ‘extremely beautiful’, dố rôî (red already) ‘of color red enough already’, X. (làm việc nhiều quá) ôm rôî. (X work job much excessively sick already) ‘X. worked too hard, so already got sick .’, etc. [There is a slight difference between hay
lâm ‘very interesting (I’m telling you)’ and hay quá ‘so interesting (I saw it, I read it)’, mỏng lâm ‘very thin’ and mỏng quá ‘too thin (as is)’.


C. The complement is a noun that completes some aspect of the content of the head adjective, as in đầy kiến ‘full of ants’, đầy bụi ‘full of dust’, đông người (crowded person) ‘full of people’, đông con ‘having many children’, vàng khạch du lịch (not-crowded visitor travel) ‘deserted by tourists’, đầy cừ (thick pulp) ‘[of fruit] with a thick pulp’, đúng phương pháp (accurate method) ‘methodical’, đúng thể lệ (accurate rule) ‘in conformity with the regulations’, giàu cứu nghèo con (rich property poor child) ‘wealthy but having no or few children’, giàu kinh nghiệm (rich experience) ‘experienced’, thưa tài nguyên (have surplus resource) ‘not lacking resources’, thưa sức (have surplus force) ‘not lacking strength’, tốt gỗ ‘[of furniture] made of good wood’---as favorably compared to tốt nước son ‘having just a good coat of paint’, xa nhà ‘far from home’, gần ngày giỗ bố (near day memorial father) ‘close to the anniversary of his father’s death’, chửa-chan hi vọng (overflow hope) ‘full of hope’, etc.


E. The complement may be a verb, as in **khó nói** ‘difficult to say’, **khó tin** (tin ‘to believe’) ‘incredible, unbelievable’, **khó diễn-tá** (diễn-tá ‘express, describe’) ‘difficult to express’, **khôn nguôi** (difficult abate) ‘[of feeling] difficult to soothe’, **khéo vá** (skillful mend) ‘[of clothing] skillfully mended’, **sung-suốt** ‘happy to be reunited together-with wife child’ ‘happy to be reunited with his wife and kids’, etc.

9.7.3.2 The complement is introduced by a connective.

A. It expresses a comparison, and the sequence is a simile, e.g. **đẹp như tiên** ‘pretty like an immortal fairy’, **xấu như ma** ‘as ugly as a ghost’, **trong như ngọc trắng như ngà** ‘pure like jade, white like ivory’, **tối như mực** ‘as dark as ink,---pitch-dark’, **chầm như rùa** ‘as slow as a turtle’, **tuổi như hủi** ‘as lazy as a leper’, etc.

B. It clarifies some kind of relationship to the receiver (**tốt cho người già** ‘good for old people’, **lợi cho sức khỏe** ‘beneficial to [your] health’ [cf. **ích quốc lợi dân** ‘useful to the country and beneficial to the people’], **nguy hiểm cho hành khách** ‘dangerous for the passengers’, **rủi có cô Kiều** ‘unfortunately for Miss Kiều’), or to the scope of the characteristic (**đúng về cân-bản** ‘accurate regarding fundamentals,---basically correct’, **sai về đường-lối** ‘inaccurate regarding guidelines,---incorrect according to the guidelines’, ** trái với nguyện-vọng của toàn-dân** ‘contrary to the aspirations of the entire population’), etc.

9.7.3.3 The connective may be optionally left out, as in:

**Rồ-ràng (là)** nào giết vợ và tình-dịch. (clear be he kill wife and love-rival) ‘It is very clear that he murdered his wife and her lover.’

**Đúng [= Chính ] (là)** bọn chúng cướp nhà bắng và bán cảnh-sát. (accurate be band they rob house-bank and shoot police) ‘It is precisely they who held up the bank and shot the police.’
THE VERB PHRASE

Our country is rich in agricultural products.

My younger brother is very good in nôm characters, but poor in math.

9.7.4 Order of determiners.
The sequential order of determiners surrounding a stative verb seems to be less complex than in the case of a functive verb. Below are some examples:

That is extremely important to us.

Little Hoàn has his mother’s eyes.

Xuân has less imagination than Hà.

Thu is more skillful than Đồng in composing poetry.

Coordination
We have examined two of the four basic patterns of grammatical grouping: the pattern of modification reflected in the structure of a noun phrase (Chapter 8, from section 8.1), and the pattern of complementation reflected in the structure of a verb phrase (this chapter, sections 9.0 through 9.7). Before moving on to Chapter 10 to examine the sentence, which displays the pattern of predication, we will conclude this chapter by examining the third pattern—that of coordination, which may appear in each of the other three constructions.

Coordination is achieved by a comma pause between two or more items placed in juxtaposition and called “coordinates”:

(1) Nhung, Ngọc, vợ Ngọc, chúng tôi....

‘Nhung, Ngọc, his wife (and) the two of us’
(2) **quần-áo, sách-vô** *(của các cháu)*
   (pants coat book notebook property plural nephew [of yours])
   ‘our children’s clothes and books’

(3) **nồi-niêu, xoong-chảo**
   (metal pot earthenware pot frying pan wok)
   ‘pots and pans’

(4) **tắm, giặt** ‘bathing and washing clothes’

(5) **ăn cơm, học bài, xem ti-vi**
   (eat rice study lesson watch TV)
   ‘(They) ate dinner, did their homework, and watched TV.’

   The items in concatenation may also be joined by a connective called “conjunction”. Connectives may occur singly or in combination.

   Examples of single connectives are **và** ‘and’, **hay** ‘or’, **hoặc** ‘or’, **nhưng** ‘but’, **mà** ‘and, yet’, now added to examples 1 to 5:

(1a) **Nhưng, Ngọc, và Ngọc và chúng tôi**

(2a) **quần-áo và sách-vô của các cháu**

(3a) **nồi-niêu và xoong-chảo**

(4a) **tắm và giặt**

(5a) **ăn cơm, học bài và xem ti-vi**

   Examples of paired connectives are:

(6) **cả đi lẫn vậy** ‘both going and coming back,---both ways; round trip’

(7) **vừa đánh trống vừa ăn cuộp**
   (both beat drum and hold up)
   ‘sounded the alarm drum and pillaged the village at the same time’

(8) **càng lớn càng đẹp**
   (more big more pretty)
   ‘[of girl] is prettier as she grows older’

(9) **không những bền mà còn rẹ**
   (not only durable but in addition cheap)
   ‘not only durable but also cheap’

(10) **Cháu Khuê tuy còn ít tuổi những rất khôn ngoan.**
    (granddaughter Khuê though still little age but very wise and nice)
‘Although Khuê is still quite young she is wise and well-behaved.’

(11) **có gì ăn nấy** (have whatever eat same thing)
    ‘to eat whatever one has’ (see 6.3.2.6)

(12) **Cúa ai nấy dùng.** (property whoever same-person use)
    ‘Anyone uses his/her own [pen, towel, etc.]’

(13) **Cha mẹ đặt đầu con ngồi đây**
    (father mother place wherever, child sit that same place)
    ‘A child sits wherever the parents put him/her.’

(14) **bảo sao nghe vậy** (tell however, listen to that same way)
    ‘to obey whatever one is told’

There may be a verb series, denoting actions that occur in chronological order:

(15) **ngủ dậy** (sleep + rise) ‘to rise, wake up, get up’

(16) **di học về** (go + study + return) ‘returned from school’ (see 9.5)

(17) **ởm khởi** (sick + recover) ‘recovered from illness’

(18) **X. nói xong, đứng dậy, cúi chào rồi ra về.**
    (X speak finish stand rise bow salute afterward exit return)
    ‘So saying, X. got up, bowed, then left.’
Chapter 10
The Sentence

10.0 The sentence as unit of communication
A sentence is understood as a linguistic unit designed for communication and possessing a content to convey with the speaker’s appropriate mood, attitude and feeling, and a specific grammatical structure uttered in a specific stress and intonation pattern. The content of the sentence may be affirmative, negative, interrogative, imperative or emotive. Its grammatical structure is a string of words carrying a meaningful message and obeying (syntactic) rules about the arrangement of gradually smaller and smaller constituents.

10.1 The simple sentence
10.1.1. Basically a sentence (cău) follows an independent pattern of predication (8.0), i.e. it consists of two immediate constituents---the subject (chữ-ngữ) announcing a topic (đề) followed by the predicate (vị-ngữ) which provides a comment (thuyết) on that topic.

Examples are:
(1) Trời / mưa. (sky, rain) ‘It’s raining.’
(2) Mặt trời / mọc. (face sky, rise) ‘The sun rises.’
(3) Chim / hát. ‘Birds are singing.’
(4) Nam / cao. ‘Nam [is] tall.’
(5) Nam / là sinh-viên. ‘Nam is [a] student.’
(6) Mẹ tôi / người Hạ-duơng. (mother me, person Hạ-duơng)
   ‘My mother (was) a native of Hạ-duơng.’
(7) Mẹ tôi / mất năm 1943. (mother me, lose year 1943)
   ‘My mother died in (the year) 1943.’
(8) Con chim ấy / hát hay lắm. (classifier bird that, sing beautiful very)
   ‘That bird sings very beautifully.’
In each of the above predications or simple sentences, the subject is a noun phrase which consists of a single noun (tròi, chim, Nam in examples 1, 3, 4, 5), a compound noun (mặt tròi in example 2), or a noun phrase (me tôi in examples 6 and 7; con chim ấy in example 8).

The predicate in each example is a verb (mua, móc, hót, cao) or a verb phrase (là sinh-viên, [là] người Hải-duong, mất năm 1943, hót hay lắm).

10.1.2. But sometimes the sentence consists only of a verb phrase, whose head is a verb of existence, appearance or disappearance (6.1.3.3), or a verb denoting a psychological state, or a weather verb, as in

9. Có khách. (exist visitor) ‘There’s a visitor.’
10. Hết tiền. (exhaust money) ‘There’s no more money left.’
11. Bụơn quá! (sad excessively) ‘How sad!’

10.1.3. The sentence may also consist of a single word, which is an exclamation, or an abbreviated note or comment, as in

13. Mua! ‘It’s raining.’
14. Vŷ! ‘It’s going to break!’
15. Tuyệt! ‘Great! Superb!’
16. Trát-tự! ‘Order!’ [in law court]
17. Nghiêm! ‘Attention!’ [to soldiers]

10.2 The subject-less sentence.

Very often the subject is absent.

10.2.1. The sentence begins with a verb of existence (Vexist):

9. Có khách. ‘There’s a visitor.’
18. Có người khách ở viên-phương. [The Tale of Kiều]

(exist person visitor at far-direction)
‘There was a stranger from afar.’
19. Còn nước, còn tạt. (still water left, still bail)
‘If there’s some water left, we’ll go on bailing,—There’s still some hope, so we’ll have to try.’

10.2.2. The sentence is some general statement or a proverb:

20. Ô Nhật-bản phải đi bên tay trái.

(in Japan must go side hand left)
‘In Japan you must keep to the left.’
10.2.1. The subject is not stated: (21) Nên lấy chữ hiểu làm trọng.
(should take character hiểu do heavy)
‘People should emphasize [the notion of] filial piety.’
(22) “Ăn quả nhỏ kể trồng cây.” [a proverb]
(eat fruit remember person plant tree)
‘Eating a fruit, one should think of the person who planted the tree.’

10.2.3. The subject has already been mentioned or is obvious:
(23) Đào này tôi ít đi bơi, vì người yếu và hay mất.
(period this I little go swim, because body weak and often tired)
‘I haven’t been swimming a lot lately because I don’t feel very well and tire easily.’
(24) Mỹ mua vào nhiều hơn bán ra, thành ra bị thâm-thủng ngân-sách.
(America buy in much more sell out, result suffer deficit budget)
‘The U.S. imports more than it exports, so it has a deficit.’

10.2.4. The sentence is a monologue, a soliloquy, or an exchange in which only the context helps identify either interlocutor:
(25) Buồn ngủ quá! Mai làm nỗi.
(feel-like sleep so-much, tomorrow do finish)
‘I’m so sleepy! I’ll finish it tomorrow.’ [speaker talking to oneself.]
(26) Đi đâu đây? — Ra buu-diên.
(Go where there, exit post-office)
‘Where are you going? — To the post office.’
[This is an exchange between friends and equals. Children would be scolded if they do not use the appropriate terms of address: they are taught, when the father asks “Con đi đâu đấy?” (child go where there) to respond politely “Thưa bố, con ra buu-diên ấy.” (report father, child exit post office POLITE PARTICLE) ‘Daddy, I’m going to the post office.’ (cf. 6.3.2.2)]
(27) Thi chưa? -- Чиều thứ hai mới thì.
(take exam yet, afternoon Monday only then take exam)
‘Have you guys had the test yet? --- Only on Monday afternoon.’
[Schoolmates talking]

10.2.5. The sentence is an order (peremptory or not) or an exhortation:
(28) im (di)! ‘Quiet!’
nín (di)! ‘[to child] Stop crying!’
thoǐ (di)! ‘Stop!,---Cut it out!’
[The final particle  di! (7.3.2) makes the order less abrupt.]
(29) Ạn nũa di! ‘Eat some more!’
(30) Cũ nóí di! ‘Go ahead and say it!’
(31) Hãy chờ đây dã! (EXHORTATIVE wait there first) ‘Wait there first!’
(32) Hãy uống nữa đi dã! (EXHORTATIVE drink more IMP first)
    ‘Drink some more first!’

10.2.6. The sentence is a response to a yes-or-no question (of the type có .... không?, dã .... chào?) or a content-question containing the interrogative substitute ai ‘who?’:

(33) Anh có muốn mua không? --- Muôn.
    (elder brother EMPHATIC want buy or-not --- want)
    ‘Do you want to buy it? --- Yes, [I do.’

(34) Hỏi-chó Têt có đông người không? --- Đóng làm.
    (fair New Year EMPHATIC crowded person or-not --- crowded very)
    ‘Are there many people at the Têt fair? -- [It’s] very crowded.’

(35) Chi đã hiểu chưa? --- Hiểu rồi.
    (elder sister ANTERIOR understand yet --- understand already)
    ‘Did you understand? --- Yes, [I did.’

(36) Câu bằng lòng không? --- Bằng lòng chứ!
    (maternal uncle equal-heart or-not --- equal-heart surely)
    ‘Do you agree? --- Certainly!’ [boys talking] (On chú, see 7.3.2)

(37) Có ấy làm cho ai? --- Làm cho Toà Đại-sứ Mỹ.
    (aunt that work give who --- work give seat big-envoy America)
    ‘Whom does she work for? --- For the U.S. Embassy.’

10.3 The sentence without a predicate.
The predicate is omitted among equals, when the sentence is a response (considered abrupt) to a question containing the interrogative substitute ai ‘who?’:

(38) Ai lấy cái bút chì do trên bàn này? --- Tôi.
    (who take classifier pen lead red space above table this --- I)
    ‘Who took the red pencil on this desk? --- I [did].’

    (who want express [opinion] --- I)
    ‘Who wants to speak? --- I [do].’
THE SENTENCE

10.4 The subject-less sentence with a reduced predicate.
This is the case of the shortened response to a question that contains an interrogative word as complement:

(41) Ại viết gì đây? --- Thu.
(elder sister write what there --- letter)
‘What are you writing? --- A letter.’

(42) Thu cho ai? --- Bắc Thuận.
(letter give who --- uncle/aunt Thuận)
‘A letter to whom? --- Aunt Thuận.’

(43) Bao giờ cô Green về Mỹ? --- Tuan sau.
(what-extent time miss Green return America --- week later)
‘When is Miss Green going back to America? --- Next week.’

(44) Cô Green về Mỹ bao giờ? --- Tuan trước.
(miss Green return America what-extent time --- week before)
‘When did Miss Green go back to America? --- Last week.’

10.5 The kernel < S-P > sentence.
The Subject-Predicate (S-P) construction can be examined in terms of its two immediate constituents: (a) the subject is a noun phrase; (b) the subject is a verb phrase; and (c) the subject is itself a predication (S-P).

A. The subject is a noun phrase (NP).
The predicate may contain a functive verb, a stative verb, or it may be a noun phrase introduced by là, or it may be a verb phrase (or a prepositional phrase) introduced by là, or it may itself be a predication optionally introduced by là.

10.5.1 SENTENCE = NOUN PHRASE + VERB PHRASE
The head predicative is a functive verb, i.e. a verb of action—either intransitive or transitive. Examples:

(45) Tâm còn ngủ. (still sleep) ‘Tâm is still asleep.’
(46) Anh bạn tôi chỉ ăn cơm Việt-nam thôi.
(classifier friend me, only eat rice Vietnamese stop)
‘My friend only eats Vietnamese food.’

(47) Các bà áy làm thơ bát-cú.
(plural lady that, make poem eight-line)
‘Those ladies write 8-line poems.’

(48) Tâm mua sách ở Đường Tự-do.
(Tâm, buy book at road freedom)
‘Tâm buys books on Tự-do Street.’

(49) Bố nó phạt nó mấy lần rồi.
(father him, punish him a few time already)
‘His father has punished him several times.’

(50) Nó bị (bố) phạt mấy lần rồi.
(he, suffer father punish a few time already)
‘He has been punished (by his father) several times.

(51) Bà hiệu-trưởng thưởng tất-cả các cậu học-sinh này.
(lady school-head, reward all plural classifier student this)
‘The principal rewarded all these students.’

(52) Tất-cả các cậu học-sinh này đều được (bà hiệu-trưởng) thưởng.
(all plural classifier student this, equally get lady school-head reward)
‘All these students were rewarded (by the principal).’

[ On bị and được, see 6.1.3.2C ]

(53) Tôi quen anh Duy từ hồi 1945.
(I, know fellow Duy from time 1945)
‘I’ve known Duy since 1945.’

(54) Thưa Bá, tuần nào chúng cháu cùng đi Vũng Tàu ạ.
(report uncle, week any group nephew likewise go V. T. POLITE PART)
‘Uncle, we go to Vũng Tàu every week.’

(55) Các cháu ra Vũng Tàu hoài!
(plural nephew, exit V.T. continuously)
‘You guys go to Vũng Tàu all the time, don’t you?’

(56) Tôi chạy ra thư viện nhé!
(I run exit book-house OK?)
‘Shall I run out to the library?’

(57) Trong bếp còn gạo nếp không?
(inside kitchen remain rice glutinous or-not)
‘Is there any sticky rice left in the kitchen?’
Nhà này không có gạo nếp.
(58) (house this, NEG have rice glutinous)
   ‘This house doesn’t have sticky rice.’

Hoan vẫn không chịu lấy vợ.
(59) (Hoan, still NEG consent take wife)
   ‘Hoan still would not get married.’

Mỗi người đều hi vọng trúng số.
(60) (every person, equally hope hit number)
   ‘Everybody hopes to win the lottery.’

Cô ấy thường nghĩ vậy.
(61) (girl that, usually think thus)
   ‘She usually thinks so.’

Chàng thu sinh trong truyện thành tiên.
(62) (guy student inside story, become immortal being)
   ‘The young scholar in the story became an immortal being.’

Quan-công hiện thành.
(63) (Quan-công, become saint)
   ‘Guan Yu became a deity [= was deified].’
   [On verbs of becoming thành and hiện, see 6.1.3.4]

Cô My-Huyền lắc đầu.
(64) (miss My-Huyền, shake head)
   ‘My-Huyền shook her head.’

Me tôi gửi tiền cho tôi.
(65) (mother me, send money give me)
   ‘My mother sends me money.’

Thái gửi rất nhiều tiền cho vợ. (T. send very much money give wife)
   = Thái gửi vợ rất nhiều tiền. (T. send give wife very much money)
   ‘Thái sent a lot of money to his wife.’

Tôi sẽ phải vay tiền của nhà băng.
(66) (I shall must borrow money property house-bank)
   ‘I’ll have to borrow money from the bank.’

Tôi đã phải vay mươi ngàn đô-la của nhà băng
(67) (I anterior must borrow ten thousand dollar property house-bank)
   = Tôi đã phải vay của nhà băng mươi ngàn đô-la.
   ‘I had to borrow 10,000 dollars from the bank.’
VIETNAMESE

(69) Hái muốn sách của tôi. (property me) ‘H. borrowed books from me.’

(70) Hái muốn năm cuốn sách quý của tôi.
    (Hái borrow five classifier book precious property me)
    = Hái muốn cuốn sách quý của tôi năm.
    ‘Hái borrowed five valuable books.’

(71) Tôi vẫn coi Nam là người bạn thân nhất.
    (I always consider Nam be classifier friend intimate most)
    ‘I always consider Nam my closest friend.’

(72) Ủy ban Chấp hành bầu Thu làm chủ tịch.
    (committee executive, vote Thu do chairman)
    ‘The Executive Committee elected Thu chairperson.’

(73) Thu được Ủy ban Chấp hành bầu làm chủ tịch.
    (Thu, get committee executive vote do chairman)
    ‘Thu was elected chairperson by the Executive Committee.’

[On ditransitive or double-object verbs (V_{do})—verbs of giving, taking, insertion and evaluation—see 6.1.3.6]

(74) Thằng lùn manh đỗ làm chúng tôi xấu hổ.
    (classifier crook that, make we exclusive ashamed)
    ‘That crook made us feel ashamed.’ [làm is a V_{cause} (6.1.3.8)]

(75) Luật ở đây cấm công nhân (không được) hút thuốc lá.
    (law at here, forbid worker NEG get smoke drug-leaf)
    ‘The law here forbids workers to smoke cigarettes.’

(76) Ông bà Hòa vừa mời chúng tôi.
    (gentleman lady Hòa, recently invite we exclusive)
    ‘Mr. and Mrs. Hòa just invited us.’

(77) Ông bà Hòa vừa mời chúng tôi ăn cơm tối.
    (gentleman lady Hòa, recently invite we exclusive eat rice evening)
    ‘Mr. and Mrs. Hòa just invited us to dinner.’

(78) Ông bà Hòa vừa mời ăn cơm tối.
    (gentleman lady Hòa, recently invite eat rice evening)
    ‘Mr. and Mrs. Hòa just invited [X] to dinner.’

(79) Cu Thâm Quýnh dạy chữ Hán.
    (greatgrandfather T. Q., teach character Hán)
    ‘Old scholar Thâm Quýnh taught Chinese characters.’
(80) *Cu Thám Quýnh dạy chúng tôi.*  
(greatgrandfather T.Q., teach we exclusive)  
‘Old scholar Thám Quýnh taught us.’

(81) *Cu Thám Quýnh dạy chúng tôi chữ Hán.*  
(greatgrandfather T.Q., teach we exclusive character Hán)  
‘Old scholar Thám Quýnh taught us Chinese characters.’

10.5.2 *Sentence* = *Noun Phrase + Verb Phrase*  
The head predicative is a stative verb, i.e. an adjective. Examples:

(82) *Sương thu* (frost autumn) *lạnh.* ‘The autumn frost is cold.’

(83) *Lá thu* (leaf autumn) *dep quá!* ‘The autumn foliage is so beautiful!’

(84) *CORN VIỆT CHÍNH TÔI.* (rice just ripe reach)  
‘Now the rice is cooked just right.’

(85) *Châu* (nephew, grandson) *Tùng cao lắm.* ‘Tùng is very tall.’

(86) *NÓ CAO HỘN ANH NÓ.* (he tall superior elder brother he)  
‘He’s taller than his older brother.’

(87) *Ông Lai cao nhất nhà.* ‘Mr. Lai is the tallest in the family.’

(88) *CẢI LỚP VĂN IM-LÂNG.* ‘The whole class was still quiet.’

(89) *Anh Xuân rất vui tính.* (elder brother Xuân very joyful nature)  
‘Xuân is very jovial.’

(90) *VƯỜN CỦ PHÚC ĐÂY HOA.* ‘Mr. Phúc’s garden is full of flowers.’

(91) *Chợ Bến-thành đông người quá!*  
‘The Bến-thành Market was so crowded (with people).’

(92) *Cặp vợ-chồng chửa-chan hi-vọng.* ‘The couple was full of hope.’

(93) *BÀ ÁY THẤT KHÉO Ơ!* ‘That lady acts so diplomatically.’

(94) *Cụ già khó chiều quá!* ‘The old man is so difficult to please.’

(95) *Anh tóí khó về thằng con trai.*  
(elder brother me unhappy regarding classifier child male)  
‘My older brother suffered so much because of his son.’

(96) *CHÔ NÀY SẤU NÁM MỆT.* ‘This spot is 5 meters deep.’

(97) *CẢI GIẢNG-ĐƯỜNG NÀY RỘNG QUÁ NHỊ?*  
‘This auditorium is very large, don’t you think so?’

(98) *BÀI TẬP NÀY HƠI KHÓ.* ‘This exercise is a little too difficult.’

(99) *THÀNG KHÁNH GIỌNG HẸT BỞ NÓ.* ‘Khánh looks exactly like his dad.’

(100) *CHƯNG TÔI LÁC MẮT* (we exclusive cross-eyed).  
‘We were so impressed!’
(101) **Chuyên ấy rác-roỉ hết succinct \([= \text{hết succinct rác-roỉ}\]**
   ‘That issue is extremely complicated.’

(102) **Em gái tôi rất giỏi (về) toán.**
   ‘My younger sister is very good in math.’

(103) **Điều đỗ trái với nguyên-vọng của toàn-dân.**
   ‘That is contrary to the aspirations of the entire population.’

10.5.3 **SENTENCE** = **NOUN PHRASE** + **là** + **NOUN PHRASE**

The sentences in 10.5.1 and 10.5.2 are those in which the predicate describes the activity, status or nature of the topic announced in the subject constituent.

The sentences introduced in this section are different. Each sentence cited here contains the identificational verb \(V_{id}\) là (6.1.3.10), which, acting like the “equals” sign \(=\), functions as the equivalent of English copula be. This equative verb introduces the nominal predicate, which is equated with the nominal subject, and the construction resembles an equation. Examples:

(104) **Lien là cô giáo.** ‘Lien is a teacher.’

(105) **Cô giáo là Lien.** ‘The teacher is Lien.’

In the 15th century, it was possible to say Núi làng-giêng, chim bâu-bàn (Nguyễn Trãi) ‘Mounts [are] (my) neighbors, birds (my) friends.’

(106) **Nam là sinh-viên năm thứ ba.** (Nam be student year third)
   ‘Nam is a junior.’

(107) **Người sinh-viên năm thứ ba là Nam.**
   (classifier student year third, be Nam)
   ‘The third-year student is Nam.’

(108) **Nguyễn Trãi là một nhà-thơ lớn của chúng ta.**
   (Nguyễn Trãi be one expert-poetry great property we inclusive)
   ‘Nguyễn Trãi was one of our greatest poets.’

(109) **Tám cũng là giáo-viên trường dó.**
   ‘Tám is also a teacher in that school.’

(110) **Giáo-sư đại-học bên ấy (that side) đều là công-chúc.**
   ‘University teachers over there are all civil servants.’

(111) **Đà-lạt vẫn còn là một thành-phố đẹp lăm.**
   ‘Dalat is still a very beautiful city.’
(112)  Bến bờ hồ là những cây lê-liêu thuốt-tha.  
‘On the lakeshore are graceful weeping willows.’

(113)  Bây giờ (là) mười giờ.  ‘It’s now ten o’clock.’

(114)  Hôm qua (là) chủ nhật.  ‘Yesterday was Sunday.’

(115)  Bây giờ là năm Át-Dậu.  
‘That was the Át-Dậu Year (of the Rooster).’

(116)  Lúc bây giờ là giữa tháng tháng âm lịch.  
‘That [time] was the middle of the eighth lunar month.’

(117)  Trên bàn thờ là một phẩm tượng Đức Phật.  
(space above table worship be one classifier statue virtue Buddha)

(118)  Mẹ tôi (là) người Hải dương.  
‘My mother is a native of Hải dương.’

(119)  Cái anh tây ba-lô đó (là) quốc tịch Canada.  
(classifier brother west knapsack that, be citizenship Canada)

(120)  Ông-mê-ga (là) đồng hồ Thụy sĩ.  (copper vase Switzerland)  
‘Omega is a Swiss watch.’

(121)  Cụ ấy chín mươi tuổi rỗi. (greatgrandfather that, 90 year already)  
‘He’s already ninety years old.’

(122)  Nho không hạt này hai đô-la một kí.  
(grape NEG seed this, two dollar one kilogram)

(123)  Cuốn tự điển này (là) của cô giáo. (property aunt teach)  
‘This dictionary belongs to the teacher.’

(124)  Ai là sở hữu chủ ngôi nhà ấy? --- Vợ chồng tôi (là sở hữu chủ ngôi nhà ấy).  
(who be own-er classifier house that --- wife husband me ....)

(125)  Úc-muôn cùa tôi là học y-khoa. (wish-want property me ....)  
‘My wish is to study medicine.’

10.5.4.  SENTENCE = NOUN PHRASE + là + VERB PHRASE
The subject of the sentence is usually an abstract noun meaning ‘idea’, ‘hope’, ‘purpose’, ‘method’, etc. (5.1.3) and not a concrete noun. Examples:

(125)  Úc-muôn cùa tôi là học y-khoa. (wish-want property me ....)  
‘My wish is to study medicine.’
(126) Nhiệm-vụ quan-trọng nhất là chống nan thâm-học.
(task important most be fight scourge illiteracy)
‘The most important task is to combat illiteracy.’

(127) Bốn-phần làm con là phải phung-duong cha mẹ.
(duty act child be must serve-nourish father mother)
‘A child’s duty is to take care of one’s parents.’

(128) Mục-dịch duy-nhat của tôi là cung-cấp tài-liệu cho đọc-già trẻ.
(goal single property me be provide material give read-er young)
‘My sole objective is to provide materials to young readers.’

10.5.5. SENTENCE = NOUN PHRASE + Là + PREP(OSITIONAL) PHRASE

(129) Hai cái túi ấy là bằng ni-lông.
(two classifier bag that be by-means-of nylon)
‘Those two bags are made of nylon.

(130) Viêc tai-tiêng dó là tai ông tỉnh-trưởng.
(business scandal that be because of gentleman province-chief)
‘That scandal was due to the province chief.’

(131) Ung-thu phơi là vi / do khói thuốc lá.
(cancer lung be because of smoke drug-leaf)
‘Lung cancer is caused by cigarette smoke.’

(132) Sự thành-công của hân chỉ là nhờ gia-dình nhà và đầy thoại.
(fact succeed property he only be rely family house wife there all)
‘He was successful only thanks to his wife’s family.’

10.5.6. SENTENCE = NOUN PHRASE + < PREDICATION >
The embedded <SUBJECT - PREDICATE> structure provides a descriptive attribute of the subject NP, and the utterance can be analyzed as a complex sentence. Examples:

(133) Anh Trịnh Quang < nhà rất khá-gia >.
(brother T.Q.---family very well-to-do)
‘Trịnh Quang comes from a well-to-do family.’

(134) Cô ấy < khó người cao ráo >.
(girl that---stature body tall)
‘She’s tall in stature.’

(135) Cây quýnh này < hoa đỏ >.
(plant cereus this---flower red)
‘This night-blooming cereus has red flowers.’

(136) Xe đạp của tôi < phanh không ăn >.
(bike of me---brake not eat)
‘My bicycle has brakes that don’t work.’
(137) Ông Hän Thanh < bụng phán ra >.
   (gentleman academician Th.---belly protrude out)
   ‘Academician Thanh has a fat belly.’
(138) Lão già đê < mắt lim-dim >. (old old lustful---eye half-closed)
   ‘The old satyr half-closed his eyes.’

10.5.7 Sentence = Noun Phrase + là + < Predication >

Here, too, the embedded <subject-predicate> construction qualifies the
utterance as a complex sentence. Examples:
(139) Thiền-kiênh của tôi là < chung ta đều phải cố-gắng hơn nữa >.
   (shallow opinion of me be we equally must try more further)
   ‘My shallow opinion is that we all must make further efforts.’
(140) Chỉ-thi của Bộ là < mỗi Tí Tíệu-học mà khóa tu-nghiệp riêng >.
   (order of ministry be each office primary ed open session
   upgrade separate)
   ‘The directive from the Ministry says that each provincial
   educational office should organize its own refresher course.’

B. The subject is a verb phrase (VP)

This structure is used mostly in definitions and in explanations (to justify
something). Except for the first type (10.5.8), all examples contain là (Vâa).

10.5.8 Sentence = Verb Phrase + Verb Phrase

(141) Học đi đôi với hành. (study go pair with practice)
   ‘Study goes hand in hand with action.’
(142) Học nói đi trước học đọc. (learn speak go before learn read)
   ‘(You) learn to speak before learning to read.’
(143) Học đọc đi kèm với học viết.
   (learn read go together with learn write)
   ‘You learn to read and to write at the same time.’

10.5.9 Sentence = Verb Phrase + là + Verb Phrase

(144) Tập thể dục là giữ-gìn sức khỏe.
   (drill physical education, be preserve strength healthy)
   ‘To exercise is to preserve one’s health.’
(145) Hi-sinh là chấp-nhận một sự mất-mất nào đó.
   (sacrifice, be accept one matter lose whatever that)
   ‘Hi-sinh means to accept to lose something valuable.’
(146) **Hi-sinh cung nghĩa là chết vì một lí-tưởng cao-dep.**
(sacrifice, likewise mean be die because of one ideal lofty-pretty)
‘Hi-sinh also means to sacrifice one’s life for a lofty ideal.’

**10.5.10 SENTENCE = VERB PHRASE + LÀ + NOUN PHRASE**

(147) **Gà chông cho ba có con gái là ý-muôn của ông bà hàng xóm.**
(marry off husband for three classifier child female, be desire of gentleman lady row hamlet)
‘Marrying off their 3 daughters is the wish of our neighbors.’

(148) **Chạy cho câu con cả sang Mỹ du-học là nỗi lo-âu của họ.**
(run for classifier son oldest go America study, be classifier worry of them)
‘Their concern is to take the required steps to enable their oldest son to go study in the U.S.’

**10.5.11 SENTENCE = VERB PHRASE + LÀ + < PREDICATION >**

(149) **Hợp-tác là < mọi người hợp nhau lại cùng làm >.**
(cooperate be every person gather each-other come together work)
‘To cooperate means everyone works together on a project.’

**10.5.12 SENTENCE = VERB PHRASE + LÀ + PREP(OSITIONAL) PHRASE**

(150) **Làm cách-mạng là để thay-dổi đời sống và xã-hội.**
(make revolution be in order to change-exchange life and society)
‘(The point of) making a revolution is in order to change life and society.’

C. The subject is a predication

Following the embedded <SUBJECT - PREDICATE> in the subject position, the predicate of the kernel sentence can be a VP, or a NP or a PREP(OSITIONAL) PHRASE, introduced by là. That predicate in the first three examples does not need là. Examples (151) and (152) contain a causative verb (V_{cause}).

(151) **< Họ cười khích-kích > làm chúng em then**
(they laugh giggle make group younger sibling embarrassed)
‘(The fact that) they giggled embarrassed us.’

(152) **< Thằng cháu Hải nói liú-lo > khiến các bác buồn cười.**
(boy nephew H. speak babble cause PLURAL uncle feel laugh)
‘Little Hải’s babbling made all uncles and aunts smile.’
THE SENTENCE

(153) < Nuốc ấy thua trận > đã rõ ràng ngày từ đầu.
(country that lose war ANTIER crystal-clear right from head)
‘That it will lose the war has been clear from the start.’

(154) < Chỉ cử xử như thế > là rất đúng.
(elder sister behave like so be very correct)
‘It was very correct of you to behave that way.’

(155) < Anh nói thế > không đúng hàn.
(elder brother say so NEG correct completely)
‘What you said isn’t completely true.’

(156) < Ông ấy giải thích thế > là sai.
(gentleman that explain so, be incorrect)
‘His explanation is incorrect.’

(157) < Bà ấy đòi hai trăm > là rất quá rõi.
(lady that demand two hundred, be cheap excessively already)
‘She asked for two hundred? That’s quite cheap.’

(158) < Anh từ chỗ > là rất phải.
(elder brother refuse, be very right)
‘Your declining was the right thing to do.’

(159) < Anh không dự buổi họp hôm nọ > là một điều hay.
(elder brother NEG attend half-day meet day other, be one thing good)
‘Your not attending the meeting the other day was a good thing.’

(160) < Chúng ta đóng thuế thu nhập > là nghĩa vụ công dân bây.
(we inclusive pay tax income, be obligation citizen believe me)
‘For us to pay income tax is indeed a citizen’s obligation.’

(161) < Bác Quang làm thế > là vì mọi người trong họ.
(uncle Q. do so, be because of every person inside family)
‘Uncle Quang did so for the good of everybody in the family.’

(162) < xã hội cũ phát triển chậm-chạp > là tại các tập đoàn phong kiến.
(society old develop slowly, be because PLURAL group feudalist)
‘The old society developed slowly because of feudalist groups.’

(163) < Hai đứa bỏ nhau > là tại gia đình thằng chồng.
(two individual leave each other, be because of family guy husband)
‘They divorced because of his family.’

(164) < Cụ Nhàn chóng khỏi > là nhờ ông bác sĩ tận tâm.
(greatgrandfather N. fast recover, be rely gentleman doctor devoted)
‘Mr. Nhàn recovered fast thanks to a dedicated doctor.’
10.6 Adjuncts to the kernel < S-P > sentence
Outside the essential Subject-Predicate structure, a simple sentence usually contains some adjunct constituents, which serve a number of functions to further modify the central predication.

We can distinguish a vocative adjunct, a circumstantial adjunct, an appositive adjunct, a focal adjunct, and a transitional adjunct.

10.6.1 The vocative adjunct.
This constituent consists of relatively emotional words or phrases, which express an exclamation, a call, a curse, or an oath simply added to the main predication. This vocative adjunct usually begins an utterance. But it can also be placed at the end of an utterance or even between the subject and the predicate. Examples:

Ôi chào! mét quá! (oh tired too much) ‘Oh, I’m exhausted!’
Trời ơi! Tình sao bây giờ? (oh heaven figure out how now)
‘Heavens! How can I cope with it?’
Mình ơi? Cứu em với! (oh darling rescue me please)
‘Honey! Help me!’
Ái! Đau quá! (ouch hurt too much) ‘Ouch! It hurts.’
Chết! Sao nó ra bờ ao làm gì?
(death, why he exit edge pond do what)
‘Woe! What was he doing near the pond?’
Ui chào! Trên này sương mừ ghé thế này à!
(wow space above this fog mist awful manner this really?)
‘Wow! Is it always this foggy up here?’
Chưa tôi! Lại bão to nưa! (lord me again storm big additionally)
‘My Lord! Another hurricane!’
Hú vừa! May mà chúng tôi không đập chuyên máy bay đỡ!
(call soul, lucky that we exclusive not ride trip plane that)
‘Phew! A narrow escape! Luckily we were not on that flight.’
Không phải đâu, anh Bình à. (not correct anywhere, brother B voc)
‘It’s not like that, Binh.’
Cái kéo của Bà, qui-sữ, hông mất rỗi!
(classifier scissors of grandma, devil, out of order loss already)
‘The devil! Someone broke my scissors!’
Una! Anh tôi hỏi nào đây? ‘Hey, when did you get here?’
Me kiếp! Ô-tô lại chết máy rồi!
(mother fate, automobile again die engine already)
‘My damned fate! The car engine is dead again!’
Lẽu lểu! Mặc cớ! (oh oh shame, ashamed) ‘Shame on you!’

10.6.2 The circumstantial adjunct.
This adjunct is no other than an adverbial phrase, which adds some meaning to the main predication in terms of circumstances of time, place, means, purpose, manner, state, etc. The adverbial phrase may consist of just a noun or a noun phrase, or it may be a prepositional phrase.

Examples:
**Time and Place:**
Năm này, Cali mưa nhiều. (year this, California rain much)
‘California has a lot of rain this year.’
Mai, chúng tôi ra sông Potomac câu cá.
(tomorrow, we exclusive exit river Potomac catch fish)
‘Tomorrow we’ll go fishing on the Potomac River.’
Ở San José, có nhiều người Mỹ-hi-cô.
(at San José, exist many person Mexico)
‘There are many Mexicans in San José.’
Ở nhà quê, về mùa gặt, vui dạo dề.
(at house village, return season reap fun radically)
‘In the countryside there is great fun during harvest time.’
Về mùa hè, trên San Francisco, hay có sương mù.
(return season summer, space above SF, often exist fog mist)
‘In the summer, it is often foggy in San Francisco.’

When they co-occur, the time adverbial usually comes first:
Đến đời nhà Trần, Nho-giáo hầu như thành quốc-giáo.
(reach era house Trần, Confucianism almost become state religion)
‘Under the Trần dynasty, Confucianism nearly became the state religion.’
Thịnh thọảng, ông ấy dùng xe buýt lên thăm chúng tôi.
(once in a while, gentleman that use bus ascend visit we exclusive)
‘Occasionally he takes the bus to come up and visit us.’
Lâu lâu, bà ấy lại rủ chúng tôi đi chợ Trời.
(long long, lady that again invite we exclusive go market sky)
‘Every now and then she invites us to go with her to the Flea Market.’

**Việtnamese**

**Sang năm, cả hai cháu gái đều ra trường.**

(come over year, all two niece [of yours] equally exit school)

‘Next year both our daughters will graduate.’

**Xưa nay, cha ai hỏi vợ tiểu đó!**

(from before until now, not whoever ask wife fashion that)

‘From ancient times until now, nobody has looked for a wife that way.’

**Purpose:**

Vi sinh-kerja, anh ấy phải don lên tận Alaska.

(because livelihood, he have to move ascend all the way Alaska)

‘To make a living he had to move all the way to Alaska.’

**Để tiết kiệm thời gian, chúng ta hãy nên bàn vấn đề này đầu tiên.**

(in order to save time, we inclusive EXHORTATIVE should discuss right away problem that first)

‘To save time let’s discuss that problem right away first.’

**Means and Comparison:**

Bằng con mắt nghi ngờ, ông thư ký già quay sang nhìn tôi.

(by means of classifier eye suspect, gentleman clerk old turn over look me)

‘The old clerk turned around and gave me a suspicious look.’

Theo chỉ thị của Bộ Giáo dục, đơn xin học bổng phải nộp trước ngày 15 tháng giêng.

(follow order of ministry education, application ask scholarship must submit before day 15 month principal)

‘According to the Education Ministry directive, applications for scholarships must be submitted before January 15.’

So với năm ngoái, bà ấy map ra nhiều.

(compare with year past, lady that fat out much)

‘She’s much fatter (now) than last year.’

So với ông cả, ông ba trông già hơn đây.

(compare with gentleman oldest, gentleman third look old more I say)

‘Uncle Number 3 looks older than Uncle Number 1.’
**Manner:**

*Lê phép, me con chi Dâu cùng cúi chào.* ("Tất đên")
(polite, mother child elder sister D. together bow salute)

‘Dâu and her child politely bowed down and said good-bye.’

*Ôm dứa con vào lòng, bà ấy lấy khăn tay lau nước mắt.*
(hug classifier child enter bosom, lady that take kerchief hand wipe water eye)

‘Hugging her child in her bosom, she used a hankie to wipe her tears.’

*N gạc-nhiên, tôi bò ra khỏi phòng để kiểm ông giám đốc.*
(surprised, I leave exit from room in order to find gentleman director)

‘Surprised, I left the room to look for the director.’

*Tà-tà bồng nga về tây.* (slant shadow bend toward west)

‘The sun was slanting toward the west.’

*Mịt-mù đầm cát đồi cỏ.* (dust-mist trail sand hill tree)

‘Sand trails, wooded hills clouded in mist’

*Xấp-xẻ ếnh liêng lầu không.* (rustle swallow hover tower empty)

‘Swallows rustled through the empty home.’

[These three lines from *The Tale of Kiều* each start with a reduplicated adjective full of imagery.]

*Chân nam [= đầm] đá chân chiều, người say ruồi trở lại lở gạch.*
(foot right kick foot left, person drunk wine return back kiln brick)

‘Staggering, the drunkard returned to the brickkiln.’

10.6.3 The appositive adjunct.

A noun or noun phrase may be placed after another as an explanatory equivalent, both of them having the same syntactic relation to the other elements in the sentence:

*Nguyễn Du, nhà thơ lớn của Việt-nam, dã để lại một truyện nôm bằng-hù gồm 3.254 câu thơ.*
(Nguyễn Du, expert poet great of Vietnam, ANTERIOR leave behind one tale southern immortal consist of 3,254 line verse)

‘Nguyễn Du, Vietnam’s great poet, has left an immortal tale composed of 3,254 lines of vernacular nôm verse.’

*Linh-mục Lê Văn Lý, nguyên Viện-trưởng Viện Đại-học Đà-lạt, là một nhà ngũ-học kiệt-xuất.*
(priest LVL, former rector institute university Dalat, be one expert linguist outstanding)

‘Father Lê Văn Lý, former Rector of Dalat University, was an outstanding linguist.’

Năm 1010, Thăng-long---ngày nay là Hà-nội---được Lý Thái-tố chọn làm thủ-dô.

(year 1010, Thăng-long day this be Hanoi get Lý Thái-tố choose do capital)

‘In 1010, Thăng-long---present-day Hanoi---was chosen by Emperor Lý Thái-tố to be the capital city.’

Chúng tôi ở chơi hai hôm với anh chị Nguyễn Hiệu---là thọ-công thành-phố Niu-Oóc.

(we exclusive stay play two day with elder brother elder sister NH, be kitchen-god city New York)

‘We spent two days with Nguyễn Hiệu and his wife, who really know the city of New York inside out.’

Vụ giết người đó, mà báo-chí đã tường-thuật đầy-dù, đáng làm cho cộng-dồng ta xấu-hổ. [The adjunct is enclosed with commas.]

(affair kill person that, which newspaper magazine ANTERIOR relate fully, merit make community we inclusive ashamed)

‘That murder---of which (incidentally) the press has given a full account---rightly makes our community feel ashamed.’

[cf. Vũ giết người < mà báo-chí đã tường-thuật đầy-dù > ........

‘The murder of which the press has given a full account ..........’]

10.6.4 The focal adjunct.

One word or one phrase within the main predication may be fronted so as to highlight a fact, a phenomenon, an idea, which is thus “topicalized”, i.e. made into a topic or a “theme”. The latter is followed by a comma pause, following which the rest of the utterance is optionally introduced by thi.

Examples:

Tôi (thi) tôi hoàn-toán tán-thành. < Tôi hoàn-toán tán-thành

(me then I entirely approve)

‘As for me, I fully approve of it.’
(spacious then classifier office that spacious very)

'As for size that office is very large.'
Lap-xuông (thi) còn hai dōi, chú trưng muội (thi) hết sách.
(sausage then remain two pair, but egg salted then finish clean)

< Còn hai dōi lap-xuông, chú hết sách trưng muội rōi.

'Of Chinese sausages, there are two pairs left. As for salted eggs, though, we are completely out of them.'
Giàu (thi) tôi cùng giâu rōi. < Tôi giâu rōi.
(rich then I likewise rich already)

'Speaking of being wealthy, I have been wealthy.'
Cái anh sinh-viên ấy thi tôi biết rõ quá rōi.
(classifier fellow student that, then I know clearly excessively already)

< Tôi biết quá rõ cái anh sinh-viên ấy rōi.

'That student? I know him too well.'
Chuyện dō, con xin dế thày mẹ quyết-dình a.
(matter that, child beg let dad mom decide POLITE PARTICLE)

< Con xin dế thày mẹ quyết-dình chuyện dō a.

'Mom and Dad, on that matter, I'll leave it for you to decide.'
Ruọu không uông, thuốc lá không hút, mà cōng bị ung-thu!
(wine not drink, cigarette not smoke, yet likewise suffer cancer)

< Không uông ruọu, không hút thuốc lá, mà cōng bị ung-thu.

'No drinking, no smoking, yet he has cancer just the same!'
Cờ-bác không, ruọu-chè không, thật là một người chồng lý-tưởng!
(chess gamble not, wine tea not, really be one classifier husband ideal)

< Không cờ-bác, không ruọu-chè: thật là một người chồng lý-tưởng!

'Doesn’t gamble, doesn’t drink—really an ideal husband!'

10.6.5 The transitional adjunct.
This element makes the transition (from one sentence or one thought to the next) smoother. The transitional adjunct, which introduces the second thought, is usually a word or a fixed phrase, such as
‘on the other hand’, nói cho cùng ‘to carry the argument further’, (nói) cửa đăng tôi ‘well, to be fair; well, actually’, nói khác đi, nói một cách khác ‘in other words’, (nói) tóm lại ‘to sum it up’, Thảo nào ‘no wonder’, thật vậy ‘indeed’, trái lại ‘on the contrary’, tuy nhiên ‘however, nevertheless’, và chẳng, và lại ‘besides, moreover’, etc. Some examples:

Toi không xin. Vả chẳng có xin cũng chẳng được.
(I not apply, besides EMPHATIC apply likewise not get)
‘I did not apply. Besides, even if I apply I will never get it.’

Thôi, khuya rỗi, không đánh nữa. Và lại, anh còn đang ho, cần ngủ.
(stop late already not play more, besides you still coughing need sleep)
‘Let’s quit [the card game], it’s getting late. Besides, you’re still coughing. You need some sleep.’

Nói tóm lại, đó là một vấn đề tự do cá nhân.
(speak sum up, that be one problem freedom individual)
‘To sum it up, that is a question of personal freedom.’

Trái lại, về phương diện pháp lí, cô ta vô tôi.
(contrary back, regarding viewpoint legal, aunt that not guilt)
= Về phương diện pháp lí, trái lại, cô ta vô tôi.
‘On the contrary, from the legal point of view, she is not guilty.’

Người dùng ông ấy còn giúp, nữa là [= hướng chỉ] chỗ họ hàng.
(person stranger gentleman that still help more reason place related)
‘He helps strangers, all the more reason for him to help a relative.’

Nó ốm. -- Hẹn chỉ [= Thảo nào] không thấy đến lớp.
(his sick no wonder whatever not see come class)
‘He’s sick. -- No wonder he didn’t come to class.’

10.7 Sentence expansion
Thus far we have reviewed a large number of sentence structures. Not counting the adjuncts, the essential kernel structure consists of two immediate constituents: a topic and a comment. Each of these positions is filled by a single word, as in the three simple sentences cited earlier in 10.1.1:

(1) Trời mưa. (sky rain) ‘It’s raining.’ (3) Chim hót. ‘Birds are singing.’ (4) Nam cao. ‘Nam is tall.’

But in a real speech situation, normal sentences exchanged between two native speakers are likely to be longer than the minimal forms we have seen.
Indeed sentence (1), for instance, can easily be expanded into several larger sequences:

(1a) Trời sáp mua. ‘It’s going to rain soon.’
(1b) Trời mua rđi, mẹ ơi! ‘Mom, it already started raining.’
(1c) Hôm qua, trời mưa nắng. ‘It’s both rainy and sunny.’
(1d) Hôm kia, trời mưa to. ‘It rained hard day before yesterday.’
(1e) Hôm qua, trời không mua. ‘It didn’t rain yesterday.’

Sentence (3) can also be expanded into such utterances as:

(3a) Chim sẽ hót cúng hay. ‘Sparrows also sing well.’
(3b) Thích chim này và con (chim) ấy đều hót hay cã. ‘Both this bird and that bird sing beautifully.’
(3c) Các con kia chẳng hót gì cả. (plural animal over there not sing whatever all)
    ‘The ones over there don’t sing at all.’
(3d) Con gà trong này gay to và ăn khoè. (animal rooster this crow big and eat strong)
    ‘This rooster crows loudly and eats a lot.’

Some expanded forms of sentence (4) can be as follows:

(4a) Em Nam cao quá nhỉ! ‘Brother Nam is so tall, don’t you think?’
(4b) Năm nay Nam cao hẳn lên. (year this Nam tall clearly upward)
    ‘This year Nam grew noticeably taller.’
(4c) Nam và Bác cao bằng nhau. (Nam and Bác tall equal each other)
    ‘Nam and Bác are of the same height.’
(4d) Dông và cao và khoè. (and tall and strong)
    ‘Dông is both tall and strong.’

Historically và và ‘both .... and ....’ (in examples 1c and 4d) used to be và và......

Coordinators [7.2.2; 8.0 (4)] used in the above sentences are:

vừa mưa vừa nắng (example 1c)
con (chim) này và con (chim) ấy (example 3b)
gay to và ăn khoè (example 3d)
Nam và Bác (example 4c)
vừa cao vừa khoè (example 4d)
Not only words (*Nam, Bác*) and phrases (*con chim này, con chim ấy; gay to, ăn khỏe; vừa mưa, vừa nắng; vừa cao, vừa khỏe*) can be conjoined in juxtaposition. Two or more sentences can also appear in sequences: \( S_1 + S_2 + S_3 \), etc.—with or without the help of connectives.

The occurrences of complex sentences will be examined in the next chapter after we take a look at different types of single sentences from the point of view of their structures and meanings.
Chapter 11
The Sentence (continued)

11.1 Types of sentences
In terms of their semantic content, sentences can be divided into different types: the affirmative sentence, the negative sentence, the interrogative sentence, the imperative sentence, and the exclamatory sentence.

11.1.1 The affirmative sentence.
Almost every sentence cited in the previous chapter is an affirmative sentence, since each of them amounts to an assertion, e.g.
(1) Hôm nay, nó học đàn. (day this he study piano)
   ‘He has his piano lesson today.’
(2) Nam thông-minh. ‘Nam is intelligent.’
(3) Nam là cháu ông ấy. (Nam be nephew gentleman that)
   ‘Nam is his nephew.’

But when the assertion is emphatic, a common device consists in using the adverb có (7.1.2.3) or some particle before the predicative, e.g.
(4) Hôm nay, nó có học đàn. ‘He did have his piano lesson today.’
(5) Nam có thông-minh thật (really). ‘Nam is really intelligent.’
(6) Nam chính là cháu ông ấy. ‘Nam is [precisely] his nephew.’
(7) X. có ăn hôi-lô. ‘X did take bribes.’
(8) Tôi có gửi thư mời ông ấy mà!
   (I EMPHATIC send letter invite gentleman that I told you before)
   ‘I did send him an invitation.’

11.1.2. The negative sentence.
A. Negation of the content of the predicate is expressed by means of an adverb (không, chẳng, chưa ‘no, not’, chưa ‘not yet’) placed before the head verb (7.1.2.3) in “the comment”, as in
(9) Hôm nay, nó không học đàn. ‘He didn’t have his piano lesson today.’
(10) Nó chẳng nói, chẳng rằng. (he not speak not say)
'He did not say a word.'

(11) Nó chưa ăn gì cả. (he not eat whatever all)

‘He doesn’t eat anything at all.’

(12) Nó chưa ăn quà sáng (he not yet eat snack morning).

‘He hasn’t had breakfast yet.’

(13) Giáp không thông-mình làm. ‘Giáp is not very intelligent.’

But to negate a nominal predicate---introduced by the equative verb là--- one must use not không, chẳng, chưa, but không phải, chẳng phải, chưa phải as in

(14) Nam không phải là cháu ông ấy.

(Nam not correct be nephew he)

‘Nam is not his nephew.’

(15) Nó chẳng phải là gì cả đối với cô ấy.

(he not correct be whatever all face with she)

‘He is not anything to her.’

(16) Nó chưa phải là công dân Mỹ.

(he not-yet correct be citizen America)

‘He’s not a U.S. citizen yet.’

When the predicate contains a stative verb—which describes a quality, an attribute---there is a slight difference between không and không phải là.

Contrast

(17) Chuyên đồ không khó giải quyết.

‘That matter is not difficult to solve.’

(18) Chuyên đồ không phải là khó giải quyết.

‘It’s not true that that matter is difficult to solve.’

When someone has said, for instance, that “the matter is difficult to solve,” sentence (18) is a stronger denial (= ‘That matter is easy to solve.’) than sentence (17), which merely states that the matter isn’t difficult to solve.

B. Negation can also achieved by placing the negator không, chẳng, chưa before the subject, if that subject is an indefinite substitute like ai, người nào ‘whoever’, (cái) gì ‘whatever’, đâu ‘wherever’, etc. (6.3.2.6).

(19) Không ai quên chuyên ấy.

(not whoever forget affair that)

‘Nobody has forgotten that.’
THE SENTENCE. (CONTINUED) 235

(20) **Chàng ai hỏi đến nó.** (not whoever ask reach he)  
    ‘Nobody talked to him.’

(21) **Chá ai hỏi đến nó.** ‘Nobody talked to him.’

(22) **Chưa ai trả chiা khóa cá.**  
    (not yet whoever return key lock all)  
    ‘No one turned in their key yet.’

(23) **Không người nào trả nợ cá.** (not person whichever pay debt all)  
    ‘Nobody paid their debt.’

(24) **Không gì quý bằng tự-do.** (not whatever precious equal freedom)  
    ‘Nothing is so precious as freedom.’

(25) **Chàng đâu đẹp bằng Hà-nội.** (not wherever pretty equal Hanoi)  
    ‘No place is so beautiful as Hanoi.’

(26) **Chưa kế hoạch nào xong cá.** (not yet project whichever finish all)  
    ‘No project has been completed yet.’

C. The whole sentence, i.e. the entire < S-P > predication, may be negated by placing **không phải (là)**, **chàng phải (là)** at the beginning:

(27) **Không phải (là) tiêu-bang Cali thiếu tiền.**  
    (not correct be state California lack money)  
    ‘It’s not that the State of California lacks money.’

(28) **Chàng phải (là) anh chồng biết.**  
    (not correct be fellow husband know)  
    ‘It’s not that her husband knew about it.’

(29) **Không phải Nam là cháu ông ấy.**  
    (not correct Nam be nephew he)  
    ‘It’s not true that Nam is his nephew.’

D. The utterance may contain a double negative.

(30) **Không ai không khen nó.** (not whoever not praise he)  
    ‘Everyone praised him.’

(31) **Chị ấy không thể không khóc.** (she not can not cry)  
    ‘She couldn’t help crying.’

(32) **Không phải là tiêu-bang Cali không thiếu tiền.** [cf. ex. (27)]  
    (not correct be state California not lack money)  
    ‘It’s not that the State of California doesn’t lack money.’

(33) **Chàng phải là anh chồng không biết.** [cf. ex. (28)]  
    ‘It’s not that her husband doesn’t know about it.’
(34) **Cha ngày nào là Hoàng không gọi dây nói về Việt-nam cho vợ.**
(not day whichever be H. not call wire talk return Vietnam to wife)
‘There’s not one day when H. does not call his wife in VN.’

(35) **Chang đêm nào là ông không dậy ba bốn lần.**
(not night whichever be Grandpa not rise three four time)
‘There isn’t a night when Grandpa doesn’t get up three or four times.’

E. The utterance may use the final particle **dâu!** to state a strong denial
(6.3.2.3;  7.3.2) as in

(36) **Hồng-công có ré dâu!** (Hongkong EMPHATIC cheap where)
‘Hongkong is not cheap.’

The element **dâu** (with heavy stress) may begin the predicate, as in (37):

(37) **Hồng-công dâu có ré!** ‘Hongkong is not cheap.’

(38) **Hồng-công không ré dâu!** (Hongkong not cheap where)
‘Hongkong is not cheap. [Don’t kid yourself.]’

(39) **Tôi (có) muốn bút của anh dâu!**
(I EMPHATIC borrow pen of you where)
‘I did not borrow your pen.’

(40) **Trước đây tôi có quên cái gì dâu!**
(before here I EMPHATIC forget thing whatever where)
‘I did not forget anything in the past, did I?’

(41) **Ông Mỹ này có ăn cay được dâu! [ = không ăn cay được dâu! ]**
(gentleman American this, EMPHATIC eat peppery-hot OK where = not eat hot OK where)
‘This American gentleman can not eat spicy stuff.’

(42) **Mồng 5 tháng tư thì chưa xong giấy-tờ dâu!**
(day 5 month four then not yet finish paper-sheet where)
‘We won’t get all the papers by April 5.’

(43) **Chỉ dùng lo lâu cơm: chúng tôi ăn trên tàu, không đòi dâu!**
(you PROHIBITIVE worry cook rice: we exclusive eat on train not hungry where)
‘Don’t bother to cook. We are eating on the train, so won’t be hungry at all.’

(44) **Cô ấy không chịu dâu!** ‘She won’t agree to that. [don’t insist.]’

F. The complement of a verb denoting prohibition, refusal, forgetting, cessation or omission often takes **không** (see anecdote in 9.3.1.7), e.g.
11.1.3. The interrogative sentence.

A. The choice question. One type of question—the “yes-or-no” question—requires either ‘yes’ or ‘no’ as an answer, so has been also called the “alternative question”.

1. The pattern of coordination is used by placing the disjunction connective *hay* (là) ‘or’ between two words or two phrases, as in

(50)  **Chi hay (là) chí Thảo đi trước?** (you or elder sister Thảo go before)
   ‘Are you or sister Thảo going first?’

(51)  **Cái áo bà-dớ-xuy này, Bố tính cho anh Chình hay (là) anh Hiền?**
   (classifier coat overcoat this, dad plan give brother C. or brother H.)
   ‘Daddy, this overcoat, you plan to give it to Chính or to Hiền?’

(52)  **Em muốn mua rau ở Safeway hay (là) Phố Tàu?**
   (younger sister want buy vegetables at Safeway or town China)
   ‘Honey, do you want to buy vegetables at Safeway or in Chinatown?’

(53)  **Mấy ông mua vé theo giá chính-thức hay (là) theo giá chợ đen?**
   (few gentleman buy ticket follow price official or follow price market black)
   ‘Did you gentlemen buy your tickets at the official rate or at the black-market rate?’

(54)  **Hai cô muốn dạo phố, sắm đồ hay ngồi nhà xem tivi?**
   (two young lady want stroll street, buy thing or sit home watch TV)
   ‘You want to walk downtown, shop or stay home and watch TV?’
2. The disjunctive phrase \( \text{cô ..... không? or dâ ..... chưa?} \) is used, e.g.

(55) \( \text{Anh có tiền lé không?} \) (elder brother have money odd or-not)

‘Do you have some change?’

(56) \( \text{Anh có cần tiền lé không?} \)

(elder brother EMPHATIC need money odd or-not)

‘Do you need some change?’

(57) \( \text{Anh đã lĩnh lương chưa?} \) (elder brother ANTERIOR receive salary yet)

‘Have you received your pay check yet?’

The query in example (56) is understood to be the result of successive reductions from

(56a) \( \text{Anh có cần tiền lé hay không cần tiền lé?} \)

(... emphatic need money odd or not need money odd)

(56b) \( \text{Anh có cần tiền lé hay không? [after deleting cần tiền lé]} \)

(... emphatic need money odd or not)

(56) \( \text{Anh có cần tiền lé không? [after deleting the connective hay].} \)

A final --- optional --- deletion of \( \text{cô} \) would result ultimately in

(56c) \( \text{Anh cần tiền lé không? , which contains only the question particle không and which means exactly ‘Do you need some change?’} \)

Thus in informal situations, the preverb \( \text{dâ} \) ‘anterior’ as in sentence (57) can be omitted, and the final particle \( \text{chưa} \) can by itself help the speaker ask whether an action or a state has happened yet, as in

(57a) \( \text{Anh lĩnh lương chưa? ‘Have you received your salary yet?’} \)

(58) \( \text{Thi chưa? ‘[Did you] take [your] exam yet?’} \)

(59) \( \text{Com nước gì chưa? [rice water whatever yet]} \)

‘Have you eaten yet?’

B. The content question. The second type of question, which seeks some precise information, requires the use of question words (“who?, what?, where?, when?, why?, which?, whose?”) that are interrogative substitutes like \( \text{ai?}, \text{gi?}, \text{dâu?}, \text{bao gì?}, \text{sao?}, \) or equivalent phrases like \( \text{người nào?}, \text{cái nào?}, \text{chỗ nào?}, \text{khí nào?}, \text{thế nào?}, \text{của ai?}, \) etc. (6.3.2.3) Additional examples:

(60) \( \text{Ai khát nước?} \) (who thirsty water)

‘Who is thirsty?’

The interrogative substitute \( \text{ai} \) occupies the slot which is filled by the answer in the response, for instance \( \text{Tôi khát nước. ‘I am thirsty.’} \)
(61) Chung mình đợi ai? (we inclusive await who)
   ‘Whom are we waiting for?’
   Answer: (Chung mình) đợi Giáo-su Hiếu.
   ‘We’re waiting for Professor Hiếu.’

(62) Cậu uống gì? (maternal uncle drink what)
   ‘What do you want to drink?’ [asking a young man]
   Answer: Tôi uống trà nóng (tea hot). ‘I’ll drink hot tea.’

(63) Ai uống gì nào? (who drink what come-on)
   ‘Who drinks what?’

(64) Xin mâu đơn ở đâu? (ask model application at where)
   ‘Where do you ask for an application form?’
   Again, the substitute đâu occupies the slot potentially filled by the answer,
   for instance Xin mâu đơn ở sởưu-diên. (ask model application at office
   post-and-telecom) ‘You ask for an application form at the post office.’
   The word order in question (64) suggests that Vietnamese speakers have to learn
   to place the English interrogative word in front. On the other hand,
   speakers of English will find it easy to formulate such questions in
   Vietnamese if they keep in mind the “We wait for who?” “You know what?”
   “He go where?” “She think how?” word order.

(65) Ô đâu có bán đậu phụ? (at where EMPHATIC sell tofu)
   ‘Where do they sell tofu?’
   Answer: Đường Stockton có bán đậu phụ. ‘On Stockton Street.’

(66) Bao giờ máy bay tới? (when machine-fly arrive)
   ‘When is the plane coming?’

(67) Mấy giờ bắt đầu hát? (what o’clock catch-head sing)
   ‘What time will the show begin?’

(68) Cô Green về nước bao giờ? (Miss G. return country when)
   ‘When did Miss Green go home?’

(69) Ông Brown về nước hôm nào? (Mr. B. return country day which)
   ‘When did Mr. Brown go back home?’

Examples (66) and (67) ask about a future event, and questions (68) and
(69) are about a past event.
C. The tag question. A tag question comparable to English “is it not?”, “do you?”, “weren’t they?”, etc., French n’est-ce pas?, and Spanish no es verdad? consists in seeking confirmation on some situation, as in

(70) Cô muốn ghi tên, phải không?
(you want register name, correct or not)
‘You wish to register, don’t you?’

(71) Quyền này đặt hôm, phải không?
(roll this expensive more, correct or not)
‘This one [book] is more expensive, isn’t it?’

(72) Bài thơ đó là của Nguyễn Trãi, đúng không?
(text poetry that be of N.T., accurate or not)
‘That poem is by Nguyễn Trãi, right?’

D. The final particles. Final particles such as à?, sao?, u?, hà?, chăng?, phông?, nhi? may be used also to seek corroboration on some supposition. The first four examples connote surprise on the part of the speaker, though sao? is used more often in the Saigon dialect. While (73) through (76) are unproblematic, (78), (80), (82) and (83) are less so.

(73) Hôm nay anh bận à? (day this, you busy, I’m surprised)
‘So you are busy today?’

(74) Anh không mệt à? (you not tired, I’m surprised)
‘Aren’t you tired [after working so hard]?’

(75) Чи bệnh (hay) sao? (you sick, or somehow) ‘Are you sick, sister?’

(76) Mẹ chưa tiêm (hay) sao? (mother not-yet have shot or somehow)
‘You haven’t had your shots yet? [How come?]’

(77) Không phải cần-sa hay sao? (not correct marijuana or somehow)
‘Isn’t that marijuana?’

(78) Chỉ có hai trăm thôi à? (only exist two hundred stop really)
‘Only two hundred? [I expected more]’

(79) Kết phim há? (finish film, huh) ‘Are you out of film?’

(80) Cô ấy bằng lòng lấy tên đó hở?
(she agree marry name that, I’m surprised)
‘So she consents to marry that guy?’

(81) Họ quên chắc?
(they forget I wonder)
‘Could it be that they forgot? (I wonder)’
(82) **Minh đáp chỉec xe bùyt kia phông?**
(we inclusive board classifier vehicle bus over there right?)
‘We’re boarding that bus over there, aren’t we?’
[The final particle phông? is a contracted form of phải không?] (83) **Chồng bà Chi là ai nihil?** (husband lady Chi be who, do you know)
‘Who is Chi’s husband? I wonder.’
E. The rhetorical question. Finally a sentence which has the structure of a question may actually be an affirmative sentence, and does not expect an answer, e.g.

(84) **Đói nào có ấy chịu lấy ông già ấy?**
(era whichever she consent marry gentleman old that)
‘Never will she agree to marry that old man!’

Cf. the paraphrase in (84a):

(84a) **Không đời nào có ấy chịu lấy ông già ấy đâu!**
(not era whichever she consent marry gentleman old that where)
‘Never will she agree to marry that old man [believe me].’

(85) **Nó lão thể, ai mà tha được?**
(he insolent so, whoever that forgive okay)
‘He was so insolent, who on earth can forgive him?’

This sentence can be paraphrased as (85a).

(85a) **Nó lão thể, không ai mà tha được!**
(he insolent so, not whoever forgive okay)
‘He was so insolent. Nobody can forgive him.’

(86) **Ai chẳng biết?** (who not know) ‘Who doesn’t know that?!’

(87) **Sáng nào mình chẳng làm hai tách cà-phê?**
(morning whichever you not do two cup coffee)
‘Is there any morning you don’t drink two cups of coffee, honey?’

Cf. the two paraphrases (88) and (89):

(88) **Sáng nào mình chẳng làm hai tách cà-phê là gì (‘be what’)?**
(89) **Sáng nào mình chẳng làm hai tách cà-phê đó sao (‘there how’)?**

The latter three highly idiomatic sentences uttered by a wife all mean something like “Don’t you already as a rule drink two cups of coffee every morning? [You can’t deny it.]”
The imperative sentence. This type of sentence formulates an order, a request, a compliment or an exhortation.

A. The final particles. In "emergency situations" a verb alone will suffice---with the help of intonation: Im! ‘Quiet!’ Nín! ‘[to child] Stop crying!’ Thôi! ‘Stop! That’s enough!’ Cẩn-thân! ‘Careful!’ Đúng lại! ‘Halt! Freeze!’ However, the most common imperative structure contains a final particle like di! ‘go ahead and ........’ or với! ‘together; so that we/you can be together’, the former used as an injunctive addressed even to one’s own group, and the latter used in earnest requests or entreaties.

(90) Thôi mà im di! (stop thou quiet IMPERATIVE)
    ‘Shut up!’ [arrogantly to “inferior” or “equal”]

(91) Máy có im di không? (thou EMPHATIC quiet IMPERATIVE or-not)
    ‘Won’t you shut up?’ [arrogantly]

(92) Anh ăn di dã! (you eat IMPERATIVE first)
    ‘Go ahead and eat first.’

(93) Chò tôi với! (await me together with)
    ‘Wait for me, please.’

(94) Cứa tôi với! (rescue me together with)
    ‘Help! [I’m in danger.]’

(95) Ông ngoài cho thắng Khánh nó đi với!
    (grandfather outer let boy Khánh he go together with)
    ‘Grandpa, please let Khánh go with you, will you?’

B. The imperatives hây, dúng, chó. These adverbs help formulate some advice or admonition, and the counsel may be either positive or negative, e.g.

(96) Hây bình-tình. (EXHORTATIVE calm) ‘Keep calm!’

(97) Con hãy nên có-gắng làm cho bố vui lòng.
    (child EXHORTATIVE should endeavor make father pleased heart)
    ‘Be sure to try to please Daddy.’

(98) Người Việt-nam, xin dúng quên!
    (person Vietnam beg PROHIBITIVE forget)
    ‘Vietnamese! Please don’t forget.’ [a popular song by Thâm Oánh]

(99) Chó có theo bạn mà thụ ma-túy nhé!
    (PROHIBITIVE follow friend and try narcotics, hear me)
    ‘Don’t you let your friends talk you into trying drugs!’
C. The polite request. Regular verbs may be used to make requests, e.g. “(I) invite you”, “(I) beg you”, “(I) request”, “(I) suggest”, as in

(101) Mời bố mẹ xôi món cá này a!
(invite dad mom eat dish fish this POLITE PARTICLE)
‘Dad and Mom, please help yourselves to this dish!’

(102) Xin hai anh cự ăn tự nhiên!
(beg two elder brother go ahead eat naturally)
‘Please help yourselves. Don’t be shy! No ceremony!’

(103) Yêu cầu quý vị chú ý!
(request distinguished-persons pay attention)
‘Please may I have your attention, ladies and gentlemen?’

(104) Đề nghị chúng ta cho các cháu bé ăn trước.
(suggest we inclusive let plural nephew/niece small eat before)
‘May I suggest that we let the children eat first?’

It is customary to use a pleasant tone of voice, especially in a large crowd that includes several older persons, who deserve all the honorific terms. Shouting across the room is not considered polite behavior.

11.1.5. The exclamatory sentence. Any narrative or descriptive sentence can be turned into an exclamatory sentence, especially with the help of the final particle thay! ‘how ...!’, a phrase like làm sao! 'how ...!', biết bao! '[heaven] know how much ...!', biết Chung nào! '[heaven] know extent whichever', biết bao! '[one can’t describe] adequately how much' --- and a crescendo intonation (2.10), e.g.

(105) Hay quá! (interesting excessively) ‘How interesting! How clever!’
(106) May thay! ‘How fortunately!’
(107) Bức tranh sơn-thủy đẹp mới làm sao!
(classifier painting mountain-water that only-then beautiful how)
‘How exquisite that landscape painting is!’

(108) Sao mà con Mây-Khuê giống mẹ nó thế!
(how girl Mây-Khuê resemble mother her so)
‘Mây-Khuê looks so much like her mother!’

Sometimes thay or sao is placed inside the sentence, e.g.
THE SENTENCE (CONTINUED)

(109) Dau-dôn thay, phạn dàn-bà! (painful how, fate woman)
      ‘How sorrowful a woman’s lot!’ [“The Tale of Kiều”]

(110) Mắt sào dấy gió đáng sưng! (face how endure wind bear frost)
      ‘How weather-beaten her face has been!’ [“The Tale of Kiều”]

11.2 The compound sentence
The compound sentence can be generated through three different processes: concatenation, the use of paired substitutes, and the use of connectives.

11.2.1 Concatenation of simple sentences.
The first process consists in forming a string of simple sentences placed in juxtaposition, thus Sentence1 + Sentence2 + Sentence3, etc. The structure is loose-jointed, there can be any number of constituents, and the order in which they appear is purely arbitrary, e.g.

(1) Nó chạy, nó nhảy, nó bơi. ‘He ran, he jumped, he swam.’
   or ‘It ran, it jumped, it swam.’

(2) Tàu cuối, Tây khóc, Nhật no.
   ‘The Chinese are laughing, the French are crying, the Japanese eat
    their full.’ [This refers to the situation in 1945 Vietnam.]

(3) Trời mưa, tôi không đi. (1.11) ‘It’s raining. I’m not going.’
   The semantic relation between the elements in (1) and (2) is not clear,
   and the series of simple sentences often denote sequential actions or
   simultaneous activities. The two constituents of (3), on the other hand,
   may reveal some semantic relation in various contexts:
   ‘When it rains, I don’t go out.’
   ‘If it rains, I won’t go.’
   ‘Because it’s raining, I am not going.’
   (The disambiguating process depends on the use of connectives.)

(4) Tôi làm, nó làm. Tôi nghĩ, nó nghĩ. is another example of a series
    that may mean variously
   ‘When I work, he works. When I stop, he stops.’
   ‘If I work, he works. If I stop, he stops, too.’
   ‘He worked because I worked. And he also stopped because I
    stopped.’
11.2.2 Correlative pronouns.
Forms such as nả́y ‘that same one’, áý ‘that’, vảý ‘that same way’, đảý ‘that same place’, bảý ‘that same extent’ are used in correlation with an indefinite substitute like ai ‘whoever’ or nào ‘whichever’. Examples are:

(5) Ai lảm nả́y chju. (whoever do, that same person suffer)
    ‘Whoever did it has to suffer.’

(6) Manh ai nả́y chày. (strong whoever, that same person run)
    ‘It was a run for your life.’ [Fr. “sauve-qui-peut’]

(7) Bả̀n chái cùa ai, ngु̀bì́ ay đùng.
    (table brush of whoever, person that use)
    ‘Each one uses his/her own (tooth)brush.’

(8) Vièc ai nả́y lả̀m. (job whoever, that same person do)
    ‘Each one takes care of his/her own job.’

(9) Cò ai nả́y phát. (flag whoever, that same person wave)
    ‘Each waving his/her own flag.’

(10) Cha nào, con nả́y. (father whichever, child that same one)
    ‘Like father, like son.’

(11) Cha mè đàt nả́u, con ngọ́i đày.
    (father mother place wherever, child sit that same place)
    ‘You sit wherever your parents put you.’ [fig. “You marry whatever husband your parents selected for you.”]

(12) Ai ở đàu ơ đày. (whoever stay wherever, stay that same place)
    ‘Wherever you are, you should stay there.’

(13) Vợ nó bả̀o saố nó lả̀m (nhu) vảý.
    (wife he tell however, he do like that same way)
    ‘He does exactly how his wife tells him to do.’

(14) Kiêm bả̀o nhièu, tièu bảý nhièu.
    (earn however much, spend that much)
    ‘He spends whatever he earns.’

11.2.3 Connectives of coordination.
Thirdly, the structuring of compound sentences relies upon connectives that express various relations (7.2.2), e.g.

• conjunction (và ‘and’, còn ‘whereas, while’),
• disjunction (hay, hay là, hoặc, hoặc là ‘or’),
• cause and effect (vì .... nên ....; tại .... cho nên ....; sò dĩ ...... là vì .... ‘the reason why.... is because ....’),
• condition or supposition (mà .... thì .... ‘if .... then ....’; hề .... là .... ‘as soon as ...., then ....’; nếu .... thì .... ‘if .... then ....’; đóng .... là .... ‘as soon as .... then ....’),
• concession (tuy nhung .... ‘although .... [yet] ....’; thà .... chứ không ‘rather .... than ....’; dù .... vẫn .... ‘even though .... still ....’; mặc dù .... vẫn .... ‘even though .... still ....’),
• progression (càng .... càng .... ‘the more .... the more ....’; không nhung/chỉ .... mà còn .... ‘not only ...., but also ....’), etc.

Strictly speaking, these relations are relations of INTERDEPENDENCE rather than relations of SUBORDINATION.

(15) Anh tôi thích Đà-lạt, còn tôi thích Nha-trang.
(elder brother me like Dalat, as for me like Nhatrang)
‘My brother likes Dalat, and I like Nha-trang.’

(16) Anh về ngay hay ở lại?
(elder brother return immediately or stay behind)
‘Are you leaving right now or are you staying?’

(17) Chị đi chợ hay là em đi chợ?
(elder sister go market or younger sibling go market)
‘Sis, are you going to market or am I?’

(18) Bà mua ớt chuông hay ớt cây? --- OMETRY hoạc ớt ta cùng được.
(lady buy pepper bell or pepper hot --- pepper west or pepper ours likewise okay)
‘Do you want to buy bell peppers or pimentos, ma’am? --- Either western peppers or Vietnamese peppers will do.’

Whereas the connective or conjunction hay (là) is used in choice (yes-or-no) questions (11.1.3A), hoạc cannot be used in such an alternative question. Instead, when a statement contains hoạc—as in the response in (18)---the connotation is that the alternatives are not mutually exclusive (“either one would be fine”).

(19) Anh đến 8 giờ hoạc [= hay] 9 giờ cùng được.
(you come 8 o’clock or 9 o’clock likewise okay)
‘Either 8 o’clock or 9 o’clock will be fine.’
(20)  
Hoặc bố hoặc mẹ, một người phải có mặt ở đây chứ!
(either dad or mom, one person must have face at here I’m sure)
[mother speaking to child] ‘Either dad or I, one of us definitely
has to be present, I hope.’

(21) Vì không can-than nên tôi bị móc túi.
(because not careful consequently I suffer pick pocket)
‘Because I was not careful they picked my pocket.’

In this structure [vì S₁ nên S₂], S₁, that denotes a cause and is often
called a “circumstantial clause” [Trần, Phạm & Bùi 1942: 23-27], can be
placed after S₂ (the “effect clause”): in that case, the element nên ‘as a
result, consequently’ will be deleted from the fronted S₂, as in
(22) = Tôi bị móc túi vì không can-than. ‘id.’ [S₂ vì S₁]
Several analysts, including the three above-cited co-authors, consider
the circumstantial S₁ a subordinate sentence. We prefer to treat this as a
case of coordination.

(23) Tài họ chủ-quan cho nên mới bị thật-bại. [tại S₁ cho nên S₂]
(because they subjective consequently only then suffer failure)
‘They failed only because they were subjective.’

(24) = Họ bị thật-bại tại (ho) chủ-quan. ‘id.’ [S₂ tại S₁]

(25) Sở dĩ cuộc họp bị hoãn lại là vì văn-phòng ông bộ-trưởng chưa
dực chuẩn-bị [The order of the two linked sentences is fixed.]
(the reason why session meet suffer postpone behind be because office
gentleman minister not yet get ready)
‘The reason why the meeting was postponed is because the
minister’s office had not been made ready for it.’

(26) Pháp mà thi-hành đạo luật ấy thì dân-chùng sẽ phân-dối liên.
(France if carry out classifier law that then people shall oppose
immediately)
‘If France implements that law, the people will immediately
protest.’

In the S₁ denoting condition, mà can be used with nếu ‘if’, and the
combination is fronted, as in
(27) = Nếu mà Pháp thi-hành đạo luật ấy thì dân-chùng sẽ phân-dối
liên. ‘id.’

(28) = Dân-chùng sẽ phân-dối liên nếu (mà) Pháp thi-hành đạo luật ấy.
248  THE SENTENCE (CONTINUED)

(29)  Nếu tôi không làm thì trước 1975 ông ta làm quân-trưởng.
  ‘If I am not mistaken, [then] he was a district chief before 1975.’

The connective may express either condition or supposition. Contrast the two sentences (30) and (31):

(30)  Nếu có tiền, chúng tôi sẽ mua cái nhà ấy.
  ‘If we have/had money, we will/would buy that house.’

(31)  Nếu có tiền, thì chúng tôi đã mua cái nhà ấy rồi.
  ‘If we had had money, we would have bought that house.’ [But we don’t have money.]

Here giây ‘if, by any chance’ can substitute for nếu.

Sometimes the connective nếu does not express either condition or supposition, but comparison, e.g.

(32)  Nếu Pike có công soạn cuốn “Phonemics” thì Nida có công soạn cuốn “Morphology”:
  (if P. have credit compose book “Phonemics” then N. have credit compose book “Morphology”)
  ‘Whereas Pike was credited with the book Phonemics, Nida contributed the one on Morphology.’

(33)  Ông nhà tôi hễ nói là làm!
  (gentleman house me as soon as say be do)
  ‘Once my husband says it, he does it!’

(34)  Ông ấy khó tính làm: đồng hỏi đến là gắt.
  (he difficult character very: move ask reach be holler)
  ‘He’s a very difficult man: as soon as you ask him something, he bursts into angry words.’

(35)  Tuy nó mới có mười tuổi nhưng nó thông-minh bằng người mười bốn mười năm làm.
  (though he only have ten year (of age) but he intelligent equal person fourteen fifteen)
  ‘Though he is only ten years old, he is as intelligent as somebody 14 or 15 years old.’ [no need to translate nhưng]

Unlike the case in English, the S2 that follows the concession has to be introduced by the connective nhưng or song ‘but, however’.
The two juxtaposed sentences $S_1$ and $S_2$ can switch position, too:

(36) \[\text{Thàng bé thông-minh làm tuy mới có mười tuổi.}\]

(boy small intelligent very though only have ten year (of age))

‘The boy is very intelligent although (he is) only ten years old.’

(37) \[\text{Dù / dâu con có muốn cũng không được.}\]

(though child EMPHATIC want, likewise not okay)

‘Sonny, even though you want it, you still can’t have it.’

(38) \[\text{Mặc dâu trời mưa, họ vẫn đá.}\]

(though sky rain, they still kick)

‘They [= the soccer teams] still played although it rained.’

(39) \[\text{Dù muốn dù không, mình cũng vẫn phải đợi cho tháng Ninh học xong đã.}\]

(though want though not, we inclusive likewise still must wait for boy Ninh study finish first)

‘Whether we want it or not, we still have to wait until Ninh finishes his studies.’

(40) \[\text{Dầu sao chẳng nữa, Phạm Quỳnh cũng đã có công góp phần vào việc xây dựng nền quốc văn mới.}\]

(though whatsoever not additional, Phạm Quỳnh likewise ANTERIOR have credit contribute share enter task build up classifier national literature new)

‘At any rate, Phạm Quỳnh deserved credit for his contribution to the buildup of a new national literature.’

(41) \[\text{Tuồng Phú bảo vợ: "Thà chết chứ không đầu hàng".}\]

(general Phú tell wife: would rather die but not surrender)

‘General Phú told his wife: “I’d rather die than surrender.”’

(42) \[\text{Khi chàng du-học-sinh trở về thì mọi tình của nàng lại càng dần-thắm hơn nữa.}\]

(time when classifier student turn return, then classifier love of her even increasingly intense more additionally)

‘Upon the young scholar’s return from studying abroad, her love for him grew even more intense.’

(43) \[\text{Ông ấy càng van xin thì dân thanh-nien càng la ó.}\]

(he more pray beg, then mob youth more shout holler)

‘The more he begged, the more loudly the crowd of youths roared.’
(44) Gừng càng già càng cay. (ginger more old more pungent)  
‘The older ginger is, the more pungent it becomes.’

(45) Chị Kim-Hoàn trông càng ngày càng đẹp ra.  
(elder sister Kim-Hoàn look more day more beautiful out)  
‘Sister Kim-Hoàn looks prettier every day.’

(46) Học phí mỗi ngày một cao. (study fee each day one high)  
‘Tuition fees are getting higher and higher.’

(47) Các văn sĩ không những làm thi phú, mà còn làm các thể văn khác nữa. [Đường Quảng-Hạm]  
(plural writer not only do poem rhyme-prose, but also do plural genre writing other additionally)  
‘Writers not only composed poetry and rhyme-prose, but also wrote in other genres.’

(48) Không chỉ kỹ sư cơ khí, mà cả kỹ sư hoá học cũng khó kiếm việc.  
(not only engineer mechanics, but even engineer chemistry likewise difficult find job)  
‘Not only mechanical engineers, but also chemical engineers find it hard to land a job.’

More examples of coordination:

(49) Chiếc cầu đó, họ phải mất gần mười năm mới xây xong.  
(classifier bridge that, they must lose nearly 10 year then and only then build finish)  
‘They had to spend almost ten years before that bridge got built.’

(50) Ai, nó cũng vay tiền. (whoever, he likewise borrow money)  
‘He would borrow money from anyone.’

(51) Đất bao nhiêu, tôi cũng mua.  
(expensive however much, I likewise buy)  
‘I’ll buy it no matter how expensive it is.’

(52) Mẹ ăn (cái) gì cũng được.  
(mom eat whatever likewise okay)  
‘Anything would be fine for Mom to eat.’

(53) Nhiều vũ khí thế mà vẫn thua đây!  
(many weapon so yet still lose there)  
‘Despite all those weapons they got beaten just the same.’
11.2.4 Within one compound sentence, each constituent can in turn consist of two or more submembers tied by some similar relation of interdependence:

(54) \textit{Neu anh mu\'on mua m\'a chi \'{a}y kh\'ong d\'ong-y, thi anh kh\'ong n\'en mua, tuy r\'ang d\'o c\'o th\'ed l\'a m\'ot v\'u d\'au-t\'u hay.} \\
(if you want buy yet sister that not agree, then you not should buy, though that has possibility be one affair invest interesting) \\
‘If you want to buy that property but your wife doesn’t go along, then you shouldn’t buy---although that could be a good investment.’

(55) \textit{Hoa quynh l\'uc no thi th\'at dep, nh\'ung no ch\'ong tan, \m\'a d\'a tan thi kh\'ong dep n\'u\'a tuy van c\'on thom.} \\
(flower night-blooming-cereus time open then really beautiful, but it fast wilt, and ANTERIOR wilt then not beautiful more, though still fragrant) \\
‘The night-blooming cereus is really beautiful when the flower opens, but the bloom doesn’t last long, and once it is wilted it no longer looks pretty---though the fragrance still lingers on.’

11.3 The complex sentence.
We can distinguish two kinds of complex sentences: those that contain an embedded completive sentence, and those that contain an embedded determinative sentence.

11.3.1 The embedded completive sentence serves as complement of the “mother” or “matrix” sentence, which it follows, e.g.

(56) \textit{Dong bi < vo bo >.} (Dong suffer: wife abandon) \\
‘Dong’s wife left him.’

(57) \textit{Nam du\'oc < bo\' me vo cho chiec o-t\'o moi >.} \\
(Nam gain: father mother wife give classifier automobile new) \\
‘Nam’s parents-in-law gave him a new car.’

(58) \textit{T\'am du\'oc < Li\'en yeu >.} (T\'am gain: Li\'en love) \\
‘T\'am is loved by Li\'en.’

(59) \textit{Ho\'p b\'au Qu\'an < lam chu-t\'ich >.} (they vote Qu\'an: do chairperson) \\
‘They elected Qu\'an chairperson.’

(60) \textit{Co\' coi Ch\'au < la ke th\'u >.} (she regard Ch\'au: be person foe) \\
‘She considers Ch\'au an enemy.’
(61) Tôi nghĩ (rằng) < anh kia đúng >.
(I think that: fellow other correct)
'I think that the other guy is right.'

(62) Tôi tưởng (là) < các anh không thích >.
(I thought wrongly that: plural fellow not like)
'I thought (wrongly) that you fellows don't like it.'

(63) Bác biết rằng < các cháu nhà >.
(uncle know that: plural nephew/niece miss home)
'I [your uncle] know that you are homesick.'

(64) Chúng mình đừng hòng < no giúp mình >.
(we inclusive PROHIBITIVE hope: he help us inclusive)
'Let's not entertain any hope that he will help us.'

(65) Gia đình chúng tôi mong < quy-vì lương-tình tha-thù >.
(family we exclusive hope: distinguished persons sympathize forgive)
'Our family hope that you will understand and forgive us.'

(66) Mẹ đã nói rằng < chúng mình phải chờ ông ngoại >.
(mom ANTERIOR say that: we inclusive must await grandfather outer)
'Mom said that we have to wait for Grandpa.'

(67) Chúng tôi đều tin-tưởng rằng < chính-nghĩa quốc-gia sẽ thắng >.
(we exclusive equally believe that: just cause national shall win)
'We all believe that the national cause will prevail.'

(68) Bộ Ngoại-giao xác-nhan rằng < công-chúa chưa đồng ý >.
(ministry foreign confirm that: princess not yet agree)
'The Foreign Office confirmed that Her Highness had not agreed.'

(69) Bên nào cũng nhân mạnh là < mình tuân-thở hòa-uộc ngừng bán >.
(side any likewise emphasize that: self obey agreement stop-fire)
'Each side emphasizes that it abides by the cease-fire agreement.'

(70) Văn-thủ của nhà trường báo rằng < nó không hỏi đủ điều-kiện >.
(letter of school say that: he not gather complete requirement)
'The note from the school says he doesn't meet all requirements.'

(71) Tôi nghĩ < nó nói dừa >. (I thought: he speak jest)
'I thought he was kidding.'

(72) Tôi biết thừa rằng < tên đó không thật-thật >.
(I know surplus that: name that not honest)
'I've known all along that that guy is not honest.'
(73) Anh ấy tưởng rằng < cô ấy chê anh xấu trai >.
     (he thought wrongly that: she slight he ugly boy)
     ‘He got the wrong impression that she thought he isn’t handsome.’

The matrix sentence in each of the above examples contains a verb of saying, thinking, knowing, guessing, hoping, evaluating, etc. In the following examples, on the other hand, the matrix sentence contains a causative verb.

(74) Bà ấy cho < họ nghỉ sớm >. (she let: they rest early)
     ‘She allowed them to quit early.’

(75) Anh để < tôi làm ngay bây giờ >. (you let: I do right now)
     ‘Let me do it right now.’

(76) Nó làm < chúng tôi xấu hổ >. (he make: we exclusive ashamed)
     ‘He makes us feel ashamed.’

(77) Họ đòi < anh ấy (phải) từ chức >. (they demand: he must resign)
     ‘They demand that he resign.’

(78) Luật lệ cấm < sinh viên không được hút thuốc lá >.
     (law forbid: student not allowed suck drug-leaf)
     ‘The law prohibits students from smoking cigarettes.’

11.3.2 The embedded determinative sentence—commonly known as “the relative clause”—serves as an attribute modifying the NP in the matrix sentence (7.1.2.1; 8.1.7), e.g.

(79) Nó < tôi ra đời > đã bị bom đạn phá hủy.
     (place < I exit life> ANTERIOR suffer bomb bullet destroy)
     ‘The spot where I was born has been destroyed by bombs and shells.’

(80) Cái ông < deo kính đen > chắc là tay mật vụ.
     (classifier man <wear glasses black> surely be hand secret-affairs)
     ‘The man with dark glasses must be a Secret Service agent.’

(81) Những cái máy tính < nhà trường vừa mua trước > bị mất rồi.
     (plural classifier machine calculate <school just buy week before> suffer lose already)
     ‘The calculators the school just bought last week have been lost.’

(82) Những ai < làm ca đêm > đều được trả lương phụ trợ.
     (plural who <do shift night> equally gain pay salary supplementary)
     ‘All those who work on the graveyard shift get overtime pay.’
(83) "Những ông bà nào < chưa giữ chỗ > sẽ phải trả khoản phụ-trội.
(plural gentleman lady any <not yet retain seat> shall must pay
item extra)
‘Those who didn’t make reservations will have to pay an extra fee.’

(84) Cái đồng-hồ < (mã) chú tôi vừa gửi cho tôi > không phải lên dây.
(classifier watch <which uncle me just send to me> not must wind)
‘The watch that my uncle just sent me does not need any winding.’

(85) Cái dòng-họ < (ma) chưa giữ chỗ > sẽ phải trả khoản phụ-trội.
(plural gentleman lady any <not yet retain seat> shall must pay
item extra)
‘Those who didn’t make reservations will have to pay an extra fee.’

(86) Tôi thích < (ma) ba nó vừa mới mua >.
(I like classifier house brick huge <that dad he just recently buy>)
‘The tailor who came this morning is very skillful.’

(87) Người < (ma) tôi kính trọng nhất > lại là một giáo sư nghèo.
(person <that I respect most> unexpectedly be one teacher poor)
‘The person I respect most happens to be a poor teacher.’

(88) Cái ô-tô < trong đó canh sát khám thấy ma túy > là chiếc Ford cũ.
(classifier car <inside that police search find drug> be classifier
Ford used)
‘The car in which police found drugs is an old Ford.’

(89) Đó là cái chính sách < vì đó Pháp mất mặt >.
(that be classifier policy <because that France lose face>)
= Đó là cái chính sách < (ma) nó đã khiến cho Pháp mất mặt >.
(that be classifier policy <which it ANTERIOR cause France lose face>)
‘That is a policy which has caused France to lose face.’

(90) Việt nam gửi một phái đoàn < do Giáo sư XYZ cầm đầu >.
(Vietnam send-one delegation <origin professor XYZ hold head>)
‘Vietnam sent a delegation led by Professor XYZ.’

(91) Họ đã tự tiện in lại quyền tự tiền < của tôi soạn thảo 1976 >.
(they ANTERIOR brazenly print again classifier dictionary <property I
compile time 1976>)
‘They printed a pirate edition of the dictionary I compiled in 1976.’

(92) Cây dâu < (của anh Hiền trồng năm kia) ra bao nhiêu là quá!
(tree guava <property brother Hiền plant year other> give out so many
fruit)
‘The guava tree Hiền planted two years ago has borne so much fruit.’

(93) Quyên bách-khoa < (mà) tôi mua hôm nọ > bị ăn cặp mất rồi.
(book encyclopedia <which I buy day other> suffer steal lost already)
‘The encyclopedia I bought the other day has been stolen.’

(94) Tất cả chỉ có 130 thuyền-nhân < đã đăng ký tự nguyện hộ hương >.
(all only exist 130 boatpeople <ANTERIOR register voluntary repatriate>)
‘In all there are only 130 refugees who signed up for repatriation.’

(95) American Technologies, < mà số thương-vụ hàng năm lên tôi gần 100 triệu Mỹ-kim >, là một công-ty Việt-nam.
(AT, <which amount commercial affairs yearly ascend reach nearly 100 million US dollars> be one company Vietnam)
‘American Technologies---whose annual business [incidentally] amounts to nearly 100 million dollars---is a Vietnamese corporation.’

The adjunct enclosed by commas is a “non-essential, non-restrictive” predication introduced by the “relative” connective mà meaning variously ‘which, to which, of which, from which, against which, whose, etc.’
APPENDIX 1

PARTS OF SPEECH

I. FULL WORDS = CONTENT WORDS (thực-từ)

A. SUBSTANTIVES (thể-từ)
   1. Nouns (danh-từ)
   1a. Classifiers (loại-từ)
   2. Locatives (phương-vị-từ)
   3. Numerals (số-từ)
B. PREDICATIVES (vị-từ)
   4. (Functive) Verbs (động-từ)
   5. Stative Verbs = Adjectives (tính-từ)
C. SUBSTITUTES (dại-từ)
   6. Substitutes (dại-từ)
      Pro-nouns (dại-danh-từ)
      Pro-verbs (dại-vị-từ)

II. EMPTY WORDS = FUNCTION WORDS (hử-từ)

D. ADVERBS (phó-từ)
   7. Adverbs (phó-từ)
E. CONNECTIVES (quan-hề-từ)
   8. Prepositions (giới-từ)
      Conjunctions (liên-từ)
F. PARTICLES (tiểu-từ tính-thái)
   9. Initial and Final Particles (tính-thái-từ)
   10. Interjections (cấm-thán-từ)
APPENDIX 2

TEXTS

1. FOLK VERSE ABOUT THE LOTUS

Trong đầm gì đẹp bằng sen,
(inside pond what beautiful equal lotus)
‘Lotus in a pond: what a great beauty!’

Lá xanh bông trắng lại chen nhị vàng.
(leaf green flower white and mix stamen yellow)
‘Leaves shiny green, petals pure white, yellow stamens.’

Nhị vàng, bông trắng, lá xanh:
(stamen yellow, flower white, leaf green)
‘Yellow stamens, white petals, green leaves.’

Gần bùn mà chẳng hôi tanh mùi bùn.
(near mud yet not putrid noisome odor mud)
‘It grows in mud, yet has no mud stench.’

This quatrain, which compares the incorruptible “superior man” to the lotus flower, consists of two couplets, in which a line of eight syllables follows a line of six syllables, hence the name luc-bát or “six-eight” meter. The sixth syllable of line 2 (chen) rhymes with the final syllable of line 1 (sen). Likewise, the sixth syllable of line 4 (tanh) rhymes with the final syllable of line 3 (xanh).

The most popular narrative, artfully crafted by Nguyễn Du (1765-1820), is the 3,254-line Tale of Kiều, which consists of 1,627 such couplets.
2. EXCERPT FROM A NOVEL

Dialogue between Bà Án (A), the widow of a judiciary mandarin (án sát), and her son Lộc (L), who came to confess his love for Mai and asked for the permission to marry her. The mother uses different pairs of personal pronouns "I-you": mẹ - con, tôi - anh, tao - mày, tôi - cậu.

A : Chắc con có điều gì phiền-muốn mà con giữ mẹ.
(surely child have matter whatever worry that child hide mother)
‘You must have something troubling you’re trying to hide from me.’
L : Vâng, có thể. Bấm mẹ, con khó làm.
(yes, emphatic so. respectfully report mother, child unhappy very)
‘Yes, I have. Mother, I’m very unhappy.’

A : Chuyện gì thế con?
(story what so child)
‘What is the matter, son?’

L : Mẹ có tha tôi cho con thì con mới dám thưa.
(mother emphatic forgive sin to child, then child only-then dare report)
‘Mother, I dare tell you only if you forgive me.’

A : Con cứ nói.
(child go-ahead speak)
‘Go ahead and say it.’

L : Cô Mai ....
(miss Mai)
‘Mai ....’

A : Con Mai. Cô phải con bé nhà-quê nó quyên-rũ anh không? Thế sao?
(girl Mai. emphatic correct girl little country she seduce you or-not so, how)
‘Mai? The country girl who tried to seduce you, son? What about her?’

L : Bấm mẹ, bây giờ cô ấy vẫn ở với con, cô ấy đa ....
(respectfully report mother, now she still live with child, she has ...)
‘Mother, she’s still living with me. She is ......’
A : Thời ấy gì giờ thật .... Máy đổi tao, máy đánh-lừa tao ....  
(so then you good really .... you lie me, you strike-dupe me ....)
Mày đi thuê nhà riêng để ở với nó.
(you go rent house private in order to live with her)
Mày còn coi tao ra gì nữa, tháng kia?
(you still regard me as anything further, rascal there)
‘So you really did it! You lied to me, you tricked me. You rented a separate house to live with her. You rascal, what are you taking me for?’

Mượn song ngày mai phải về đây ở với tao. Còn con bé
(want live day tomorrow must return here live with me. remain girl thì tao sẽ trình sở cảnh sát bỏ vào nhà thổ.)
then I shall report office commissioner arrest drop enter house earth)
‘If you want to live, you come back here tomorrow to live with me. As for that girl, I will report her to the police commissariat and have her put in a brothel.’

L: Bàn mẹ, người ấy đã là vợ con.
(respectfully report mother, person that anterior be wife child)
‘But mother, she has been my wife.’

A : Vợ may! Ai hỏi nó cho may?
(wife you. who ask her for you)
‘Your wife? Who asked her in marriage on your behalf?’

L : Con hỏi lấy.
(child ask myself)
‘I asked her myself.’

A : À, thằng này giờ thật, vượt quyền cha mẹ.
(ah, boy this, excellent really, go beyond authority father mother)
Phải rồi! Câu văn-minh! Câu tự-do kết hồn.
(correct already you civilized you freely get-married)
Nhưng dù thế nào câu cũng phải xin phép tôi dâng chủ?
(but though whatever you likewise must ask permission me first, I’d say)
‘Oh, this boy really did it! Ignore your parents’ authority! I know. You are civilized. You want to freely choose your wife. But in any event you must ask for my permission first, must you not?’
L : Bam me, con da xin phep me,
(respectfully report mother, child past ask permission mother, nhung me khong bang long)
(but mother not agree)
‘I did ask for your permission, mother, but you didn’t give it.

A : Vay toi khong bang long thi cau cau lay, co phai khong?
(so I not agree then you go ahead take, emphatic correct or-not)
‘And even if I don’t agree you still go ahead and marry her, is that it?’
Nhung thoi, toi khong can nhieu loi. Cau con muon trong that
(but stop, I not need many words. you still want look-see
mat toi nhu thi phai lap-tuc tong co con di ay di,
face me more then must at once expel neck classifier slut that away, roi ve day o voi toi.
then return here live with me)
‘Enough, I don’t need to speak so much. If you still want to see my face, you must immediately kick that harlot out, then come back here to live with me.’

L : Bam me, that con khong tuan theo y me duoc.
(report mother, really child not abide follow wish mother possible)
‘Mother, really I cannot obey your wish.’
Dau me gioi, con cung cam chju,
(even if mother kill, child likewise content suffer)
vi nguoi ay da co chua voi con
(because person that anterior have pregnancy together with child)
‘Even if you kill me, I’ll be willing to suffer, because she is now pregnant by me.’

A : Nhung con da chac dau rang no co chua voi con!
(but child anterior sure anywhere that she have pregnancy with you)
‘But how can you be sure that she is pregnant by you?’
Roi con se ro ....... Thoi, the này.
(later child shall see clear ..... stop, way this.
‘Later you will see ..... For now, here is the thing.’
Néo anh muon lay con be ay lam le, thi tói cung cho phép anh.
(if you want take girl that do concubine, then I likewise give authorization you)
‘If you want to marry her as a concubine, I’ll authorize you to do so.’
Làm trai lấy năm lấy bảy mặc ý.
(be man take five take seven never mind wish)
‘A man may have five to seven wives if that’s his wish.’
Nhưng phải nghe tôi: đến tháng tám này tôi cuối con quan tuần cho anh đây.
(but must listen me: come month eight this I marry daughter mandarin governor for you there)
‘But you must listen to me: this coming eighth month I will get the governor’s daughter as your wife.’
Tuy anh nghĩ sao thì nghĩ.
(depend you think however then think)
‘It’s up to you to think what is right.’

Nửa chung xuân
by Khách-Hùng (1896-1947)

3. EXCERPT FROM A NEWSPAPER ADVERTISEMENT

TRUNG-TÂM DỊCH-VỤ XYZ
(center service XYZ)
XYZ SERVICE CENTER

Quốc-tich -- INS: Đặc-biệt miền thi nhập-tịch
(citizenship INS: special waiver exam naturalization)
‘Citizenship, Immigration & Naturalization Service: Special Waiver of Naturalization Exam’
Những người bệnh-tất đang nằm tại nhà-thương hay tại nhà,
(plural person sick-infirm presently lie in house-wounded or at home, không thể tôi số đi-trú được; chứng tôi sẽ mời một nhân-viện số đó not able come office immigration ok, we shall invite one staff office that tôi ngày giường bệnh để phòng-ván cho quí-vị, khôi come right bed sick to interview give distinguished persons, not obliged lo phải di-chuyễn worry must move around)
‘For those of you, distinguished clients, who are sick lying in bed in the hospital or at home, unable to go to the Immigration Service, we’ll invite a staff member of INS to interview you, so that you would not have to travel.’
Dành riêng cho người già yếu, bệnh hoạn, tật nguyền, câm, mù, (reserve special give person old weak, sick, disabled, dumb, blind,电池, mental, không nói hay viết tiếng Anh,.... đang lãnh SSI, deaf, mentally ill, not speak or write language England .... now receive SSI theo đúng tiêu chuẩn điều kiện mới nhất INS ban hành.
follow exact standards conditions new most INS issue)

‘Special service for people who are old, sick, disabled, dumb, blind, deaf, mentally ill, unable to speak or write English, currently receiving SSI* following exactly all standards and requirements most recently issued by the Immigration and Naturalization Service.’

*The initials SSI stand for “Supplementary Security Income”, a financial aid granted to people with low income.

Chúng tôi sẽ lo mọi dịch vụ miễn thi, phòng vấn và (We will take care every service waiver examination, interview and tuyên thệ lấy quốc tịch cho quý vị.
swear take citizenship for distinguished persons)

‘We will take care of all services including applying for the test waiver, preparing the interview and the oath of allegiance so as to secure US citizenship for you, our distinguished clients.’

Đoàn tụ gia đình: dem vợ con, vợ con, vợ chú, vợ phu sang Hoa Kỳ, (reunite family: bring wife kid, fiancée, fiancé over USA khởi căn về Việt Nam. Quý vị sẽ dön họ tại San Francisco từ 6 tháng. not need return VN. You shall meet them in SF from six months)

Diễn con nuôi, con gái, con vợ 1, vợ 2.... quên ở Việt Nam. (category child adopted, stepchild, child wife 1st, wife 2nd .... stuck in VN)

‘Orderly Departure Program [ODP]: bring your wife and kids, your fiancée or fiancé over to the USA without having to go back to Vietnam and apply there. You will meet them in San Francisco in six months.

Or those falling under the categories of adopted children, stepchildren, children of your 1st wife, of your 2nd wife, who got stuck in Vietnam.’

Thời báo (San José, California)
May 29, 1997 issue
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272  BIBLIOGRAPHY


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BIBLIOGRAPHY


INDEX

a! 168. a ha! 168
à! 166, 168
a! 166
abstract 56: -- adjective 56; -- noun 55, 72, 89, 94, 97, 176, 177, 210; -- verb 119
accompaniment 191
adjective 40, 82, 88, 107, 108, 119ff, 121-122, 188, 217: abstract -- 56; compound -- 75-76, 122; concrete -- 56; qualitative -- 119, 121; quantitative -- 120, 121; reduplicative -- 122; -- -adjective compound 75; -- -noun compound 75; -- -verb compound 75; larger forms 51-53
adjunct (in sentence) 224: appositive -- 227; circumstantial -- 225; focal -- 228; transitional -- 229; vocative -- 224
adverb 87, 140, 161
affinity with Chinese 2
affix 59ff.
affixation 59: infixes 60; prefixes 60-63; suffixes 63-66
ai 131, 212, 238-9: ai ... nay ... 124, 245
á 168: ái chà! 168
alliteration 42-43, 47, 69
alliterative patterns 42-43, 47-48
âm-tiểt = syllable
âm-vị = phoneme
analytic language 17
Ancient Vietnamese 5
¬ang 54
anh 43: as classifier 178
ân < anh 43
Annamese 1
Annamite 1
antonym compounds 70ff
appearance and disappearance 113
appointment 196
Archaic Chinese 6
Archaic Vietnamese 5, 69
article 96, 97
aspectual words 88, 153-154
association 191
attenuation 45
attribute 174, 181
attributive position 120
Aubaret, G. 83
Austro-Asiatic 2, 4
auxiliary 41, 87, 108: -- verb 118, 187
ây 92, 95, 96, 133-4
bà 43: as classifier 178
bà < bà 43
bác 178: as classifier 178
Bahnar 2
bán- 61
bán-hur-tư = semi-empty word
bán-thúc-tư = semi-full word
bao 132: -- giò 132; -- lâu 132; -- nhiều 132; -- xa 132
bằng 27, 162, 174
bằng 'by means of' 192
bằng (verb of contrast) 105
bắc 44
bắc (classifier) 178
bâm 168
bàn- 63
bát- 61, 62, 122
bầu 116
bày 134: -- giò 42, 134; -- nhiều 134
bây 134: -- giò 42, 134; -- lâu 134; -- nhiều 134
because of 193
belief 194
bên 157
bên 98
bên < bên 43, 98
beneficiary 193
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDEX</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>bí</strong> 111, 112, 214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>biết</strong> 117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>bilingual</strong> 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>bối</strong> 162, 194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>bông</strong> 186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>borrowings</strong> 36-38, 74-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>bound morphemes</strong> 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bru</strong> 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>bức</strong> 178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Buddhism</strong> 5, 11: <strong>Hinayana</strong> 5; <strong>Mahayana</strong> 5; <strong>Cao Đài</strong> 5; <strong>Hoà Hảo</strong> 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Buddhist monasteries</strong> 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bùi Đức Tịnh</strong> 83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bùi Kỷ</strong> 83, 179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bulteau, R.</strong> 96, 179, 182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>cà</strong> 39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>cà-phê</strong> 39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>cả-rốt</strong> 39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>cả 165. đến cả 165</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>các</strong> 131, 140, 141, 143, 145, 177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cadière, Léopold</strong> 83, 129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>cáí 79, 92, 93, 95, 96, 97, 98, 169, 178, 179: <strong>cáí-</strong> N', cáí ông, cáí thằng 180</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>cảm-thán-từ</strong> = <strong>interjection</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>câm</strong> 117, 191, 196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>cân</strong> 160, 187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>càng .... càng .... 188: <strong>(càng) ngày</strong> 188</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>cânh</strong> 182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cao-Dài sect</strong> 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>cardinal numbers</strong> 101, 102, 177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>categorical (nouns)</strong> 88, 91, 92, 94, 95, 96, 129, 174, 175, 183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Catholics</strong> 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>cạu as classifier</strong> 178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>causality</strong> 190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>causative verb</strong> 117, 196, 216, 222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>cày</strong> 178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>chá</strong> 108, 149, 150, 186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>chá &lt; cha</strong> 43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>chao (ô) ! 168</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>chăng? 150</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>chăng! 150</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>chang</strong> 108, 140, 149, 150: <strong>-- những 150, 152, 161, 186</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>chết ! 168</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>chi = gì</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>chỉ &lt; chỉ</strong> 43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**chỉ 142, 186: <strong>-- những 142</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>chỉ</strong> 43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>chiéc</strong> 178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chinese</strong> 2, 3: <strong>-- characters 2; -- script 2; -- loanwords 2, 40, 42, 76, 79, 119, 171; Cantonese 80; affinity with -- 2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>chính</strong> 165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>chỉu</strong> 111, 112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>cho</strong> 115, 117, 163, 169, 174, 192, 194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>chô</strong> 108, 159-160: <strong>-- có 160, 242</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>choice question</strong> 237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>choi</strong> 192: <strong>-- an -- 192</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>chốt</strong> 186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chrau</strong> 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>chủ</strong> 178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>chữ-nghĩa ..... (N) 170. ..... -chữ-nghĩa (ADJ) 170</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>chữ-ngữ</strong> = <strong>subject</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>chữ</strong> 164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>chủ! 166, 212</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**chǔ 6, 15: <strong>-- Hán 6, 12; -- nho 6, 12; -- nôm 6, 7, 8, 12; -- quốc-ngữ 6, 8, 9, 10, 12</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**chua 100, 149, 151, 152: <strong>chua ..... dã .... 151; dã ..... chua? 151, 152, 145, 166, 200; ..... chua! 152</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>chúng</strong> 124, 125, 131: <strong>-- bay, -- mà, -- mình, -- ta, -- tao, -- tôi 124-125</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>chúng</strong> 104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>circumstantial complement</strong> 110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>class conversion</strong> 168ff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>classifier (N')</strong> 88, 91, 92, 94, 95, 96, 129, 174-175, 178ff, 183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**có 113: <strong>có .... [emphatic] 152, 186; <strong>có thể</strong> 187</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>có 'only' 142</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>có 43, as classifier 178</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
cô < cô 43  
cơ! = kia!  
coda 18  
coi 116  
collective nouns 55, 92, 176, 177  
color 76, 181  
commands 158  
comment 16, 86, 180: topic- -- 16  
common nouns 90, 91  
comparative (hon) 122, 123  
comparison 143, 186-187  
complaint 88  
complement 109, 189ff  
complementation 171  
compound 66, 77: alliterative -- 69;  
antonym -- 70; archaic -- 69-70;  
coordinate -- 66-67; generalizing -- 67-68;  
idiom -- 71; pseudo-- 122;  
reinforcing -- 70; subordinative -- 71ff;  
synonym -- 70; characteristics of -- 68;  
reversibility 68; -- word 15, 59, 66ff;  
V-O -- 74; V-C -- 74; V-Result -- 74  
compound adjective 75, 122  
compound name 90ff  
compound noun 71ff, 172, 173: N-N -- 72;  
N-Adj -- 72; N-V -- 73  
compound verb 74; V-O -- 74  
con 79, 92, 93, 95, 96, 145, 178  
còn 108, 113, 145, 146, 147, 186: -- như  
164; hãy --, vân -- 161; không -- 161;  
sể -- 161  
concatenation 244  
concern 193  
confirmation 152, 167, 186  
Confucianism 5, 7, 11  
conjunction 40, 87, 162, 163-165: -- of  
coordination 163-164, 245; -- of  
subordination 164-165  
connective 87, 162-165, 191-194, 195-197,  
204-205, 245ff  
co-noun (= classifier) 92-93, 96  
consonant 18ff: initial -- 19ff; final -- 23ff  
container 93, 179  
content 93, 179: -- question 32, 212; --  
word 36, 85, 107, 139, 168  
contentive 139  
context 86  
continuity 108, 143, 145, 146, 147, 186  
continuous 87, 108, 153, 154, 186, 188  
contour 13, 25  
contraction 42  
contrast 143  
coordinator 163  
copula 86  
correlatives 145  
counter 92  
courtesy name 91  
cover 109: -- of direction 109, 111, 163,  
190; -- of result 41, 111, 163, 190; -- of  
orientation 163, 190  
của 87, 115-116, 162, 168, 173, 184, 192  
cùng 163, 186: -- với 163  
cùng 144ff, 161, 186: -- đều 186. --  
không 186  
cuộc 97  
cưới 98  
cưới 178  
curse 88  
cức 108, 145, 146, 147, 186: hãy -- 147;  
vân -- 147  
cứa 42  
cực 161: -- kỳ 161  
cùng < cùng 42  
dã ! 168  
dám 187  
dám (ba) 104  
dân-tộc ít người 1  
dân-tộc thiểu-số 1  
dân 191: dân dân 191  
dầu 164: mắc -- 164  
dầu (rằng) 164  
definite word 180  
degree marker 108, 160-161
INDEX

demonstrative 42, 92, 95, 96, 107, 133-134, 175, 179-181
departure 192
derivative 45, 50-53, 59
descriptive 55
destination 111, 190
determiner 141, 175ff, 186, 201-205
dialects 4, 9: class-related -- 4; Hanoi --
Huế --, Saigon --, Vinh -- 9
Dictionarium Annamiticum Lusitanum et Latinum 1
Quang Ban 198
Diffloth, Gerard 55
direct object 109, 115-116
direction 109, 163, 190: -al verbs 109
disyllabic 35, 36
ditransitive verb 115-116, 196, 215-216
diversity 9
do 162, 184, 194
double negative 150
double nucleus 22, 23
double-object verb 115-116, 196, 215-216
dù 164
Dubois, Marcel 27
Durand, Maurice 55
dự-đính 118
dự-tính 118
dưới 98, 163
da- âm-tiệt, da-tiệt = polysyllabic
da ‘anterior’ 83, 87, 108, 148, 149, 151, 152, 153, 154, 186, 189; dã .... chua?
151, 152, 166, 186, 238; dã, dang và sê .... 188
dã! 154, 166
Đài Xuân Ninh 83
dại- 62
dại-từ = substitute, pro-noun, pro-verb
dạng 87, 108, 146, 153, 154, 161, 186, 188, 189
dành 187
dăng 99
dặng < dàng 43
dắm 113, 114
dâu 132, 134, 135, 136, 239
dâu! 136, 166, 236
dâu 98
dày 42
dày 42, 134
dày! 166
dề = topic
dề 117, 163, 164, 194: -- cho 164
dề- 103-104
dền 162: -- cả 165; -- nội 164
dếu 145, 186
dí 109, 111: dí .... về 198
dí! 160, 167
dịch 165
diveau 97
Dinh Văn Đức 83
dính 118, 187
dố 96, 133: trong -- 183; vì -- 183
-dố 65
Đỗ Hữu Châu 50
dố 104
dối 117
dối 178
dối với 173
dồng-bào Thượng 1
dồng-từ ngoại-đông = transitive verb
dồng-từ nội-đông = intransitive verb
dơn-tiệt, đơn-âm-tiệt = monosyllabic
dùa 192
dưng (có) 108, 159-160
dược 111-112, 113, 143
duong 153
e! 168
earlier records 33
Emeneau, Murray 28, 56, 83, 84, 151, 161, 174
empty words 36, 84, 85, 139, 168
endomotivus verbs 109
English 11
English loanwords 79
environment 86
eo ơi! 168
equality 145
equational (= equative) verb là 118, 218-219
etymon 60
etymology 39, 76-77, 78: folk -- 39
evaluation 196
exclamation 88, 210
exhortative 108, 121, 147, 159, 160, 187, 211
existence 113
extended state verbs 108
exomotivus verbs 109
explosive 31
expressive 55

factitive 116: -- complement 196
family name 90
final 18: -- consonant 18, 23-24; -- particle 41, 88, 166ff, 212-213, 240, 242
first (= given) name 90
focus 192-193
foreign borrowings 39, 78
fraction 103
French 11: -- loanwords 20, 39, 78
frequency 190, 198
Fries, Charles 84
from 192
full words 36, 84, 85, 139, 168
function 86: -- word 36, 85, 87, 139, 168
functive verbs 86, 88, 107, 186
functors 139, 165

gã classifier 178
genetic relationship 3-4
Geneva Armistice 4, 34
gi 131
-giá 63
giá (mà) 164: giá nhu 164
-giá 63, 87
giá sủ 164
giăm- 63
giội-ngũ = prepositional phrase

giội-tử = preposition
gióng 114
giưa 98
given name 90
glide 22
glottal 27: --ity 25, 26, 27
goal 111
grammatical behavior 86
Grammont, M. 83
Greek 78
Gregerson, Kenneth 33, 154

hà ? 167
hạ- 62
Hán-Việt see Sino-Vietnamese
Hanoi dialect 10, 21
hán 126
hàn 191
hàng ! 191
Hashimoto, Mantaro 37
hâu, ngõ hâu 164
hậu-tố = suffix
Haudricourt, André 3, 27
hay 'or' 164: -- là 164, 237-238
hay 'often' 186
head noun 174ff
head verb 186ff
hèn chi 164
Henderson, Eugénie 27
hê 165
hết 113, 114, 105: -- súc 161; -- thây 134
highlanders 1
Hinayana Buddhism 5
hình-tiệt = morpho-syllable
hình-vj = morpheme
Hoa-di dịch-ngũ 5
Hoà-hào Sect 5
hoá 114
-hoá 65, 87
hoàn-toàn 161, 197
Hoàng Minh 28
Hoàng Tuệ 28
hoặc 164  
-học 64  
hoi (thành) 26  
hóm < hóm 43  
hỏi 108, 119, 121, 140, 160, 188  
hỏi! 168: -- ơi! 168  
homorganic consonants 48  
hơn 121  
Honey, Patrick J. 83, 84  
honorifics 126ff  
hủ! 168  
hủ! 168  
hủ! 167  
Huế dialect 9  
hurm  168  
hương chi 164  
hương hô 164  
huyền (thanh) 26  
hư-từ = empty word  
hướng 98  
idential verb là 11  
-iéc 53-54, 56, 59  
imagist 55  
immediate constituents 209  
imperative 121, 160, 242  
impressive 31  
impressive 55  
imdefinite substitute 33, 134-137  
indefinite object 109, 115-116  
individual noun 91-92  
infix 60  
infection 41  
initial 18: -- consonant 18, 19-22, 29; -- particle 165  
injunction 158  
instrument 195  
intensification 45  
interjection 41, 88, 168  
interrogative substitute 131-132, 211  
intonation 31-33  
intransitive verb 109, 110  
ironical 55  
isolating language 17  
item noun 92, 176  
Japan(ese) 2: Japanese loanwords 79  
juncture 30-31  
Kampuchea 2  
kể 164: -- lại 164; -- mà 164  
kernel (S-P) sentence 213ff  
khá 108, 119, 121, 140, 160, 188  
khá- 61  
Khái-Hùng 261  
khê 197  
khì 128, 155, 164, 183: dang -- 164; sau -- 164; trong -- 164; trước -- 164  
khí 160, 188  
kiên 196, 222  
kiếp! 168  
Khmer 2  
Khmu 2  
-khoa 64  
khoảng 104  
khó! 168  
khoảng 108, 140, 149, 150, 186, 234-236, 237, 238: -- những 150-151; -- chỉ 151; có ..... khoảng? 152, 139, 167, 238; -- phải là 118  
kia 42, 92, 95, 133-134  
kia! 133-134, 167  
kia 42, 133  
kinesics 11  
kính 80  
kinship terms 43, 96, 123, 127-131  
Korea(n) 2  
-ký 65  
lá 178  
labio-velar co-articulation 24  
lai coverb 109  
lai adverb 146, 147, 148-149, 187: lai ..... 147; ..... lại 147; lại còn 147; lại ..... nưa 147; dã ..... lại ..... 147
lâm 117, 196
lâm 42, 44
lâm 119, 120, 121, 140, 160, 191
language unification 33
Lao 17
láp (lấy) 44ff
larger forms 47-48
Latin 78
lâu 133: bao -- 134; bây -- 134; lâu lâu 186
lấy (disposal verb) 192
lấy (coverb) 163, 190
Le Parler Vietnamien 79-80
Lê Khả Kế 63
Lê Lợi 7
Lê Ngoc-Vương (Trà-Ngân) 83
Lê Quang Trình 83
Lê Văn Lý 27, 83, 159, 168, 180, 183
lên (coverb) 109, 111, 163
lâu lâu 168
lexeme 14, 34, 59, 139
lexico-grammatical 86
lexico-syntactic 83, 86
liên 35-36, 61-63
liên 157, 191
linking verb 114
literacy campaign 34
loại-tù = classifier, categorical noun (N')
location 167
locative 43, 44, 88, 98-101, 163, 169, 176
lồi 104
lower register 27, 28
lúc 164: dang -- 164
lục-bát meter 12, 257
lười 172, 191: luôn luôn 191
Lưu Văn Lăng 83
mà 162, 174, 183, 192
mà! 167
Mahayana Buddhism 5
mái 191: mái mái 191
Malay loanwords 39, 78
Mandarin Chinese 11
manner 190
mão-tù = article
marker 108
Martinet, André 139
Martini, F. 98, 99
Marxist thought 11
Maspero, Henri 3, 5, 9, 27, 37
mass noun 93
material 174, 181
mày 73, 80
mày 124: mày tao mi tô 125
mạc 111, 112
mắc đầu 164
măng 39
măng-cut 39
mắt 98
mặt 113, 114
mày 132
meaning 40: -- differentiation 47ff;
grammatical -- 40; lexical -- 40
means 162, 195
measurement unit 92, 93
medial 19, 25
medium of instruction 4
medical term 63
melodic 27
mi = mày
middle name 90
Middle Vietnamese 5, 7, 33
Mineya, Toru 37
mình 126: chúng -- (= chúng ta) 126
mixed origin 78
móc 113
modal 88
modality 88: -- marker 153
Modern Vietnamese 5
modification 171, 172ff
modifier 172, 173
môi 103, 140, 142, 145, 177
môi 94, 97
môi 103, 140, 142-143, 177: mê ngày
môt ... 188
môi 140, 153, 156-157, 186, 188: vừa -- 140, 153, 156, 186, 188
momentary action verbs 108
Mon 2: Mon-Khmer 2, 3, 4
mòmè = mòng 60
monologue 211
monosyllabic 13, 35
montagnard 1
mood marker 88
morphème 139
morphological processes 41-44
morphology 14, 34
morpho-syllable 81
môt 42
môt cách .... 197
motivation 193
muôn 197
muoi 42, 44
muón 42
Muòng 3, 4, 69
name 90: family -- 90; first -- 90; given
-- 90; middle -- 90
năng 186
năng (thanh) 26
nào 95, 131: ..... nào ..... này 145.
nào ! 167
nay 42, 133
này 42, 92, 95, 133, 134
này ! 168
này 133, 134
này = này
này 133, 134, 136, 137, 145
negation 108, 140, 149-151, 186
nên ‘become’ 114: trở -- 114
nên ‘should’ 159, 187: dùng -- 159
nên ‘consequently’ 164: cho -- 164; -- chi
164
nên 94, 97
nêu (nút) 165
ngă (thanh) 26
ngáng 42
ngay ‘even’ 165
ngay ‘right away’ 191
nge! 167
nghĩ 117
ngoài 98, 99, 163
ngoài < ngoài 43, 99
ngói 178, 181-182
ngôn 178
Nguyễn Anh Quê 139
Nguyễn Bat-Tuy 91
Nguyễn Du 12, 134, 247
Nguyễn Đặng Liêm 112
Nguyễn Dinh-Hoà 34, 37, 77, 91, 97, 112, 115, 129, 163
Nguyễn Đức Dân 69
Nguyễn Hiện Lê 54
Nguyễn Khắc Hiệu 91
Nguyễn Khắc Kham 91
Nguyễn Kim Thần 28, 83, 95, 161, 189
Nguyễn Lân 83, 95
Nguyễn Quang Hồng 28
Nguyễn Quý-Hưng 54, 182
Nguyễn Tài Cấn 83, 179
Nguyễn Trái 7, 70, 77
ngủ = phrase
ngủ-ki-thừ = final particle
nguộc 42
người 1: -- Kinh 1; -- ta 126; -- Việt 1;
as classifier 178
nhaus 137
nham 42, 44
nht 122-123
nhi! 167
niêu 42: bao -- 42, 137; bài -- 42, 137;
bài -- 42, 137
niêu 42, 87
như 164, 192: còn -- 164; cùng -- 164;
dường -- 164
nhưng 164, 172: -- mà 164
những 136, 140, 141-142, 177: -- ai 136;
-- dâu 136; -- gi 136; -- x là x 53, 142; những .... as much as 142; chỉ -- 142
nuộc bàng 165
ni 133
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>nòm</th>
<th>79, 97, 169</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-niéu</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nó</td>
<td>87-88, 123, 124, 125: chúng -- 125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nò</td>
<td>133, 134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nô</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nói lại</td>
<td>28-29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nói</td>
<td>79, 92, 169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nóm</td>
<td>7, 44: nóm characters 8, 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nôm</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nominal expression</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nominalization</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nominalizing suffix</td>
<td>63-64, 87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-inflectional</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-reversible compound</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nốt</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>noun</td>
<td>40, 88ff: abstract -- 94; categorical -- 94ff; collective -- 92; common -- 91ff; item -- 92-98; locative -- 98-101; mass -- 93; proper -- 90-91; time -- 94; unit -- 92; verb to -- 169; adjective to -- 169; -- to adjective 170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>noun phrase</td>
<td>171, 172ff, 179-184, 213-221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nưa chứng-xuất</td>
<td>258-261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>núa</td>
<td>119, 147, 148, 155, 156, 157, 191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>numeral</td>
<td>40, 41, 42, 89, 90, 91, 101: approximate -- 104; cardinal -- 101-103; ordinal -- 103-104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>numerator</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ó!</td>
<td>168: ó hay! 168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ó</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ô!</td>
<td>168: ô hay! 168; ô kia! 168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ô</td>
<td>99, 163, 193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>object</td>
<td>109, 110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>objective</td>
<td>116, 192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oi!</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ông</td>
<td>43, 178, 182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ông &lt; ông</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>onomatopeia</td>
<td>41, 46, 49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>onset</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>open syllable</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>opposition</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>order</td>
<td>158ff, 187, 211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>orientation</td>
<td>111, 163, 190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>then and only then</td>
<td>156-157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pali</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>particle</td>
<td>165: final -- 40, 166-168, 240; initial -- 105; polite -- 166, 211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parts of speech</td>
<td>83ff, 107ff, 139ff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>past tense morpheme</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pejorative</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pen name</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>personal substitute</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>passive verb/voice</td>
<td>111, 112, 168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peak of sonority</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phái ... “passive”</td>
<td>111, 112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phái ... ‘must, have to’</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... phái (opposite of ... được)</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phái! (response)</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phan Duy Khium</td>
<td>83, 179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phan Thô</td>
<td>83, 95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phân-</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-phán</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phi-</td>
<td>61, 122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phi Tuyết Hinh</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phia</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phó-daň-tút = classifier, categorical noun</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phó-tút = adverb, auxiliary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phoneme</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phonemic</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phonetic modification</td>
<td>42ff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phonology</td>
<td>17ff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phrase</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phuong</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phương-vi-tút = locative, relator noun</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pig-Latin</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pitch level</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>place word</td>
<td>99-100, 101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[-pleasant]</td>
<td>112; [+pleasant] 111-113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plurality</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pluralizer</td>
<td>89, 90, 140-141, 177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>polite particle</td>
<td>166, 211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>polite request</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>polysyllabic</td>
<td>13, 35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>portion of space</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>position</td>
<td>99: -- word 88, 98, 99, 163</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INDEX

possession 162, 174, 181
possibility 187
possible syllables 28
post-verb 143, 189ff
pre-verbs 186-189
Pre-Vietnamese 5
predicate 16, 86, 108, 209
predication (See sentence) 172, 209ff, 222, 233ff
predicative 85, 105, 107ff: -- position 120; -- substitute 132-133
prefix 60-63
preposition 41, 87, 98, 142
prepositional phrase 162-163, 184, 220, 222
preverb 143, 186
prohibition 108, 158-159, 187, 191, 196
prohibitive 187, 191, 196
pronoun = substitute
proper name 91
proper noun 90
Protestant 5
Proto-Vietnamese 5
pro-verb See substitute
proverb 210, 211
provider 195
Przyluski, Jean 3
pseudo-compound 60ff, 63ff, 122
pseudonym 91
quá 87, 120, 140, 160, 188, 191: -- xá 161
quả classifier 178
qualitative adjective 119, 121
quality 174, 181
quan-hể-tụ = connective (prep., conj.)
quán-tụ = article
quantifier 103, 176, 177
quantity 174
question 31-32, 237: choice -- 237; content -- 238; -- intonation 31; rhetorical -- 241; tag -- 240
Quốc-ám thi-tập 7
quốc-ngữ 8, 9, 33: earlier records 33; reforms 33-34
quotative verb 116-117
quyền 178
quyết 187-188: -- ché 188; -- tâm 188
ra coverb 109, 111, 163
rằng 117, 121, 164, 165, 185
rất 87, 108, 112, 119, 120, 121, 140, 161, 185, 188
recent past 156
recipient 195
recurrence 147, 187
reduced predicate 182ff
reduplication 27, 36, 44, 49-57, 122: total -- 46-47; partial -- 47ff
reduplicative adjective 122
reforms 33-34
register 27: lower -- 27; upper -- 27
reinforcing compound 70
relative: -- clause 141, 182, 183, 184; -- pronoun 182, 183, 184
relator-noun = locative
relaxed 27
religion 5
response 88
result 163, 190
resumption 187
reversible compounds 68
Rhodes, Alexandre de 7, 33
rhyme 18, 22-23, 28-29
rhyming patterns 49-50
rời 87, 152, 158
root 59
"round-trip" phrase 198
Rõ-ngaọ 3
Russian 10
ruôi, ruôi 42
sắc (thanh) 26
Saigon dialect 10, 21
Sanskrit 5, 79
sao 132
sao! 167
sáp, sáp súa 153, 155, 186
sau 98, 163
Schmidt, W. 2
INDEX

scope 190
sê 87, 108, 153, 155, 186, 188, 189: -- không còn 161; -- vẫn còn 161
sê = khá 171
selection 196
sémantème 139
semantics 13
semelfactive classifier 97-98
semi-active verb 110-111
semi-empty word 85
semi-full word 85
semi-substantive 105
semivowel 23, 24
sentence 14, 209: adjunct -- 224ff; affirmative -- 233; appositional -- 227-228;
circumstantial -- 225-227; completive -- 251-253; complex -- 251ff; compound
-- 244ff; correlational -- 245; declarative -- 32; determinative -- 253-255;
exclamatory -- 243; focal -- 228-229; imperative -- 242-243; interrogative --
237; kernel (SP) -- 213-223; negative -- 233; simple -- 209-210; subjectless --
210-212, 213; transitional -- 229-230; vocative -- 224; -- concatenation 244; --
expansion 230-232; -- types 233ff; -- without predicate 212-213
-si 63
Siamese 3
siêu- 61
simile 192
simple word 40ff
Sinitic culture 2
Sino-Vietnamese 5, 6, 7, 36-38, 63, 74, 76ff, 78, 80, 81
situational complement 190
size 174, 181
Smith, Kenneth 55
socio-economic mobility 4
soliloquy 211
song (le) 164
sô đĩ .... là vì .... 164
source 192
spatial locative 98-101
special classifier 88
specifier = demonstrative 89, 92, 93, 107
Spooner, W.A. 28
spoonerism 28
stative verb See adjective
status pronoun 96, 124
stem 59
stress 31-33
The Structure of English 84
style (name) 91
stylistic effects 49-51
subject 16, 86-87, 209-210
subject-less sentence 210ff
submissive verb 111, 112
subordinative compound 71-73
subordinator 163, 164-165
substantive 85, 88ff, 98ff, 101ff
substitute 40, 42, 43, 83, 87, 88, 123ff,
177: demonstrative -- 133, 134;
indirect -- 134-137; interrogative --
131-132, 134-137; personal -- 124ff;
predicative -- 123, 132, 133; reciprocal
-- 137; reflexive -- 137; status -- 126ff
subsyllabic morpheme 29
suffix 41, 60, 63-66
súng 80
suốt dời 198
-sù 64
sự 79, 97, 169
superlative (nhất) 122, 123
syllable 11, 12, 17, 18, 81: -- boundaries
30; -- structure 11, 12, 18; syllable-
morpheme 15, 57; below the -- 28;
possible syllables 28
synonym compound 70
syntactic 88: syntactic behavior 88;
syntactic relationship 88
syntagm 149, 171
synthetic language 17
ta 124, 125: chúng -- (= chúng mình) 124
Taberd, Jean Louis 33
Tai 3
tại ‘at’ 193
INDEX

287

tài 'because' 162, 164: -- vì 164
tấm 178
Tân Đa 91
tăng 63
tao 124, 125: chúng -- 124
Taoism 5, 11
tát cả 134, 142, 145
Tay-Nung 69
telescoping verbs 196
temporal locative 98-100
tên 178
tense marker 87, 108, 153, 154, 186, 188, 238
term of address 123, 124-131, 211
terminology 62-63
thà 165: ... chứ không 165
Thái 3
Thailand 3
thambil 197
thành 168
thằng 43, 178: -- ấy 43; -- cha 43
thằng < thằng 43
thanh(-diêu) = tone
thanh-mảu = initial consonant
thành 114: trở -- 114; -- thử 164
thảo nào 164
thất 161
thay ! 167
thấy 163
thể 87, 123, 132-133
thể ! 167
thì 87, 153, 154-157, 165
thiên-nghĩ 197
thiệt-nghĩ 197
thiếu- 62
thỉnh thoảng 186
Thomas, David 161, 189
Thompson, Laurence 31, 65, 67, 70, 71, 84, 115, 126
thuê = comment
thủ- 60, 103
-thực 64
thực-tử = full word
thương 186: -- van = vấn -- 189
thường- 62
tích-cực 197
tiền-danh-từ = pre-noun
tiền-tố = prefix
tiếng = (syllable-) morpheme, word
tiểu-tứ = particle
time 186: time noun/word 94, 100
tính 187
tính-thái-tứ = particle
toan 187
toàn-bố 134
toàn-thế 92, 134
tơi 124, 130: chúng -- 124
tối-nghiệp ! 168
tonal harmony 27
tone 13, 18, 19, 25-27: -- categories 27; -- change 42; diagram 26; -- register 27, 46; tones in poetry 27
tông- 61-62
tonogenesis 4
topic 16, 86, 180: topic-comment 16
totality 140, 142, 145, 174, 175, 177
totalizer 92
tố 178
tố 125
tố (coverb) 102, 167
trá phê 39
trác 27
Trần dynasty 7
Trần Ngọc Ninh 83
Trần Trọng Kim 83, 130, 179, 247
trang-từ = adverb
transitive verb 109, 110, 111, 189
transliteration 63
tên 98, 163, 169
tên < trên 43, 93
trisyllabic 36
tró 113
tró nên = trở thành 114
trở mình 197
tron dời 197
trong 98, 99, 163
trong < trong 43, 99
trung- 62
INDEX

trung-tố = infix
trước 98, 163
Trương Văn Chính 54
Trương Văn Kỳ 83, 104
Trương Văn Tổng 179
-trương 64
từ 174, 193
tư = word: -- ghép = compound; -- gõc
Hán, -- Hán-Việt = Sino-Vietnamese; --
láy = reduplication
tư-tố = morpheme
từ ‘from’ 193
tư- ‘self’ 62
từng 103, 140, 143, 177
từng 157, 158, 186: chua -- 158; dã -- 158
tường 117
tuy 164: -- ràng 164; tuy-nhiên 164
tuyệt 161, 191

ù! 167
ú! 168
unanalyzed form 81
-ung 54
uniformity 143, 144, 145, 186
unit noun 92, 93
unit of measurement 178
upper register 27
Ức-trai di-táp 7

va 126
và 87, 162, 163, 172
và 164: --chang 164; --lai 164
vài (ba) 104
Vallon, Pierre G. 56, 83
vào coverb 109, 111, 163, 195
văn-ngọn 6
vận 108, 145ff, 161: -- còn 146
vận-mâu = rhyme
vàng! 168
vây 123, 132-133
vây! 168
về (coverb) 111

vê ‘about’ 162, 193
verb 40, 42, 107, 108ff: action 86, 107,
110; appearance 113; becoming 114;
bodily movement 114; causative 117;
choosing 116, 196; direction 109;
disappearance 113; ditransitive 115;
existence 113; feeling 111;
giving/taking 115, 116; identificational
118; insertion 116, 196-197; intransitive
109, 110; linking 114; motion 111, 163,
190; quality 86, 107, 188; quotative
116; semi-active 111; semi-transitive
110; stative 119ff; transitive 109, 110;
volution 118, 187;
verb phrase 185ff, 213ff, 217ff, 219,
221ff; verb-complement compound 74;
verb-object compound 74; verb-result
compound 74
verbalizing suffix 65
vì 162, 164: -- ràng 164; bòi --, tài -- 164;
số dĩ .... là -- 164
vì 164: --bằng, --dũ, --nữa, --thừ 165
vì 178
-vì 64
vì-ngữ = predicate
vực 79, 97
v imagem 63, 66
viên 178
-viên 64
Vietnamese: earlier records of 33; history
of 5; reforms 33; -- word order 78
Vietnamese-Portuguese-Latin dict. 7, 21
vố- 62, 122
vố cùng 191
vocalic nucleus 19, 23
vocative 88
vối 162, 163, 172, 191-192: -- cùng 163
vố! 168
volution 187
vowel 18, 19ff, 22ff: -- alternation 44; --
nucleus 18
vùa (mói) 140, 153, 156, 186, 188
Vương Lộc 69
INDEX

we, exclusive 124
we, inclusive 124, 126
witness word 108
writing systems 6

word 14, 35: content -- 168; empty -- 36, 84, 85, 168; full -- 36, 84, 85, 168; function -- 168; simple -- 40; -- order 77

xe 73
xong 152
xuống (coverb) 109, 111, 163

y 126
yes-or-no question 32, 150, 212