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Comparison of Expression of Verbal Tense and Aspect in English and Vietnamese

(Bakalářská práce)

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Abstract

This thesis is a comparison of expression of time in English and Vietnamese with focus on verbal tense and aspect. Both languages are considered analytic, nevertheless, they express verbal features with different means. English uses inflectional suffixes on the verb and also some analytic expressions (auxiliaries) but Vietnamese has no affixation on the verb whatsoever, thus uses time particles and time adverbials to express verbal temporal features. The aim of this thesis is to give a general comparison of the typology of these languages and to discuss and compare the expression of time and aspect in greater detail.

Key words

English, Vietnamese, Morphology, Typology, Analytic, Inflection, Tense, Time, Aspect, Adverbial, Particle

Anotace

Tato práce srovnává vyjádření času v angličtině a ve vietnamštině se zaměřením na slovesný čas a aspekt. Oba jazyky jsou považovány za analytické, nicméně vyjadřují tyto gramatické kategorie rozdílnými způsoby. Angličtina využívá flektivní sufixy na slovese a také pár analytických výrazů (pomocná slovesa), ale sloveso ve vietnamštině je neohebné, a tak využívá časové partikule a příslovečná určení času k vyjádření těchto vlastností děje. Cílem této práce je obecně srovnat anglický a vietnamský jazyk z typologického hlediska a také důkladně zanalyzovat jakými způsoby tyto jazyky vyjadřují vlastnosti děje.

Klíčová slova

Angličtina, vietnamština, morfologie, typologie, analytický, flexe, čas, aspekt, příslovečné určení, partikule

Content

1   Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to compare constructions in English and Vietnamese with focus on tense and aspect markers. These two languages are both genetically and areally distant, English is a member of the Indo-European language family and Vietnamese is a member of the Austroasiatic language family (Černý 1998, 51-52). Therefore, I consider these two languages suitable subjects of such an analysis. Although, in my work I will especially focus on the classification by linguistic typology. "It has nothing to do with neither genetic nor geographic classification and classifies languages according to their type of grammar"[1] (Černý 1998, 59), however, the fact that they have developed in different geographical areas lower the chance of influencing one another.

As regards linguistic typology, for this research it is most relevant to compare and classify these languages from the morphological aspect. They both can be classified as analytic due to their low index of synthesis[2]. Vietnamese has a value of 1.06 and English has 1.68, contrasted with the extreme of the other end of the scale which is Inuit with 3.72 morphemes per word in average (Greenberg 1960, 193). Although both English and Vietnamese appear to be on the same side of the scale, it is important to point out several differences in their characteristics. While English shows some synthetic characteristics, that is grammatical categories are expressed by affixes attached to some other word (Bickel and Nichols 2013), e.g. 3rd person singular suffix -s or past tense suffix -ed on a verb, Vietnamese seems to have no affixation whatsoever, therefore, it can be considered as an isolating language. Vietnamese is also a "monosyllabic language (each syllable is one isolated word)" (Le et al. 2004, 602) but also has compounds. They are likely to be a result of Chinese influence, as these languages have been in close contact throughout their development. Chữ nôm, which was a system based on Chinese characters and was used until the early

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[1] "Nemá nic společného s klasifikací genetickou ani geografickou a třídí jazyky pouze na základě typů jejich gramatiky."

[2] Total of morphemes divided by total of words (M/W) (Schwegler 1990, 20)

20th century (Ager 2008). A variety of compounds have their origin in these characters, e.g. *Trung Quốc* 'China' which literary means 'central nation.' As regards inflectional morphology and expressing tense and aspect in particular, English uses suffixation, namely *-ed* or *-en* attached to the verb or analytic use of the auxiliary *have*, while in Vietnamese, these features are marked analytically by 'time elements'[3] (Hlavatá and Slavická 2003, 71), in my work I will refer to them as 'time particles.' These time particles are namely *đã, đăng* and *sẽ.* The combination of tense and aspect create a large variety of verb forms in English and how such features are expressed in Vietnamese is the main of this work.

In addition to time particles, expressing tense and aspect in Vietnamese also relies on the usage of time adverbials such as *rồi, vẫn, xong, vừa, mới, sắp, chưa* etc. They can even be combined with one another or also used together with a time particle. They express other specific features of the verb such as continuity, duration or repetition and more. What their English counterpart is and to what degree they correspond with it will also be discussed in my thesis.

In Vietnamese, time particles denoting time are closed-class words, they do not carry any meaning if they stand alone and they need to be used with a verb which they modify – they give us information whether the action expressed by the verb is a past, present or future event. With combination with time adverbials they can also tell us whether the event happened just recently or long before the speech act or is going to happen in the near future. This information can be grammatically expressed in English by inflection with the exception of future *will* and *going to* and other constructions. However, the particles in Vietnamese are not always obligatory as English tense markers are. In some cases they occur when a time adverbial is not present, in other cases they are used together with a time adverbial and there are also cases in which neither is present. It is still sufficient for a native speaker to understand the message. The interpretation replies mostly on context. Nevertheless, I am

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[3] "Časové elementy"

going to describe the usage and function of the tense and aspect markers with regard to syntax, morphology and semantics.

As my work is a contrastive analysis, my methodology is mostly comparative – stating the situation in English and then finding the closest equivalent and point out the differences. If there is a feature which is not present in English, I try to find the closest equivalent in English. Example are provided in each section to demonstrate the usage. Despite Vietnamese having no grammatical means of expressing verbal features, my aim is to demonstrate that it has more distinct expressions of verbal features which can be also graded and used with little or no restriction, while English relies mainly on grammatical constructions of which meaning and usage depends on grammatical relations.

My work is based on the theory of English and Vietnamese grammar. The main sources for English grammar are Bernard Comrie's publications *Language Universals and Linguistic Typology* (1981), *Tense* (1993) and *Aspect* (1995), and Geoffrey Leech's *Meaning and the English Verb* (2004). The basis for the theory of Vietnamese language are Đình-Hoà Nguyễn's *Vietnamese* (1997), and *Praktická vietnamština = Tiếng Việt thực hành* (2003) by Lucie Hlavatá and Thi Binh Nguyen Slavická.

To carry out a contrastive analysis, it is necessary to give a typological background of English and Vietnamese and give an overview of their characteristics from the view of various linguistic disciplines. Secondly, I will briefly review the morphology with the emphasis on the verb, especially inflectional morphology. In chapter 4, I will compare the function of adverbs in English and Vietnamese. In chapters 5, 6 and 7, I will compare how English and Vietnamese express events that refer to present, past and future time respectively. In chapters 8-10 I will be dealing with the realization of the aspectual features such as completion and repetition in both analyzed languages.

2　Comparison of English and Vietnamese from different aspects of Grammar

English belongs to the Germanic branch of the Indo-European language family, while Vietnamese is a part of the Mon-Khmer branch of the Austroasiatic language family. Vietnamese language is spoken mainly in Vietnam, where it is the official language of the country, and also in Laos and Cambodia, and in Vietnamese immigrant communities in many parts of the world, especially in the United States and Europe. Nevertheless, only in the Czech Republic it is a recognized minority language (Šimůnková 2013).

However, geographical occurrence is not a reliable clue for determining genetic relatedness. For example the Hungarian language is surrounded by languages from the Indo-European family but is a member of the Uralic language family. Its relative Finnish is also geographically distant – Hungarian is spoken in Central Europe, while Finnish in Northern Europe (Černý 1998, 51). Nevertheless, I will briefly compare these two languages considering various linguistic layers, looking for both similar and different structures

2.1　Lexicon

If English and Vietnamese have completely different lexicon, related languages usually have similar words in basic vocabulary, for instance kinship terms, body parts, pronouns, numerals etc. Comparing pairs such as *father-bố*, *heart-tim, I-tôi* or *one-mồt*, any kind of similarity can hardly be concluded. It is also less likely that some words come from a common antecedent. Although, one may find similar words of the same meaning and similar pronunciation as *khaki-kha ki* or *fascism-phát xít*, it is more likely that these words entered the Vietnamese vocabulary from English after English had borrowed them from another language. Therefore English and Vietnamese words do not seem to have common antecedents in the sense that these languages have words that have their origin in a word from another language which then developed separately, but rather in the sense of borrowing words successively from one another.

Vietnamese vocabulary was mainly influenced by Chinese due to the close interaction. The writing system was also similar, Vietnamese used Chinese characters together with characters developed in Vietnam for Vietnamese vocabulary and this system was widely used until the "Roman catholic missionaries introduced a Latin-based orthography for Vietnamese" called *chữ quốc ngữ* 'national script' in 17th century (Ager 2008) with diacritics to mark 6 tones. The original writing system called 'chữ nôm' and 'chữ quốc ngữ' were used simultaneously until 1910 when under the French occupation the 'chữ quốc ngữ' became the only official alphabet. During this period a lot of French words entered the vocabulary as loan-words e.g. *cà-phê* 'coffee', *so-co-la* 'chocolate', *bia* 'beer'.

2.2   Syntactical Structures

As for syntax, we can find both similar and different structures. Regarding the basic word order, both languages follow the word order pattern S-V-O in a declarative sentence.

(1)   Tôi   thích   hoa.
       1SG[4]   like   flower
       'I like flowers.'

English allows movement of syntactic constituents in interrogative sentences. The auxiliary verb inverts with the subject resulting in V-S-O. Lexical verbs require 'do-support.' Vietnamese sentence remains strictly S-V-O, although, a process which is similar to English "do-support" occurs.

(2)   Bạn   có   thích   hoa   không?   Bạn   có.
       Friend   AUX[5]   like   flower NEG[6]   Friend AUX
       'Does (your) friend like flowers?'   'Yes, she does.'

       Bạn   thích   hoa   nào?   Bạn   thích   hoa hòng   nhất.
       Friend   like   flower which   Friend like   rose   SUP
       'Which flower does she like?'   'She likes roses the most.'

As can be seen in the example (2) above, the verb *có* has to be inserted between the subject and the verb, but carries no lexical meaning. It can also be

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[4] 1st person singular

[5] Auxiliary

[6] Negation

used as a lexical verb with the meaning of possession. In this case, another *có* is not used in questions. The usage of *có* is not obligatory. Additionally, *không*, which means "no" or "not", has to be put in the sentence at the end. This *có-không* construction is typical for a yes-no question. *Có* or không can be used in answers to these questions, similarly to elliptical answers in English. In Wh-questions, the Wh-element replaces the constituent for which it asks as in echo questions. Only *tại sao, vì sao* or *sao* 'why' are sentence-initial. *Nào* 'which' appears in post-position and behaves like an adjective. Post-modification is typical for Vietnamese.

Regardless of elements that are inserted in the sentence, the S-V-O word order does not change. English also has a typical intonation patters for questions, but in Vietnamese it does not play a big role because it would be in clash with the phonemic tone. Syntactic movements are also visible in English but for example in Czech, the word order stays the same in questions so it relies on rising intonation.

Both languages have prepositions. Vietnamese sentence structure is more similar to the English one than to Japanese or Korean one, for instance. Geographical occurrence thus does not hint any similarity or difference.

2.3   Morphology

As regards morphology, here we come across great differences. Also, for the sake of my research, comparing these two languages from this aspect is most relevant. According to the parameter of index of synthesis, both English and Vietnamese are considered analytic, due to its low value. Although, English, has relatively larger amount of affixation than Vietnamese does. Vietnamese shows no marks of affixation whatsoever.

2.3.1 Monosyllabicity in an Analytic Language

Analytic or isolating languages use mark grammatical categories with "special auxiliary words (in fact with free morphemes)" (Černý 1998, 61)[7]. This fact corresponds with the monosyllabic nature of Vietnamese, although an isolating

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[7] "… postupně k typu analytickému, v němž je běžné označovat gramatické kategorie zvláštními pomocnými slovy (vlastně volnými morfémy)…"

language does not necessarily have to be monosyllabic (Comrie 1981, 43). Also, simple denomination prevails in analytic/isolating languages, "isolating type which does not cumulate morphemes in one word cannot be favorable to descriptive denomination" (Popela 2006, 15)[8]. It is more natural for such a language to tend to monosyllabicity and simple denomination which is not further decomposable which is apparent in Vietnamese. It is often one general idea that is expressed in one form both for a noun and a verb in case of English, e.g. *love*, the word category is further specified by other morphemes such as *the* or *-ing* or personal pronouns. In Vietnamese, there is no distinction between the form of an adjective and an adverb. Descriptive denomination is more characteristic for synthetic languages, e.g. German *Studenten-wohn-heim*, 'student dormitory') (Popela 2006, 26).

2.3.2 Meaning Boundaries

A morpheme is defined as the minimal unit of meaning (Wardhaugh 1972, 68). However, the boundaries in Vietnamese are not always clear. "Moreover, it is general true that each word consists of just a single morpheme, with the possible exception of *bắt đầu* 'begin', which is arguably a word on some criteria, e.g. unity of meaning, although it can be segmented, at least etymologically into two morphemes: *bắt* 'seize' and *đầu* 'head'" (Comrie 1981, 43). Vietnamese is rich on such compounds[9]. Sometimes their meaning is predictable from their parts but it is not always the case. The meaning of *bắt đầu* is not easily predictable, however, there are also compounds which are transparent to a certain degree. *Quần áo* 'clothes' consists of *quần* 'trousers' and *áo* 'shirt', so in fact, two co-hyponyms are compounded to give a label to their hyperonym. So if we consider these structures as compounds, it would mean we would have to consider the meaning of each part resulting in 2/1 index of synthesis. Although every syllable (word) is spelled separately, these complex structures behave like one, therefore, they count as one word. It is very likely that these structures cause the index to deviate from the ideal value 1. Generally, it is hard to define the term 'word' so that it would hold true

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[8] "Izolační typ, jenž nekumuluje morfémy v jednom slově,… nemůže být popisnému pojmenování příznivý."

[9] "Compound is a word (more precisely a lexeme) that consists of two or more simpler lexemes" (Matthews 1991, 82)

universally. "In some languages – 'isolating' languages, such as Vietnamese – there are plainly low-level units, with little or no internal structure" (Crystal 1987, 91).

2.3.3 Inflectional Morphology

Present day English has only eight inflections: two suffixes for nouns, four for verbs, and two for adjectives and adverbs. "This is astonishingly small number of inflections compared with the number of inflections on nouns and verbs in other inflected Western European languages, such as Spanish, French, and Italian" (Klammer, Schulz and Volpe 2010, 43). In fact, Old English, from which present day Modern English has developed, used to be very rich on inflection – the nouns were marked not only for number but also gender and case and today we barely see any overt case marking on nouns (only possessive -*'s*) and some is visible on pronouns (*he-his-him*). Vietnamese possessives are made always made analytically as a post-modification of an NP, similar to the English construction *of + NP*. Also, Vietnamese nouns are inflected neither for gender nor case. Vietnamese nouns also make no distinction between a singular noun and a plural noun. For expressing the quantity, a quantifier has to be used.

(3) Con   tôi   có   mồt   tuổi   Con   tôi   có   hai   tuổi
     Child   1SG have one   age   Child   1sg have two   age
     'My child is one year old.'   'My child is two years old.'

Grading adjectives in English can be made by adding -*er* and -*est* or analytically by adding *more* and *the most* in order to make the comparative form and superlative form respectively. In Vietnamese, this process is always made analytically by adding *hơn* or *nhất*, expressing comparative and superlative respectively. There is no distinction between adjectives and adverbs, thus there is no derivational morpheme which would derive an adverb from an adjective.

(4) cao – cao hơn – cao nhất
     'high' – 'higher' – 'the highest'

Another English inflectional morpheme is suffix -*s* which indicates agreement with third person singular in present tense. There are 3 grammatical features expressed by one morpheme which shows some fusional characteristics of English, although, this is rather an exception. Vietnamese shows no signs of

agreement, the verb remains in the same form, it does not take affixation or undergo any stem changes whatsoever.

(5) *Cô giáo*   *mới* *cảm thấy* *tốt.*   *Tôi*   *cảm thấy*   *buồn.*
     Female teacher   new   feel   good   1SG   feel   sad
     'The new teacher seems to be nice.'   'I feel sad.'

The last set of inflectional morphemes in English are suffixes indicating grammatical tense and aspect, namely *-ed, -en* and *-ing*. Vietnamese expresses these features by time particles and time adverbials. In other words, these features are always expressed analytically, not by affixation on the verb. This will be discussed in the following chapter.

3   Verbal Morphology

Although English is not an inflectional language, it does have a few inflectional suffixes. The ones that are attached to a verb, namely *-s, -ed, -en* and *-ing* express features such as tense, aspect voice and even person and number. "With most full verbs 'basic' paradigms of fourteen (or possibly sixteen) forms are to be established. These take into account only finite phrases and exclude phrases containing imperatives" (Palmer 1966, 55).   This paradigm is a result of combinations of tense, aspect and voice. It has both analytic (the use of auxiliaries) and synthetic (the use of suffixes) features in terms of morphological typology. This holds for regular verbs.

3.1   Analytic and Synthetic Features

Inflectional suffixes *-s, -ed, -en, -ing* on the verb show synthetic features of a language and result in four other verb forms apart from the simple form, namely past tense form, past participle, gerund and 3rd person singular in present tense. A language with 5 possible different verb forms (not considering the analytical forms) would be rather considered as isolating – closer to Chinese and Vietnamese and further from Latin which has over one hundred verb forms. This is true only if we consider words. If we think of forms, we get a comparable number with Latin. "The essential difference between Latin and English is therefore not perhaps so much the matter of the number of verbal forms but rather the way in which the verbal forms are divided up into words" (Palmer 1966, 2). To form the basic verbal paradigm mentioned above, primary auxiliaries are used (*have, be*). This is an analytic feature, since free morphemes are used. In Vietnamese, it is always the case. Verb stems do not change – they do not inflect for person and number like the English verbs do. The tense and aspect is not expressed with a suffix and auxiliaries are not used either. Vietnamese relies on the use of a large variety of adverbials and time particles to express what we call tense and aspect in English. It is therefore pointless to speak of verbal forms in Vietnamese.

3.2   Tense and Time

Tense is a grammatical category, "grammaticalised expression of location in time" (Comrie 1993, 9). It has three functions, "first to mark purely temporal relations of past and present time, secondly (and closely related to the first) in the sequence of tenses of reported speech, and thirdly to mark 'unreality' in conditional clauses and in wishes" (Palmer 1966, 69). Another possible division of tenses is 'past' and 'non-past' by Leech (2004). Present and future are classified as non-past tenses. One of the reasons why present and future are put together could be that present tense can also express the future not only the present time. The grammatical labels are often misleading because the tense does not always correspond with time. Therefore, I will use the term 'time' rather than the grammatical labels of 'tense'.

A Vietnamese verb is "timeless in itself, […] only linguistic and situational context provides a clue to relative time" (Nguyễn 1997, 108). Time reference is lexicalized, adverbials are used to locate situations in time (Comrie 1995, 6). Therefore we cannot speak of tense as a grammatical category in Vietnamese. These adverbials give information about the action the verb expresses, but they are not a part of it as the English past tense suffix *-ed* is. On the other hand, English auxiliaries are not a part of the verb either, but for making a certain verb form for example past participle, it is used along with an inflectional suffix and even the auxiliary itself can take an inflectional suffix, for example in *had looked* the auxiliary is inflected for tense but the lexical verb is in the participle form with *-ed* suffix. Nothing like this is possible in Vietnamese.

"Tense relates the time of the situation to which it is referred to some other time, usually to the moment of speaking" (Comrie 1995, 1). Adverbs which have such function are *đã*, *sẽ*, *sắp*, *vừa*, *mới*, *rồi* etc. (*sẽ* might be considered as an auxiliary, as its possible English equivalent is *will*). Some of them also indicates how far in time the situation is from the referred point in time – near future or recent past.

3.3 Aspect

Another grammatical category is aspect which is concerned with "how the speaker perceives the duration of events, and how different events relate to one another in time" (Carter and McCarthy 2011, 411). In English it is realized through auxiliaries and a corresponding inflectional suffix on the lexical verb. There are three grammatical aspects – simple, perfect and continuous or progressive. "Perfect aspect is concerned with the speaker's perspective on the relationship between one time frame and an event that takes place in another time frame" (Carter and McCarthy 2011, 415). Continuous aspect is concerned with the duration of the event. It may be ongoing, unfinished and it can also imply temporality of the duration of the event.

Vietnamese uses adverbs to denote aspect such as *đang*, *xong*, *vẫn*, *mãi*, *cứ* etc. They express features such as continuity, completedness or continual repetition. English verb forms are combinations of grammatical tense and aspect, however in Vietnamese, it is not necessary to have both tense and aspect marking in one sentence. Aspect is not a grammatical category of a verb neither is tense.

Expressing and understanding the time in Vietnamese language thus relies mainly on the context and time adverbials. In English the grammatical categories tense and aspect realized on the verb are sufficient, adverbials are used for specification but are not at all necessary.

4   Function of English and Vietnamese Adverbs

Most English adverbs are classified as full words, whereas Vietnamese adverbs belong to the class of function words. However they are not completely empty in meaning, "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" (Nguyễn 1997, 139). In English they are sometimes classified as a part of the open or lexical word classes but in both languages they modify the meaning of a verb, an adjective, another adverb or some other constituent. Nevertheless there are differences in their behavior, occurrence and usage. For my work, time adverbs and time adverbials are most relevant.

4.1   Time adverbials in English

They are used to express when the action expressed by the verb takes place. As for their position in the sentence, "their normal position is immediately following the verb or at the end of the sentence, it is often possible, for emphasis and stylistic effect, to move adverbs about within a sentence. In fact, the mobility of adverbs is one of their most distinctive characteristics" (Klammer 2010, 82).

(6)   *I saw a bear yesterday.*
        Yesterday I saw a bear.

They are not always obligatory, they are not necessarily essential to understanding the sentence. Also, their omitting might not result in an ungrammatical sentence such as in the case of omitting an obligatory verbal complement. Often the time adverbials have the syntactic function of adjuncts, they are always optional in the sentence. The only difference might be inaccuracy of the information the sentence for instance *I will clean the house tomorrow* vs. *I will clean the house*.

As for expressing the time of the event to which it is referred, time adverbial expressions are not obligatory, as the tense marking on the verb or the auxiliary already expresses this information.

However, there are some verbs that take adverbs as their complements, e.g. *be, happen, live, take place, arrange, schedule* etc. In these cases they are obligatory.

4.2 Adverbials in Vietnamese

Vietnamese adverbs are described as "lexemes which accompany a content word and serve to modify the meaning of that head word either in a nominal or verbal expression" (Nguyễn 1997, 140). While English time adverbial expressions are not mandatory, in Vietnamese their use is crucial to determining the time to which it is referred, as Vietnamese grammar lacks any kind of grammatical marking on the verb, which is the case of English. Not only do they express the time as in the location in time, but also the way the action is distributed throughout the time. In other words, they roughly mark the grammatical categories, which in English are marked by suffixes and auxiliaries, tense and aspect.

Their position in the sentence varies, they will be discussed individually. It is possible to front some of them for greater emphasis, but another way to reach the same effect, which is also very characteristic for an analytic language, is through repetition.

Some adverbs are not obligatory, especially if there is another element, which expresses the tense or aspect information. It is also possible to have more such markers of tense and aspect in one sentence. Sometimes they are redundant, they do not contribute to the meaning, and sometimes they function as an emphasis. Omitting a time adverb when a tense or present marker is already present, does not result in an ungrammatical structure. It is comparable to the case of example *I will clean the house tomorrow* vs. *I will clean the house* in Chapter 4.1 of which Vietnamese version can be seen below.

(7) *Mai   tôi   sẽ   dọn   nhà.*
     Tomorrow   1SG   FUT[10] organize house
     'I will clean the house tomorrow.'

    Tôi   sẽ   dọn   nhà.
     1SG   FUT   organize   house
     'I will clean the house.'

4.3 *When* in the Function of an Interrogative Element and a Conjunction

An adverb *when* can introduce time adverbial clauses and nominal clauses (Quirk et. al 1985, 441-442), which are usually in the function of adverbials/adjuncts. *When* can also substitute *at what time*, it is a pro-form. It can also be the fronted interrogative element in questions asking for the time.

(8) *When are you coming home?*
     At what time does the train arrive there?
     When I was still a student, I never did my homework.
     Call me when you get home.

In Vietnamese, there is a large variety of expressions with the meaning of English *when* as demonstrated on the following examples which are the translations of the English examples above.

(9) *Bao giờ   con   về?*
     When   child   come back
     'When are you coming home?' (Mother to child)

    Mấy giờ   tầu   đến   đấy?
     What time   train   arrive   there
     'At what time does the train arrive there?'

    Ngày xưa   khi   con   vẫn còn   bé,   con   không bao giờ   khóc.
     Day   ancient when child still   small   child never   cry
     'When you were small you never cried.' (Parent to child)

    Khi nào   con   về   nhà   thì   gọi   cho   mẹ.
     When   child   come back home   then   call   for   mother
     'Call me when you get home.' (Mother to child)

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[10] Future

The closest equivalent to *when* seems to be *bao giờ* or *khi* or *khi nào.* However, *khi* or *khi nào* is somewhat more specific, as it can be translated as 'the moment when'. *Khi* itself can be used as a lexical noun meaning 'time', 'while', moment' as in *Có khi tôi rất buồn* 'Sometimes I am really sad' or more specifically 'There are times when I am really sad.' *Bao giờ* never refers to the past but *khi* may. The interrogative *bao giờ*, *mấy giờ* and *khi nào* stand before the verb phrase if they ask about the future. If they ask about the past, they occur after the verb phrase (Nguyễn 1997, 132). In English the information about the time is carried by the tense morpheme but in Vietnamese it is in fact the word order that makes distinction between the past or future reference. Compare examples (9) and (10).

(10) *Em*   *về*   *nhà*   *bao giờ?*
     Younger brother   come back   home   when
     'When did you come home?'

When can be translated into Vietnamese in many ways – in interrogative sentences examples are *bao giờ*, *mấy giờ* and *khi nào*, in declarative or conditional sentences it is mostly compounds that contain a lexical word which is usually a time noun, e.g. *ngày* 'day' in *ngày xưa* 'long ago.' These always stand at the beginning of the sentence thus the subordinate clause precedes the main clause.

5   PRESENT TIME

Actions that take place in the present that is not before the speech act, if we follow the 'past' and 'non-past' distinction, are usually expressed by present tense in English. However, present tense has a large variety of uses, Leech (2004) states 5 uses of simple present tense – state use, event use, habitual use, simple present referring to past and future and imaginary use. As we can see, despite labeling the tense present, it does not necessarily refer to the present. It can refer to the past as well as to the future, e.g. *The match on Sunday starts at 2 o'clock* or *And then she slaps him and tells him to get the hell out, didn't she?* It is not always used to describe events holding at present moment, however, there is certain association with it (moment of speech). Additionally, if we think of 'present time' as a point in time, it is, in fact, a period that extends indefinitely into the past and into the future. "In this sense, 'present time' is potentially all-inclusive" (Leech 2004, 4). On the contrary, past and future times are limited, as they cannot extend further as far as the present moment. Aspect helps to define how the situation is restricted.

In this chapter I will discuss the uses of the present tense in English in reference to present time and compare them to adverbs that denote a present action in Vietnamese.

5.1   State Use

"The state use of the Simple Present is found with verbs expressing a temporally stable state of affairs" (Leech 2004, 6). It is 'unrestrictive' in the sense that it extends the state into the past as well as into the future without any limitation. "The use of the present tense is in referring to situations which occupy a much longer period of time than the present moment, but which nonetheless include the present moment within them" (Comrie 1993, 37). They hold for the present moment but they began before the moment of utterance and also may continue and expand into the future. It is not restricted to the present moment only. It is not excluded that the situation is not part of the past

or present. Whether it is or is not perhaps depends on the context or one's practical knowledge.

Adverbials may be used to limit the duration or contrasting one period with another. For example *At present they live in New York* implies that they lived somewhere else some time ago.

So-called 'eternal truths' are also a state use of simple present tense. These statements are always true, usually found in scientific or mathematical context, such as *Two and three make five*, or even proverbs, e.g. *time flies*. Geographical statements also have no time limit, e.g. *Vatican is located in Italy*.

Similarly to English, Vietnamese verbs used for expressing states do not require any other marker if they refer to the present. Vietnamese verbs thus appear in their 'simple' form, that is, no adverbial is required.

(11) *Tôi   sống   ở Cộng Hòa   Séc.*
     1SG   live   in republic   Czech
     'I live in the Czech Republic.'

     Hiện tại   tôi   sống   ở   Cộng Hòa   Séc.
     Currently   1st sg   live   in   republic   Czech
     'Currently, I live in the Czech Republic.'

5.2   Event Use

Present simple tense is also used with event verbs and it signifies "an event referred to as a whole and viewed simultaneous with the present act of speaking" (Leech 2004, 7). This is the case of sport commentaries and commentary of demonstrators. It is also used in exclamations as opposed to the use of the progressive aspect, which is rather unmarked, e.g. *Here comes my bus!* In so-called performative utterances when the event and the act of speech are identical and occur at the same moment, for instance *I agree* or *We accept your offer*.

In Vietnamese, verbs expressing events also need no other tense marking as can be seen in the following example ().

(12) *Tôi   đồng ý.*
    1SG   agree
    'I agree.'

5.3 Polite Requests – Polite Particle *ạ*

Also, a verb in past tense can refer to the present in polite requests, when the speaker does not want to sound too direct as in the example (13) below.

(13) It's getting cold in here. Could you please close the window?

Despite the verb *can* being in past tense, it refers to the present – the window is open and it is cold at the moment of speech and the speaker requests closing the window in order to make the room warmer. Also, the verbs *to wonder* and *to think* are often used in a similar way. In the example *I just wondered if we got any homework today* the speaker is wondering now, past tense does not refer to the past in this use. "Past tense distances an event from the present, and distancing an event can make it more indirect" (Carter and McCarthy 2006, 406). However, it would be completely grammatical to use present tense in requests, it is just a matter of the speaker's attitude, as it changes the tone of the message.

In Vietnamese, politeness is not expressed by tense but by polite particle *ạ* which is placed at the end of the sentence both in declarative and interrogative sentences. The verb has the same form, there is no tense marking specific for polite requests.

(14) *Con   mắc   áo   này   có   được   không   ạ?*
    Child   wear   shirt   this   AUX   good   NEG   POLITE
    'Is it OK to wear this shirt?' (Child to mother)

    Xin   bố   cho   con   tiền   ạ.
    Beg   father give   child   money   POLITE
    'Please give me some money, daddy.' (Child to father)

5.5 Imaginary present

This special kind of present simple used is typical for fiction. Imaginary happenings are described in past tense and present tense is used for "dramatic heightening" (Leech 2004, 16). It has some effect on the reader as if they were

experiencing the events described. Here is an example from a novel used by Leech (2004) and a sample from an old comic by Võ Hùng Kiệt.[11]

(15) Mr. Tulkinghorn takes out his papers, asks permission to place them on a golden talisman of a table at my Lady's elbow, puts on his spectacles, and begins to read by the light of a shaded lamp.

Tuổi	vừa	mười	bốn,	bế	trai,	thấy	giặc	chạy	dài,	em	nhảy	lên	xe
Age	just	fourteen		small	boy	see	enemy	run	long	he	jump	up	vehicle

Cầm	dao	cậy	nắp	tăng	kia,	bị	địch	quay	nắp	gạt	về phía	sau.
Hold	knife	remove	lid	tank	that	enemy		turn	lid	push	toward	back

'The little boy, who has just turned 14, sees the enemy and jumps onto the tank. He tries to use a knife to open the lid of the tank but the enemy turns the lid and knocks him down.'

As can be seen, the verbs do not have any special marking for past time.

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[11] "Comics in Vietnam: A Newly Emerging Form of Storytelling," accessed June 22 2016.

http://kyotoreview.org/issue-16/comics-in-vietnam-a-newly-emerging-form-of-storytelling/

6   PAST TIME

"It is well known that English has two chief ways of indicating past time by means of verbs: the past tense and the perfect aspect; also that these two can be combined to form the past perfect" (Leech 2004, 35). This concerns actions that took place before the moment of speech. The function of the past tense, however, is purely to locate a situation anywhere before the present moment. It does not specify whether it is just a single point in time or whether it continues to the present or into the future or to another reference point in time (Comrie 1993, 41). This is further specified by the verbal aspect. In this chapter I will discuss the expression of past events with the use of past simple, past perfect and adverbs with emphasis on locating an event on the timeline. Present perfect, which also describes events in the past, will be discussed in next chapters.

6.1   PAST SIMPLE

Apart from the event or state taking place before the present moment, another feature of the past tense is that the speaker must have a definite time in mind (Quirk et al. 1985, 183) which is expressed by time adverbials such as *last week*, *in 1990*, *when I was in Prague*, for instance in *I started school in 1999* or *I started school last year*. This is one of the main distinction between the uses of past simple and present perfect, as the time adverbial would make the sentence ungrammatical. The time adverbial is not needed when there is some shared general knowledge between the speakers, for instance *This novel was written by a famous romantic writer* presupposes that the novel must have been written at some time or another (Quirk et al. 1985, 184).

We can distinguish three meanings of past – event (*I broke a glass)*, state (*I lived in America)* and habitual (*In my school years, I woke up at 6*). Event past occupies a single point in time, habitual occupies multiple points in time and state occupies a continuous period of time.

6.1.1 Đã

In English the past tense is expressed by the suffix *-ed* on the verb, in Vietnamese it is expressed by the auxiliary *đã* along with time adverbials. It is

even possible that no tense marking is present, in that case the interpretation depends on the context.

The adverb *đã* can be used for events, states and habits. It is always placed before the head verb. Its use seems to be optional, but as the meaning of the sentence might be vague and one has to take the context into account, it narrows down the interpretation. It emphasizes only that the action took place in the past but also that it is completed. To be more precise, it has the feature of anteriority either for past or future time, it "signals that the head verb denotes a circumstance viewed as completed prior to some other circumstance" (Nguyễn 1997, 153) in the past or future. If the 'other circumstance' is present moment, then *đã* is in fact a past tense marker.

(16) Tôi   đã   biết thằng này   không   thật thà.
     1SG ANT[12] know guy   this   NEG   honest
     "I (already) knew this guy was dishonest."

In the example (16) there is no other circumstance given, it is to be deducted from the context. We can suppose that some bad experience preceded this statement, therefore, the state of 'knowing' held true before the supposed bad experience. Additionally, the copula *là* 'to be' is never used for linking a subject and its adjectival complement, thus it can never appear with *đã* or any other tense marking. *Là* only links a subject and its nominal complement.

When there is no tense marker present, it seems that speakers would automatically consider it past, especially with event verbs as in the following example.

(17) Tôi làm vỡ   cái   cóc.
     1sg make break CLS[13] glass
'I broke a glass.' (literally 'I made a glass broken')

Time adverbials are probably the most reliable indicator of time. Compounds like *hôm qua* 'yesterday' (literally 'the day that has passed), *tuần trước* 'last

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[12] Anterior

[13] Classificator

week' (literally 'the week before') or *năm ngoái* 'last year' (literally 'the outer year') usually introduce the sentence but can also appear at the end.

(18) Hôm qua   tôi   đi   bác sĩ.
     Yesterday   1SG   go   doctor
     'Yesterday I went to the doctor.'

6.2   Past Perfect

Past perfect has the meaning of "past-in-the-past, or more accurately, a time further in the past, seen from the viewpoint of a definite point of time already in the past" (Leech 2004, 46). Similarly to the past simple, it needs an already established point of reference. It is used both with definite and indefinite time, as opposed to present perfect which cannot be used with definite time reference. Past perfect is thus used for describing an event occurring at a definite or indefinite time but before some other definite point in time. In an example *When I came home, my dad had cooked the dinner,* it is clear that the given point of reference in the past is *when I came home* and the cooking activity occurred earlier and it is finished.

6.2.1 Đã (Continued)

This feature is in Vietnamese also expressed by *đã*. *Đã* is used for the action that occurred earlier and is finished. For clear contrast and interpretation of the sequence of the events, there is no *đã* in the other clause, as it is not obligatory.

(19) Khi   tôi   đến   nhà,   bố   tôi   đã   nấu   cơm   (xong) (rồi).
     When   1sg   arrive   home   father   1sg   ANT   cook   rice   (finished)
     'When I came home, my dad had (already) cooked the dinner.'

The interpretation of the clause without any tense marking is narrowed down to past by the presence of *đã* in the other clause. *Đã* indicates which action was anterior. Additionally, particles *xong* and *rồi* may be used to emphasize that the action is finished. This will be discussed in Chapter 8 in greater detail.

6.2.1.1   Past Negation

It is interesting that Vietnamese even has a negative adverb *chưa* translated roughly as 'not yet' which is used in declarative sentences, yes-no questions and also in answers to them. Vietnamese yes-no questions are in fact 'yes-no-not yet questions,' as the expected answer is *có* 'yes' or *không* 'no' or *chưa*

'not yet.' In declarative sentences it immediately precedes the main verb. In interrogative sentences it stands at the end, similarly to *không.* In questions about the past, it may be used with *đã* as in example (20). In answers, the verb may be omitted, in that case it follows the subject as in the example (21).

(20) *Chị   đã   cho chó ăn   chưa?*
     Elder sister ANT give dog eat   not yet
     'Have you fed the dog yet?'

(21) *Chị   chưa.   Chị   không.*
     Elder sister not yet   Elder sister   NEG
     'Not yet.'   'No.'

There is slight difference in interpretation of example answers in (21). The first one implies that the speaker is aware of his duty to feed the dog but has not done it yet, but certainly will. The other one may imply speaker's unwillingness or ignorance of his duty. English negative answer does not imply speaker's negative attitude.

There are morphemes expressing the feature of past in both languages but in Vietnamese, it is possible to have a verb without any tense morpheme with the meaning of past. The interpretation depends on the context – if the meaning of past is known from the context, it is not necessary to express it.

7 Future Time

The future is understood as anything which has not taken place yet, that is on the right side from the present moment on the time axis, but at the same time it can express something which will hold true in the future and possibly already did in the past or present. In the case of predictions, there are so many factors determining whether they will be true or not and that is why future reference might be subsumed under mood (Comrie 1993, 44). "There is no future-tense morpheme in English, no affix that can be attached to a verb to indicate that the action will take place in the future" (Klammer 2010, 185). "There is no grammatical category that can be properly analyzed as a future tense" (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 209).

Future is realized through free morphemes or through present tense. In fact, future and present might overlap, as it might but also might not exclude the present moment or even the past. In this chapter I will compare English constructions with *will*, *be going to* and *present tense* to Vietnamese particles denoting future time.

7.1 Auxiliary *will - sẽ*

Huddleston and Pullum in their *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language* argue that *will* is an auxiliary of mood rather than tense (2002). It belongs to the same group of central modals such as *can* and *may* both from grammatically and semantically. The sentence *That will be the postman* means the speaker is sure that it is the postman because of his knowledge that the postman always comes on this particular day and hour, thus it refers to the present and it expresses necessity.

If *will* refers to the future, it can express general or habitual prediction (*That will be enough)* or volition (*Please lend me some money, I will give it back)*. It precedes the main verb, which carries no inflection. This is similar to Vietnamese expression of future. Particle *sẽ* is placed after the subject, thus it stands before the head verb but also precedes negation.

(22) *Tôi sẽ   không đổi thay.*
     1SG FUT   NEG   change
     'I won't change.'

It expresses that the action will likely take place in the future. Similarly to *đã,* it is not obligatory especially when a time adverbial such as *mai* 'tomorrow' or *tuần sau* 'next week' is present, because it is redundant but it is possible to use it to make the future reference more explicit. It is important that it expresses certain probability of an action taking place in the future. Although the difference is slight, it can be seen when comparing negative sentences. Negative sentence without particle *sẽ* implies almost absolute certainty that the action will not take place. When the particle is present, it implies the action will not take place but it is also possible that it will. Thus this particle also partly has a modal meaning, similarly to English *will*. *Sẽ* is also be used in predictions.

(23) *Tôi sẽ   không đến.*   *Tôi   không   đến.*
     1sg FUT   NEG come   1sg   NEG   come
     'I won't come.' (I might change my mind)   'I won't come.' (it is my final decision)

     Pháp mà   thi hành   đạo luật ấy   thì   dân chúng sẽ   phản đối liền.
     France if   carry out   CLS law that then people   FUT   oppose   immediately
     'If France implements that law, the people will immediately protest.'

7.2   BE GOING TO

Be going to + infinitive construction is used to express future outcome of present circumstances, both intention and cause (Leech 2004, 58).

7.2.1 Intention - *định*

Định is one of the verbs of volition and it translates as 'to intend.' Thus for expressing intention a full-meaning verb is used, not a particle carrying only grammatical information as in earlier cases. It stands before the main verb and acts like an auxiliary or modal verb. This verb is used for emphasizing the intention, its meaning is close to 'to plan,' otherwise *sẽ* can be used as well.

(24) *Hôm nay   anh   định   làm   cái   gì?*
     Today   elder brother   intend   do   CLS   what
     'What are you going to do today?' sister to brother

7.2.2 *Cause*

"The future with present cause is found with animals and inanimate objects, as well as with human subjects" Leech (2004). Additionally, it may imply immediate future, as the "train of events" leading to the future happening might be already under way. *Sẽ* is used but depending how soon the future will be, particle *sắp* or *sắp sửa* is used instead. The topic of immediate future will be discussed in next chapters.

(25) *Bà   sắp   chết.*
    Grandma IMMFUT[14]   die
    '[Our] grandma is going to die.' (she's very ill now)

7.3   Present tense

Present tense is usually used for arrangements and plans for the future and it implies that they have already been made. There is very slight difference between the arrangement and intention expressed by *be going to + infinitive*. The latter puts more emphasis on one's presents state of mind, while the former expresses something socially predetermined regardless of one's feelings now (Leech 2004, 61-62).

Vietnamese has no other means for indicating future based on present plan or programme than the verb *định*. If the speaker does not need to emphasize his intention with the use of *định*, only a time adverbial is used.

(26) *Hôm nay   mẹ   làm   phở.*
    Today   mother make   phở
    'I'm making phở today.' (for dinner)

Vietnamese uses particle *sẽ* and verb *định* to express plans or predictions about the future. However, time adverbials are very frequent and also reliable means of expressing this feature as well. English uses, along with time adverbials, bound morphemes (present tense) and also free morphemes (auxiliary *will*, *be going to*).

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[14] Immediate future

8   COMPLETION

The notion of completion has been slightly discussed with regard to past time reference. English has no means to indicate completion or termination of a situation separately. This meaning is implemented in various verb forms across tenses and aspects, usually expressed by past time reference tenses. In Vietnamese, completion is quite an important feature and is expressed by *đã*, *xong* and *rồi*.

8.1   Past Simple and Past Perfect Simple

Completed actions are mostly indicated by past simple. These are usually single-time events and may have a direct time reference, as opposed to present perfect which does not allow direct time reference as can be seen in Chapter 5.1. It focuses on when the action occurred, not on its duration nor its result (Alexander 1988, 168). It can be contrasted with the present perfect. In examples *Mary has lived a good life* and *Mary lived a good life* the past simple implies that Mary is no longer alive, thus it indicates termination. Past Perfect Simple has the function to indicate which of two events happened first. Both of them are single-time events, therefore it excludes the meaning of progressive as in *When I came home, my dad had already cooked the dinner*.

8.2   Future Perfect

Future perfect is used for describing actions that will "already be completed by a certain time in the future" (Alexander 1998, 181). It is a combination of auxiliaries *will have* and past participle or -ing form. This form already consists of three words, four morphemes to be precise, which shows the analytic characteristics of the English language. Usually a direct time reference is given.

8.3   *Đã, xong, rôi*

As stated earlier in Chapter 6, the particle *đã* expresses past time. Its main features, however, are completion and anteriority. It is used "when the speaker wants to indicate explicitly that an action has been completed" (Nguyễn 1997, 154). Thus, it can be in fact used in any time reference.

The particle *đã* is often accompanied by the adverb *rồi* 'already', 'over and done with' but it is not the rule. *Rồi* may be used without *đã*. While *đã* is placed before the predicate, *rồi* follows the predicate. This construction stresses that the action or condition has been terminated.

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. (Nguyễn 1997, 158)

If a future time adverbial is used such as *tomorrow* or *next week*, it is understood that the action will have been completed in the future by the time specified by the time adverbial, as shows the example () below.

(27) *Mai   đã   hai năm rồi   từ khi mình   sang bên   đây*
    Tomorrow ANT two year already since self   to   side   here
    'Tomorrow it will have been 3 years since we moved here.'

Additionally, adverb or possibly adjective *xong* 'finished' can be used with *đã* and *rồi* resulting in the same meaning. *Xong* follows the verb or its object and precedes *rồi* (Hlavatá and Slavická 2003, 190). It is also a part of a compound *làm xong* 'to finish' (literally 'to make something finished'). All three elements expressing completion may be used simultaneously to achieve greatest emphasis on the fact of completion, as in example (28).

(28) *Tôi đã   sửa   xong   xe   rồi.*
    1SG ANT repair   finished vehicle already
    'I (have) (already) finished repairing the car.'

It can be concluded that in Vietnamese, it is more important to express the feature of anteriority and completion than past time, due to numerous ways of expressing it contrast with no means of expressing past time separately. Anteriority implies past time because an event is always 'past' when compared to another event to which it is anterior.

8.4   Perfective

This small subchapter is dedicated to perfective and imperfective verbs which is related to the topic of completion. "It is sometimes claimed that perfective forms indicate situations of short duration, while imperfective forms indicate

situations of long duration" (Comrie 1995, 16). Both English and Vietnamese have this feature encoded in some lexical verbs which appear in perfective-imperfective pairs. Perfective expresses a single-time action, thus also completed and usually has a result. Imperfective expresses an action that may last for a longer period of time and does not necessarily imply a result or completion. This system is very well established in Slavic languages, for instance in Czech it is a separate grammatical category. Example (29) in perfective focuses on the completion of the action, thus its equivalent is past simple. Example (30) in imperfective focuses on the duration of the action, thus it corresponds with the continuous aspect in English.

(29) *U-děla-l*   *to*   *za*   *dv-ě*   *hodin-y.*
     PERF-do-PAST.MASC.3rd.SG   it.ACC   in   two-FEM   hour-FEM.PL.ACC
     'It did it in 2 hours.'

(30) *Děla-l*   *to*   *dv-ě*   *hodin-y.*
     Do-PAST.MASC.3rd.SG   it.FEM   two-FEM   hour-FEM.PL.ACC
     'He was doing it for two hours.'

As I have already said, English has pairs of lexical verbs that distinct in the features of perfectivity such as *to find – to look for*. The verb *to find* is, in fact, a result of the verb *to look for*. It cannot be used for expressing duration of an action that lasts a long period of time. Another pair is *to know (somebody) – to recognize (somebody)*. This distinction is not possible on all verbs, for instance *to look – to see*. In this case, *look* may be a short limited action as in *I looked at him*, or a continuous action as in *I was looking at him*.

In Vietnamese, this distinction is evident on verbs of sense or verbs which are in English classified as state verbs such as *to know, to understand* etc. (Hlavatá and Slavická 2003, 216). To mark that a verb is perfective, *được, thấy* or *ra* is used (only *được* may be used with all kinds of verbs). They stand immediately after the verb, thus forming a compound and giving it a new meaning. Examples of the perfetive and imperfective pairs are: *nghe* 'to listen' – *nghe thấy* 'to hear,' *nhìn* ' to see' – *nhìn thấy* 'to notice,' *tìm* 'to look for' – *tìm thấy* 'to find.'

(31) *Tôi   tìm   chìa khóa   mãi   không tìm được.*
  1SG   look for keys   CONT   NEG   find

  'I have been looking for the keys for ages but I still can't find them.'

Được is more universal, it literally means 'good' so in combination with a verb which expresses a state or a continuous activity, *được* can be roughly translated as 'the process came to an end and brought results.'

9   Duration, Continuation, Repetition

This chapter deals with the features of duration, continuation and repetition. Events that last for a period of time are grammatically expressed by the progressive (continuous) aspect in English.

9.1   Duration

In Vietnamese, the feature of duration is denoted by particle *đang* 'in the process of' which stands before the main verb. It can refer to an action in progress at present moment but also in the past or future but it is not used with the particles *đã* and *sẽ*.

(32) Tôi   đang   đọc báo
     1SG   PROG   read newspapers
     'I'm reading newspapers.' (now)

9.1.1 Progressive Aspect

"The Progressive aspect is said to give an 'inside' view of a happening, rather than an 'outside view,' seeing the happening as a single whole" (Leech 2004, 18). It expresses duration, going-on actions and also temporality. It can be contrasted with the simple aspect, in examples *Which team do you support?* and *Which team are you supporting?,* the former one means in general and the latter one means at this particular match so the time in which this holds true is restricted to a certain period of time, therefore it is temporary. It is realized through a form of *be* and *-ing* suffix on the verb and is mostly used with event verbs, some state verbs might change their meaning when in progressive form, for instance sense verbs such as *see*, *hear, smell* etc.

9.2   Continuation

Although the notion of continuation is to certain extend included in duration, it is more specific. It emphasizes that a situation, which began in the past and lasts for a certain period of time, is still not completed at the present moment or other time specified and continues in the future and is most likely to last for a long time. As opposed to the progressive aspect which implies temporary duration. In Vietnamese, these two notions are not interchangeable. It applies

to series of repetitive events and also continuous states. This is in English expressed by the present perfect, adverbs such as *still* or verbal constructions such as *keep* + verb -ing or adverbs such as *still*.

9.2.1 Adverbs vẫn, cứ, còn, mãi, nữa

English has various means of expressing this feature varying from different tenses to lexical verbs and adverbials. Vietnamese uses adverbs *vẫn, cứ, còn,* and their combinations. "They indicate that an action or state of affairs goes on without ending or changing or that it occurs repeatedly" (Nguyễn 1997, 145). How long it lasts is defined by the context or time adverbials. They are placed before the main verb. *Vẫn* can be translated as 'still,' *cứ* indicates that states or events go on without any change and *còn* is translated as 'remain.' Their combinations express their feature more forcefully, they emphasize it.

(33) Nó   vẫn cứ   hút   thuốc lá
      That guy   CONT   smoke   cigarette
      'He keeps smoking (cigarettes).' (even though he was told to stop)

      Em   khỏe   không?   Em   vẫn   khỏe.
      Younger sibling   strong   NEG   Younger sibling   CONT   strong
      'How are you?'   'I'm (still) good.

In addition, *cứ* may occur with *mãi* which indicates that an action is going on continuously for a long period of time (Hlavatá and Slavická , 208). Since *cứ* occurs in front the verb, *mãi* occurs behind it. For greater emphasis, *mãi* may be reduplicated resulting in *mãi mãi*.

(34) *Nó   cứ   khóc   mãi.*
      That guy   CONT   cry   on and on
      'He wouldn't stop crying.'

Nữa expresses addition to already existing state or action. It follows the predicate.

(35) *Chị   hát   hay   lắm,   hát   nữa   đi!*
      elder sister   sing   good   so much   sing   ADD[15]   IMPERATIVE
      'You sing so well, sing some more!'

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[15] Addition

Cô   ấy   không dẹp   nữa.
Woman that NEG   pretty ADD
'That woman is not pretty anymore.'

9.2.2 Present Perfect

The grammatical label for present tense is partially misleading, as it does not refer to the present directly. Leech (2004) refers to it as 'past with present relevance' or 'past involving the present.' That means the event occurs in the past but is related to the present in some way. Either it lasts up to the present moment or has results persisting at the present moment so it includes an idea of continuation even though the action itself might have been terminated. The use of the perfect aspect sometimes depends on the speaker and on his attitude towards the event and how he perceives the earlier mentioned relevance to the present. In examples *John arrived* and *John has arrived*, the only possible meaning is that the latter indicates "persistence of the result of John's arrival, i.e. that he is still here" (Comrie 1995, 56).

9.2.2.1 Experiential Perfect - *từng*

"Experiential perfect indicates that a given situation has held at least once during some time in the past leading up to the present" (Comrie 1995, 58). The difference between *John has gone to America* and *John has been to America* is that the former is the 'perfect of result', implying that John is in America now or on his way there. In the latter one there is no such implication, it simply expresses John's experience of going to America at least once. The difference is thus made only by the choice of verb, in this case it is *go* or *be*.

Vietnamese has a similar expression of experience, although more restricted to sensual experience. This is expressed by adverb *từng* which Nguyễn (1997) translates as 'has (once) ...-ed in the past.' In affirmative it follows *đã* and *chưa* in negative sentences. Simple expressions with negative adverbs such as *không bao giờ* 'never' or adverbials of frequency such as *một lần* 'once' or *nhiều lần* 'many times' can be used instead of experiential *từng*.

(36) *Tôi   chưa   từng   thấy con ngoan như   này.*
     1SG   not yet EXPERIENCE see   child good   like   this
     'I have never seen such a good child.'

9.2.3 Present Tense – Habitual Use, Regular Repetition

"The habitual use typically occurs with event verbs and represents a series of individual events which as a whole make up a state stretching back into the past and forward into the future" (Leech 2004, 10). It expresses regularity or repetition in some event taking place. However, Comrie in his *Aspect* argues that it describes a "situation which is characteristic of an extended period of time, so extended in fact that the situation referred to is viewed not as an incidental property of the moment but, precisely, as a characteristic feature of a whole period" (1995). Its use is thus not restricted to repeated single events only, but also states as in *The Temple of Diana used to stand at Ephesus.*

Habits in the past are expressed by the *used to + verb* construction, for present habits there is no morpheme that marks the feature of habituality nor there is a morpheme that marks present tense)[16]. Present tense and thus present habits can be expressed by a bare verb or time adverbials. Quantifiers, such as *every*, are used for greater emphasis on the repetition.

(37) In the evenings I go home from work by bus.
      Every evening I go home from work by bus.

Present tense in the habitual use, in fact, refers to past, present and also future. It is not completely 'unrestrictive.' If we take the example sentences in (), we can assume that the speaker went home from work by bus last Wednesday or Friday and most likely will do so next Tuesday as well. It is also not said that the action is occurring at the moment. The time is not specified for the past present or future, however, a certain pattern of occurrence is given by the adverbial *in the evenings* and certain reference point is represented by *work* (after he has finished work) and we can assume that the action will follow the pattern if the conditions or circumstances are the same as they are at the moment of speech, for example the same working hours, the same bus connections, the same financial situation, the same job etc. In this respect it includes the idea of continuation.

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[16] except 3rd person singular *-s*

9.2.3.1 Adverbs hay, thường xuyên, "...nào" constructions

In Vietnamese, event verb used without any other element that would specify the location in time seems to evoke a past time meaning. Therefore, habitual present is always expressed by adverbs such as *hay* 'often' (it tends to be so often) or by time adverbial constructions such as *ngày nào ... cũng* 'every day', *thường xuyên* 'regularly' etc.

The adverb *hay* precedes the main verb. *Thường xuyên* is a compound construction, it usually begins the sentence but it is not the rule. Adverbials such as *every day, every week* are constructed in this pattern: *Time Noun + nào 'whichever' + Subject + cũng 'likewise' + Predicate.*

(38) Cóc   này   hay   võ.
     Glass   this   often   break
     'These glasses often/usually break.' (because they are poorly made)

     Thường xuyên   tôi   lau   của sổ.
     Regularly   1SG   clean   window
     'I clean the windows regularly.'

     Tuần   nào   tôi   cũng   dòn   nhà.
     Week   whichever 1SG   likewise clean   house
     'I clean the house every week.'

Due to the absence of any tense grammatical markers, these time adverbials are essential in differentiating the time period to which it is referred.

10 Recent Past and Immediate Future

This chapter deals with expressions of situations which occupy a point near to the present moment, in the past or in the present. This feature of 'nearness' does not have separate means of expression in English. The idea of recent past may be included in the present perfect. The idea of immediate future is expressed by *be about to + verb* construction.

10.1 Present Perfect

As has been already said, the idea of recent past may be associated with the perfect aspect. It is used when "the present relevance of the past situation referred to is simply one of temporal closeness, i.e. past situation is very recent" (Comrie 1995, 60). All cases of the present perfect do not necessarily have to express recent past even with certain present relevance, so that recentness may be deducted, but recentness may imply present relevance. "It is most frequently used in news announcements" (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 145).

Present perfect does not allow direct time reference as the past simple does, however, it allows time specification with the adverb *recently* or one of its close synonyms such as *just*, and other time adverbials denoting recentness such as *a minute ago*, *yet*, *already* or *just now* as in *I have just closed the window*.

Past simple may also indicate recent past, but without the emphasis on the persistent relevance as in *Who said I couldn't walk in? I just did it*.

10.1.1 *Mới, vừa*

Vietnamese has the idea of recent past indicated by adverbs *mới* 'new, recent' and *vừa* 'just (now).' They precede the main verb and may and may not occur together, if they do, *vừa* precedes *mới*. Their meaning is not exactly the same, that is the reason why they cannot appear together to achieve the same effect as the combination of *đã*, *xong* and *rồi* as in Chapter 8.3. Additionally, *xong* may be used to indicate completion of the action.

(39) *Tôi   vừa   (mới)   ăn   cơm   xong.*
     1SG   just   recent   eat   rice   finished
     'I have just finished eating.'

Tôi   mới   nhận   cái   thư.
1SG   recent   receive   CLS   letter
'I have recently received a letter.'

10.2 Immediate Future

Immediate Future is a situation "when an action is imminent, i.e. when it approaches the utterance or a moment in either past or future" (Nguyễn 1997, 155). English expresses such situation with the form of *be* and *about to + verb* or *be on the point of* + verb in –ing form (Alexander 1988, 183). The tense of *be* depends on the time of the point of reference – past tense for actions approaching a moment in the past and present tense for actions approaching a moment in the future. Near or immediate future is generally understood as the time period within seconds or minutes.

In *He came when I was about to leave*, the point of reference is *he came* and the act of leaving is immediate future with respect to that point of reference.

The use of *be on the point of* implies greater immediacy (Alexander 1988, 183) as in *I was on the point of calling you*. Just may be used to imply even greater immediacy. An example of 'the most immediate future' may be *I was just on the point of calling you*. Immediate future which in fact becomes present at the moment of speech may be expressed by the present continuous as in *They're just starting!*

Immediate future may be one's intention as well as cause, this classification was used in Chapter 7.2 regarding *be going to*, which in fact may also imply near future. The sentences *It's about the rain* and *It's going to rain*, have more or less the same meaning.

Time adverbials may be used for specifying when this action occurs such as *in a minute*, *in a bit*, *in a second* etc. In this case, *be about to* is not used, as the

meaning of a short period of time is already implemented in *be about to*, thus it does not appear with time specification.

10.2.1 *Sắp, sắp sửa*

Immediate future in Vietnamese is expressed by adverbs *sắp* or *sắp sửa* 'about to, on the point of.' They precede the main verb and may be accompanied by *rồi* 'already.' If the speaker wants to indicate that an action will be completed in the immediate or near future, *sắp sửa* may be combined with *xong* as in the example (40) below.

(40) Tôi   sắp sửa   xong   bài học.
     1SG   about to   finished   homework
     'I'm almost done with my homework.'

11 Conclusion

The thesis deals with expressions of time in English and Vietnamese, thus analyzing the realization of verbal tense and aspect. Both   languages are considered analytic, nevertheless, they differ in the expression of grammatical features such as tense and aspect. Vietnamese being close to an ideal isolating language which isolates morphemes in separate words, relies on the usage of time particles and time adverbials. Context is another important factor in interpreting the meaning of the sentence. Vietnamese has no grammatical affixes, these are characteristic for English, despite some analytic expressions. English verb can be inflected in minimum four ways, while Vietnamese verb does not change its form.

Despite these facts, my aim was to demonstrate that Vietnamese has more temporal features which are expressed by separate words not by bound morphemes. These words (particles, adverbials) have a clear function and their usage is not grammatically restricted, their meaning is mainly defined by the context. English has numerous grammatical means of expressing these features but they are constrained by the grammatical and semantical relations in the sentence, for instance incompatibility of present perfect with direct time reference. Every verb form (combination of tense and aspect) may have multiple meanings and may be used for expressing different features, thus a lot of features do not have separate means of expressing. For instance the feature 'past' can be expressed by past tenses and present tenses in combination with aspects, while in Vietnamese, *đã* or any other expression with the feature of anteriority is sufficient and they do not need to combine. In larger context, it is possible to omit any time expression.

12 Resumé

Tato práce se zabývá vyjádřením času v Angličtině a ve Vietnamštině a tedy analýzou tím, jak tyto jazyky vyjadřují gramatické kategorie času a aspektu. Oba jazyky jsou považovány za analytické, nicméně se liší v tom, jak realizují dané gramatické kategorie. Vietnamština, jakožto téměř izolační jazyk, který odděluje morfémy jako samostatná slova, se spoléhá na užití časových partikulí a příslovečných určení času. Také kontext je významným faktorem, na kterém závisí interpretace dané věty. Vietnamština nemá žádné gramatické afixy, ty jsou vlastností Angličtiny, i když se vyskytují také analyticky sestavené výrazy. Anglické sloveso může být vyčasováno nejméně čtyřmi způsoby, zatímco Vietnamské sloveso vůbec nemění svůj tvar.

Navzdory těmto faktům bylo cílem mé práce demonstrovat to, že Vietnamština má více vlastností, které určují děj, a které také mají své vlastní vyjádření vlastními morfémy. Tyto morfémy (partikule, příslovečná určení) mají jasnou funkci a jejich užití není omezené gramatikou, neboť význam udává hlavně kontext. Angličtina sice má hodně gramatických prostředků ale jejich užití je příliš omezeno gramatickým a sémantickými vztahy ve větě, například inkompatibilita předpřítomného času s přímým určením času. Také všechny tvary sloves mohou mít více významů a být použity k vyjádření různých vlastností, tudíž spousta vlastností nemá výhradně jednu svojí vlastní formu vyjádření. Například vlastnost „minulost" lze vyjádřit minulým časem i přítomným časem v kombinaci s aspektem, zatímco ve Vietnamštině je naprosto dostačující použít pouze partikuli *đã* nebo kterýkoli jiný výraz, který vyjadřuje časové předcházení. Ani se nemusí kombinovat a v případě dostupného kontextu mohou být úplně vynechány.

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