TIME AND MODALITY IN VIETNAMESE:
A CONTRASTIVE STUDY OF VIETNAMESE AND ENGLISH

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A Field Study Report submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts (TESOL) in the Canberra College of Advanced Education.

October 1985.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

On the completion of this work I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. John Murray Penhallurick, who suggested the topic, provided constructive ideas, made valuable suggestions and comments on various parts of the study, and devoted many hours to precious discussions of matters related to my work on the report. Contact with a personality like his was a true inspiration.

I am also indebted to Dr. Patricia Denham, Dr. Elizabeth Patz and Mrs. Leonie Cottrill who have taught me a great deal of the linguistics that serves as the basis for this work.

In describing Vietnamese grammar, I have had the benefit of many discussions of the Vietnamese verb-phrase in Thompson (1965), Nguyen Tai Can (1975) and Dai Xuan Ninh (1978). I have also benefited from the description of modality markers in Vietnamese in Truong Van Chinh (1970). For all their keen insights into the workings of the Vietnamese language I am greatly indebted.

My sincere thanks are furthermore due to a number of friends who read the manuscript of the study and whose suggestions were almost always found to be an improvement on the original.

Needless to say, none of the above can be held responsible
for any of the inadequacies of the report, which, of course, are my own mistakes.
ABSTRACT

The present study is an attempt to give a description of how temporal and modal meanings are expressed in Vietnamese, and to relate the description to English by way of translation correspondence. The study is, therefore, a contrastive work on **Time** and **Modality** in Vietnamese and English.

It is hoped that Vietnamese students might find in this work some kind of help that may facilitate their study of English grammar as regards time and mood.

In chapter 1, the author presents a brief history of foreign language teaching in Vietnam, and the role of English as a foreign language in the country at present. He also discusses problems confronting Vietnamese teachers and students in teaching and learning English and states the aims of the study. Next, the structure of the Vietnamese verb-phrase is discussed, with a view to giving the reader some idea of how auxiliaries operate in Vietnamese.

In chapter 2, a description of temporal expression in Vietnamese is presented, with emphasis on the uses of the so-called "time auxiliaries". Also, time adverbs, time clauses and questions with time in Vietnamese are discussed.

Chapter 3 deals with modal expression in Vietnamese. In
this chapter special attention is given to the uses of the modal auxiliaries. Attempts are then made to describe the so-called "attitudinal disjuncts" and conditional sentences in Vietnamese.

In chapter 4, implications for teaching time and modality in English to Vietnamese students are given. The author suggests some teaching points, which, through the present contrastive work, are likely to be some of the most difficult areas for Vietnamese speakers and therefore should be given the most particular attention.
CONVENTIONS

An asterisk * before a word, phrase or sentence means that what follows is unacceptable.

The symbol vs = in contrast with.
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Some Implications for Teaching Time and Modality in English to Vietnamese Students

BIBLIOGRAPHY
1.1 English Language Teaching in Vietnam

The history of teaching English to Vietnamese speakers is not a long one. For many centuries, teaching and learning foreign languages in Vietnam was mainly confined to teaching and learning Classic Chinese, which was primarily aimed at training the kind of elite who were responsible for administration and governing, as well as for propaganda and education in Confucianism. Here priority was given to reading and writing in Classic Chinese, the ancient, scholarly language that Confucius and contemporaries used centuries before Christ. Very much later, when the French came about a hundred years ago, people began learning French, the language then being used in the whole country as a second language, especially in administration and education.

Although it is not clear when English was first taught in Vietnam, it is certain that the teaching and learning of English did not become widespread until the French war in Vietnam ended in 1954 and the Americans moved in a short time after that. But in spite of the fact that English came very much later than other foreign languages, notably Chinese and French, it has quickly gained a foothold in the country. As relations between
Vietnam and the outside world have considerably improved since the end of the war in 1975, English has been playing an ever more important part in establishing and stimulating these relations. For many people in Vietnam including politicians, scientists, technicians, diplomats, teachers, university students, officials in the Civil Service and in the Armed Forces, etc. the need to know English is becoming more and more urgent. Nowadays, English and Russian are the two foreign languages being taught at all educational levels throughout the country including primary schools, secondary schools, colleges and universities.

The teaching and learning of English in Vietnam, although it has been growing in momentum, has many problems to overcome. One of these problems is that English and Vietnamese differ greatly from each other in many respects, and particularly in grammar.

The Vietnamese student, who speaks a language that is purely analytic, finds it difficult to acquaint himself with a language like English, where words operate in a quite different way from how they do in Vietnamese. The English verb system, for example, has many characteristic features that are not to be found in Vietnamese verbs. Whereas in English, a verb has tense and mood distinction, there are no such distinctions in the Vietnamese verbs, which remains morphologically unchanged no matter in
what contexts it is used. As will be shown in chapter 2 of the study, the notion of time is expressed in Vietnamese by means of a set of items, which generally correspond to adverbs of the kind already, just, still, etc. in English, and by time adverbials relating the circumstance being talked about to some point of time. All this contrasts with English, in which there is a tense system containing a set of forms capable of indicating various kinds of time relationship. This tense system often constitutes a great problem for Vietnamese students, in whose mother tongue such a system does not exist.

As far as modality is concerned, there are also remarkable contrasts between the two languages. While the English speaker, by using various kinds of modal expressions available, including modal auxiliaries such as will, shall, must, can, may, which form a system in the grammar of the English language, is rather cautious about the truth-value of what he is saying, there is not so much such caution on the part of the Vietnamese speaker, who usually talks about states or events as if they were simply facts, the probability of which seems to be without question. In this respect, it can be thought that such an attitude might be one of the causes leading to the shortage of the means to convey modal meanings in the grammar of the Vietnamese language.
Here the fundamental difference between Vietnamese and English seems to be that while in English, the modal auxiliaries form a grammatical system capable of expressing different degrees of probability, messages of ability, possibility, certainty, obligation, etc. are expressed in Vietnamese by means of a number of items which do not seem to fit into any grammatical system, the items operating as lexical words in some examples and as grammatical words in others.

In view of the important role that time and modality play in grammar and semantics, the present study is an attempt to give a description of how temporal and modal meanings are expressed in Vietnamese, and to relate the description to English by way of translation correspondence. In doing so it is hoped that differences and similarities between Vietnamese and English can be observed and analysed. The study is, therefore, a contrastive work on time and modality in Vietnamese and English.

While those who wish to have an idea of these areas of Vietnamese grammar might find this study helpful in some way or another, it is primarily for the teaching of English to Vietnamese students that the present work is undertaken. The description of the ways to express time and modality in the following chapters is not aimed at presenting a theoretical analysis of these areas of Vietnamese grammar. Rather, by suggesting translation
correspondence between Vietnamese and English, it is hoped that Vietnamese students of English might find in this study some kind of help that may facilitate their study of time and modality in English.

Of course, in order to achieve the goal, only such a contrastive work alone is insufficient. One of other important tasks that the teacher of English has to do is to present the students with a description of the ways time and modality are expressed in English, and make a contrastive analysis between English and Vietnamese as regards these areas of grammar. A contrastive work of that kind will help the students in the other direction, that is, it will show how the English speaker expresses the notion of time and modality in his language and how these expressions correspond to the students' mother tongue. It is our belief that a study of that kind and a comparative work starting from Vietnamese do not in the least exclude each other, but are bound to support each other in improving the students' understanding of time and modality in English.

Due to the limits of this study, we cannot undertake the task of working on the English systems of time and modality and relating them to Vietnamese grammar, but we believe that such a work is of great importance to teaching English to Vietnamese students and we hope we shall have the opportunity to carry it out in the future.
The term "contrastive analysis" may seem to be too ambitious for this kind of study in which the main concern of the author is to find translation correspondence between Vietnamese and English as regards expression of time and modality. Here the practical character of the study is obvious: the description of Vietnamese grammar is given in order that it might help the Vietnamese student to see the linguistic grounds for the suggested translations. The study is therefore not a Vietnamese grammar written in English, nor is it a theoretical study in which problems concerning Vietnamese and English grammars are discussed and compared with each other. Rather, it is a kind of a handbook guiding the Vietnamese students in translating certain messages of time and modality from Vietnamese into English.

Of course, translating from one language into another is by no means a simple, mechanical process, especially when the two languages involved have fundamental differences as in the case of Vietnamese and English. In many instances, it seems as if it is almost impossible to find exact equivalents between the two languages. Besides, there is often more than one possibility of rendering, i.e. there can be many ways to translate a given sentence from Vietnamese into English. A suggested translation in the study is just one of these many possibilities, and it may be not so "good" as other possible translations. However, in finding translation
correspondence, attempts are made to maintain the accuracy of the translation with a view to helping the students to see the relation between Vietnamese and English. Thus the suggested translations are not aimed primarily at developing translation skills and techniques on the part of the students, but at showing how Vietnamese can be related to English. Again, the end of the procedure is to improve the students' understanding of English grammar as regards time and modality.

Since this work is undertaken for the purpose of teaching English to Vietnamese students, many grammatical terms used to describe Vietnamese grammar, such as auxiliary, verb, adverb, disjunct, adverbial clause etc are borrowed from works on English grammar that are now current, especially from the encyclopedic grammar by Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech and Svartvik (1972), which has been used as a text book for teaching English grammar in Vietnam for the past ten years. It should be noted here that while such borrowing may be of some value in showing relations between Vietnamese and English, there is the danger that it may distort the characteristic features of Vietnamese grammar, which generally differ a great deal from English. The term auxiliary, for instance, is used in this study for an item that tends to precede the head of a verb phrase to show some kind of temporal relationship, or relate the proposition to the question of its truth-value. As will be shown in the following
chapters, such an "auxiliary" in Vietnamese is by no means the same as an auxiliary in English. However, instead of calling it a "verb-aiding item", we should like to use the term auxiliary for it, and we think it is more useful and practical to do so, since the term is easier to remember and it also conveys the idea of "supporting", although Vietnamese "auxiliaries" such as dâ, dang, phái should not be understood as the same as auxiliaries in English. Let the reader take this as a warning, not just for the term auxiliary, but for all other terms as well, that the terms are used here to describe Vietnamese grammar and they can mean quite different things for English.

Most of the examples used in the study are invented by the author rather than borrowed from texts, as we think it useful to include in this kind of work simple, self-explanatory, economical illustrations. However, we are fully aware that such a procedure has disadvantages in that when sentences are treated in isolation without contexts, the analyst may have tremendous problems in defining their meanings. We shall try to solve these problems by making the examples as clear and self-explanatory as possible, and by providing contexts for the sentences when it becomes necessary to do so. Anyway we hope the practical end of the study may justify the method we follow.
1.2 The Vietnamese Verb Phrase and the Auxiliaries

1.2.1 The Study of the Vietnamese Verb Phrase

The verb phrase in Vietnamese has been dealt with in several studies by Thompson (1965), Nguyen Tai Can (1975), Dai xuan Ninh (1978) and some other authors. Previous works on the matter seem to lay more emphasis on the syntactic distribution of the verbal constituents rather than their semantic functions, although some attention has been given to the meanings of the elements that form the verb phrase, especially by Thompson (A Vietnamese Grammar, 1965) and Dai Xuan Ninh (Word Operations in Vietnamese, 1978).

In the following section, we present a summary of the observations of the previous scholars and our own remarks on temporal and modal auxiliaries and their co-occurrence in the verb phrase, with a view to giving the reader some idea of how auxiliaries operate in the verb phrase in Vietnamese.

1.2.2 The Vietnamese Verb Phrase Structure

The verb phrase consists of a lexical or full verb acting as head, around which other elements cluster. These "clustering elements", or "auxiliaries", are of different types.

Most of them precede the head, but some follow it.
Some of them have temporal meanings, others convey modal implications. Some few have both temporal and modal uses. Some have other uses than those of time and modality. In the following examples, the underlined words are auxiliaries:

- No sẽ có thể làm được việc này
  he will can do possible task this
  Maybe he'll be able to do this.
- Tôi vừa mới viết xong bức thư đó
  I just newly write finish letter that
  I've just written that letter.
- Họ vẫn đang phải giải quyết nhiều
  they still still must solve many
  problem complicated
  They still have many difficult problems to solve.

1.2.3 Auxiliaries and Full Verbs

Auxiliaries differ from full verbs in that they themselves cannot be used singly as predicate: that is, they cannot occur as head of a verb phrase. There must be a lexical verb following them. Thus, we cannot omit the head in the following and say:

*- No đã nhà
  he already house

*- No phải nhà
  he must house
But:

- No `đã` về nhà.
  he already return home
  He's returned home already.
- No `phải` về nhà.
  he must return home
  He must go home.

However, several items, notably xong (finish), còn (still, remain), bi, được, phải (items having passive functions. See 3.3.9) are also capable of acting as head apart from operating as auxiliary. These items in this study are treated as belonging to both the auxiliary class and the full verb class. Còn, for instance, is an auxiliary in:

- No còn đang học bài
  he still still learn lesson
  He's still learning his lesson.

But a full verb in:

- Trong nhà còn 10 người nữa
  in house remain 10 person more
  There are still ten people in the house.

or

Ten people still remain in the house.

1.2.4 The Co-occurrence of Auxiliaries in the Verb Phrase

Different kinds of auxiliaries can be used at once in a verb phrase and it is common for time auxiliaries
and modal auxiliaries to occur together.

When two or more auxiliaries appear at once, it seems their appearance does not follow a strict order. This is especially true of time auxiliaries. One auxiliary of time is often capable of preceding or following the other. For example, we can either say:

- Trời vẫn sẽ còn mưa
  sky still will still rain
  or
- Trời sẽ còn vẫn mưa
  sky will still still rain
  or
- Trời vẫn còn sẽ mưa
  sky still still will rain
  or
- Trời sẽ vẫn còn mưa
  sky will still still rain
  It'll still be raining.

Modal auxiliaries, on the other hand, have a more definite position in the verb phrase. Items such as nên (should), cần (need), phải (must) tend to follow time auxiliaries and they are nearest to the head:

- Nó vẫn dang phải học bài.
  he still still must learn lesson
  He still has his lesson to learn.
  or
- At the moment he still has to learn his lesson.
or

He's still busy learning his lesson.

However, attitudinal disjuncts (3.4), that is, elements which show the speaker's attitude towards the proposition in terms of its truth-value, but which do not belong to the verb phrase, can either precede the sentence subject or occur immediately after it, before other auxiliaries. We can say:

- **Chắc họ vẫn cần phải hoàn thành**
  sure they still still need must finish
  việc này
  task this.

or

- **Họ chắc vẫn cần phải hoàn thành**
  they sure still still need must finish
  việc này
  task this

Certainly it's still necessary for them to finish this work.

- **Có thể nó dang ở nhà.**
  perhaps he still stay home

or

- **Nó có thể dang ở nhà**
  he perhaps still stay home

Perhaps he is at home now.
The co-occurrence of time auxiliaries, modal auxiliaries and attitudinal disjuncts results in a combination of meanings in the verb phrase. Thus when several aiding elements are used before the head, the meaning of each of these elements will have a part in the meaning of the whole. For example, in:

- Nổ chắc có thể vẫn đang con cần phải.
  
  he sure possibly still still still need must

It's very likely that he still needs our help.

The following implications are included:

a) **certainty** on the part of the speaker, expressed by **chắc** (surely)

b) **possibility** that the speaker envisages, expressed by **có thể** (possibly)

c) **existence** of the event from some point in the past up to the present, expressed by **vẫn** (still)

d) **continuation** of the event at the moment of speaking expressed by **dáng** (in progress)

e) **continuation** of the event to the future, expressed by **con** (still)

f) **strong recommendation** on the part of the speaker expressed by **cần** (should, need)

g) **necessity** or **obligation** expressed by **phải** (must)
1.2.5  Contrasts Between Vietnamese and English

While some of the so-called time auxiliaries in Vietnamese, such as dạ, vân correspond to adverbs in English in certain contexts, many Vietnamese verb phrases containing these auxiliaries are equivalent to some English tense-forms realized with an auxiliary and a participle. Dang, for instance, can be translated into English with be + verb + ing, as in:

- Nông dang ngủ.
  he still sleep
He's still sleeping.

Similarly, Vietnamese modal auxiliaries, such as phải, nên, cạn (see chapter 3) generally correspond to modal auxiliaries in English:

- Nô nên đi ngủ sớm.
  he should go sleep early
He should go to bed early.

Nevertheless, there are many great differences between English and Vietnamese in this respect.

First, auxiliaries in English, like full verbs, operate in a tense system in which they take different forms in different contexts. The auxiliary have, for instance, may appear in the following forms:

- He has done his homework.
- He had done his homework.
- He'll have done his homework.

By contrast, Vietnamese auxiliaries always keep the same forms no matter in what contexts they happen to be used. The form da, for instance, is always the same whether in a present, past or future context:

- Bây giờ họ đã đến đây rồi.
  now they already arrive there finish
  They'll have arrived there by now.
- Khi tôi đến thì họ đã đi.
  when I arrive then they already go
  When I came they'd already left.
- Chỉ còn ba ngày nữa đã sang
  only remain three day more already cross
  year new
  It'll be the new year in just three days.

Second, auxiliaries in English are used in a strict order, as Young (1980) points out. Let m stand for modal, h for have, c for continuous, x for semi-auxiliary, p for passive and v for verb-head, then the maximum pattern of auxiliaries occurring before and after x is as follows:

```
|   | m | h | c | x | h | c | p | v |
```

It is unlikely that all of these options would be realized at once, but if they were, the result would be:
He may have been tending to have been being treated badly

Any violation of the above order would result in unacceptable patterns, as in:
- *He be may doing it
- *He have could done it

where the correct patterns should be:
- He may be doing it
- He could have done it

Such a strict order in English contrasts with the situation discussed in (1.2.4), where one auxiliary in Vietnamese can either precede or follow the other. Further, while modal auxiliaries in Vietnamese are nearest to the head (1.2.4), English modal auxiliaries are used at the beginning of the verb phrase, preceding other auxiliaries and being the farthest from the head:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Vietnamese</th>
<th>English</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Le ra nó dâ phái</td>
<td>He should have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reasonably he already must earlier.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>làm việc này sớm</td>
<td>do task this early</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>họn .</td>
<td>more</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Again, the morphological feature of the English auxiliary according to its position in the verb phrase is very important. Only one form is to be used with
another form, and not others. After **m**, the verb must take its infinitive form without **to**, after **h**, an **n**-form is required, after **c** we have to use an **ing**-form, and so on. By contrast, no such changes are necessary in the Vietnamese verb phrase, in which the verb head and auxiliaries just keep the same forms no matter in what contexts they are used.

While in English, it is not possible for more than one modal auxiliary to appear at once in a verb phrase, the Vietnamese verb phrase may contain two or more modal auxiliaries. Thus while the following patterns are ungrammatical in Standard English:

- *He should must do it
- *He will can do it

one can say in Vietnamese:

- **No cần phải làm việc này**
  he need must do task this
  It's necessary that he should do this
- **Nó sẽ có thể làm được việc này**
  he will can do possible task this
  He'll be able to do this

All auxiliaries in English precede the verb head. This is different from Vietnamese, in which some time and modal auxiliaries occur after the head. These auxiliaries are **xong**, **roi** denoting completion, **duốc** expressing **ability** and **mất** - possibility:
Third, unlike auxiliaries in English, which can occur with verbs only, almost all auxiliaries in Vietnamese can also be used directly with adjectives:

- **Nước** đang nóng, **đừng** uống.
  water is still hot, **not** drink
  The water is still hot, don't drink it.
- **Chúng ta** đã rất thận trọng.
  we **already very cautious**
  We've already been very cautious
- **Sách** cho trẻ em **cần** phải genocide
  book for children need **must** simple
dec. **hiểu** và **hấp dẫn**.
  easy understand and interesting
  Books for children should be simple, easy to understand and interesting.
This is a difference between Vietnamese and English that Vietnamese students should be aware of. Their mistakes such as:

* You should be polite with them
* The situation will more difficult

may be attributed to the imposition of the Vietnamese auxiliary use pattern upon English.

1.2.6 Negation of the Verb Phrase

Negation is realized in Vietnamese by using the negative không (not), and sometimes chưa (not yet), chẳng, chưa (not-emphatic use), đừng, chỗ (not, used for advice) before or after certain items in the verb phrase.

These negative particles (không, chưa, chẳng, chưa, đừng, chỗ) follow time auxiliaries, such as đã, đang, vẫn, sẽ, and precede modal auxiliaries, such as cần, nên, phải:

- Nó vẫn đang không học bài.
  he still still not learn lesson
  He's still not learning his lesson.
- Nó vẫn không phải học bài này.
  he still not must learn lesson this
  Still, he doesn't have to learn this lesson.
- Nó cũng chẳng nên học bài này.
  he also not should learn lesson this
  Again, he should not learn this lesson.
  or
  Anyway, he should not learn this lesson.
In cases where there is the verb-head only, the negative particle precedes the head:

- Anh **dùng** tin câu chuyện đó.
you not believe story that
You should not believe that story.

By contrast, negation in English is realized by using **not** (or **n't**) immediately after the operator, which is the first word in a finite verb phrase. That operator may be an auxiliary, or the main verb **be**. If the verb phrase has no operator, **do, does or did** will have to be used:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bill is learning .</td>
<td>Bill is not learning .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bill may be learning .</td>
<td>Bill may not be learning .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bill is a student.</td>
<td>Bill is not a student .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bill has a house .</td>
<td>Bill doesn't have a house.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bill went .</td>
<td>Bill didn't go .</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It can be seen below that while **not** in English tends to be separated from the head by a number of auxiliaries, negative particles in Vietnamese tend to come closest to the head:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Vietnamese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>He may <strong>not</strong> have been learning his lesson .</td>
<td>No có thể vẫn đang không học bài .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he may still still not learn lesson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Anh **dùng** tin câu chuyện đó.**
- **I **không** đọc sách**
1.2.7 Auxiliaries in Questions

Auxiliaries in Vietnamese do not change their position in questions, which are formed with question words such as không, à, chưa (items forming yes-no questions), bao giờ (when), đâu (where), mấy (how many) etc. By contrast, the first auxiliary of the verb phrase in English, the operator, will have to be used initially before the subject in questions, except questions in reported speech and where the subject of the question contains a wh-element:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vietnamese</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tôi (có) nên gặp họ</td>
<td>Should I see them now?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have should meet them</td>
<td>I not know whether I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>không?</td>
<td>not know have should</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>see them now.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No đã ăn cơm chưa?</td>
<td>Has he had his meal yet?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he already eat rice yet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chung tôi phải làm</td>
<td>What must we do now?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>we must do</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gì bây giờ?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>what now</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>But</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tôi không biết có nên</td>
<td>I don't know whether I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I not know have should</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gặp họ không</td>
<td>meet them not.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 1: FOOTNOTE

1. We must express here our debt to the discussions of the verb phrase in Vietnamese in Thompson (1965), Nguyen Tai Can (1975) and Dai Xuan Ninh (1978). In particular we have benefited from the analysis of Vietnamese Predicative Elements in Thompson (1965) and from the discussion of Vietnamese verbal auxiliaries and their co-occurrence in the verb phrase in Nguyen Tai Can (1975).
2.1 The Vietnamese Verb Form and Time

Apparently time as a grammatical category does not exist in Vietnamese. By this is meant that the form of the Vietnamese verb itself does not tell us anything about time. The same verb-form may refer to any time, present, past or future. While in English, there is tense distinction realized by a form of the verb, as in:

- He is my boss. (Present)
- He was my boss (Past)
- They work hard (Present)
- They worked hard (Past)

there is no such distinction in Vietnamese. In this respect, interpretation as regards time is to be based entirely on contexts. Let us take the following for example:

- Nam đi Hà Nội là điều rất hay
- Nam đi Hà Nội là điều rất hay

Given that the sentence is used in isolation, several interpretations are possible here. First, it may be taken
as a general statement: that is, in the speaker's opinion, the going to Hanoi by Nam is a good thing that the speaker favours in whatever circumstances. Thus the form di in this case has a general use. The sentence could then be rendered into English with the simple present form of the verb go, or its ing-form, or its to-infinitive form:

That Nam goes to Hanoi is a good thing
or Nam's going to Hanoi is a good thing
or For Nam to go to Hanoi is a good thing.

But the sentence can also be taken as a comment on what has happened. It may be the case that Nam went to Hanoi yesterday, and now one of his friends is talking about it. The form di in this case corresponds to the simple past form went in English:

That Nam went to Hanoi was a good thing.

However, if Nam went to Hanoi, and now he is still there, the form di will correspond to has gone in English:

That Nam has gone to Hanoi is a good thing.

Although there may be such ambiguity, in most instances, however, the appropriate message is made clear by contexts. For example, when a woman complains to us about her son, saying:

- No di Hanoi ma chang bao gio toi ca
he go Hanoi but not tell what me at all

We can easily interpret the utterance as a statement of
a past event. The form đi in this case corresponds to went in English:

- He went to Hanoi but (he) didn't tell me anything about it.

We can think of another situation. A woman happens to know that her son is going to go to Hanoi. She wants him to give her a lift, but she does not know whether he will go there by bicycle or by motor-bike. She then asks:

- Mày đi Hanoi bằng xe đạp hay xe máy?
  you go Hanoi by bicycle or motor-bike

Nếu đi xe máy thì cho tao đi với
  if go motor-bike then let me go with

The context of the utterance here shows that it refers to the future. Thus the form đi in mày đi ... corresponds to will go or are going in English:

- Are you going to Hanoi by bicycle or by motor-bike? If you go by motor-bike, please give me a lift.

Since Vietnamese is a purely analytic language, the Vietnamese verb has in it no temporal distinctions which characterize verbs in most European languages. In this respect, Vietnamese grammar differs a great deal from English where there is a tense system by means of which the proposition is made compatible with reference to certain periods of time. The tense forms of the English
verb may indicate whether the proposition is presented as fully real and actual in the present situation in which the speaker is operating, as in:

- He is talking to his aunt at the moment.

or, the proposition is distanced from the present situation of utterance, as in:

- He was talking to his aunt when I came.

Aspect, which has to do with the completion or progress of an event or state, is realized in Vietnamese by means of a set of items, which resemble English adverbs of the kind already, still, just etc. to some extent. This is different from English, where the ideas of accomplishment, anteriority, continuity etc. can be expressed by means of the combination of auxiliaries and verb endings. For example, while the item dang (still) is used in Vietnamese for an action in progress, English grammar has be + verb + ing for an event that is still going on:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vietnamese</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thày giáo dang giảng bài</td>
<td>The teacher is explaining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teacher still explain</td>
<td>the lesson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lesson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The analytic nature of Vietnamese also means that there are no such forms as infinitives, participles, subjunctives and so on in Vietnamese. Person or number, gender or voice, all have nothing to do with the form of the verb, which remains unchanged no matter in what context
it happens to be used.

Vietnamese students of English should be aware of these differences between Vietnamese and English in order to use the English verb-forms for time, voice and mood correctly. Of course, teaching a Vietnamese speaker the grammar of a new language with so many differences from his mother tongue as English is never a simple, easy task. But we believe that by showing these differences, we can build some good ground for the learner to acquaint himself with what may seem to him so unfamiliar and difficult, namely, the tense forms of the English verb, and this is what we are going to do in the following sections of the study.

2.2 The Expression of Time in Vietnamese

2.2.1 Time Auxiliaries, Time Adverbs and Aspectual Verbs

Although there is no tense distinction in the Vietnamese verb itself, temporal relationships of various kinds can be indicated in the sentence. There are two important classes of items that can be used for such relationships.

First, there are words conveying the ideas of completion, continuation etc. such as đà (finished, already), dang (still in progress). In the present study, these
words are called "auxiliaries", for the reason that they frequently occur before the head of a verb phrase, and they themselves cannot be used as full verbs performing the function of a verb-head. Syntactically and semantically, these words appear to be grammatical items rather than lexical ones. But it should be noted here that a few of these words, notably còn (still, remain) and xong (already, finish), can also be used as full verbs acting as verb-heads. In this study, these two words are treated as if they belong to two different word-classes, although a basic meaning that they have in them can be found. The same criteria are also used in calling "auxiliaries" those items having modal meanings, such as phải (must), nên (should), cần (need) etc. which, like the so-called time "auxiliaries", are frequently used before the verb-head. Of course, as will be shown later, these "auxiliaries" differ a great deal from auxiliaries in English, but for the practical purpose of helping Vietnamese students to relate Vietnamese grammar to English, the term auxiliary is adopted, despite the fact that English auxiliaries, such as be, do, have, will, shall, can, may, must may operate quite differently from how Vietnamese verb-aiding items, such as dâ, dang, sê, cần, phải do their work in the sentence.

In the following examples, the underlined words are time auxiliaries. Readers can note here that two
items, namely `ròi` and `xong`, which denote completion, occur after the head:

- **Nó đã làm bài ròi.**
  
  he already do lesson finish
  
  He's already done his homework.

- **Nó sẽ viết xong cuốn sách này trong tháng tới.**
  
  he will write finish book this in month next
  
  He'll finish writing this book next month.

  or

  He'll have written this book next month.

Secondly, there are phrases and clauses having the function of providing some circumstantial details of time of the proposition. These are generally equivalent to time adverbials in English:

- **Ban ngày chúng tôi lên lớp, tối thì làm bài tập.**
  
  time day we ascend class evening then do exercise
  
  We have lectures in the day time, and in the evening we do lesson exercises.

- **Trời thường mưa nhiều vào tháng tám**
  
  sky usually rain much in August
  
  It usually rains much in August

- **Khi chiến tranh bùng nổ họ đang sống**
  
  when war explode they still live
When the war broke out they were living in Hanoi.

These time adverbials can occur in different positions in the sentence, and it is common for them to occur with verb phrases containing time auxiliaries.

Apart from time auxiliaries and time adverbials, there are aspectual verbs denoting the beginning, undertaking or cessation of the proposition. Here belong bắt đầu (begin, start), tiến hành (undertake), ngừng, kết thúc, chấm dứt (stop, cease) etc. These verbs like aspectual verbs such as start, continue, stop etc. in English, can either precede a noun or another verb:

a) preceding nouns:
   - Anh ta bắt đầu câu chuyện một cách chậm rãi.
     he begin story one way slow
     He began the story slowly.
   - Thầy giáo ngừng bài chính tả.
     teacher stop lesson dictation
     The teacher stopped the dictation.

b) preceding verbs:
   - Anh ta bắt đầu hiểu câu chuyện này.
     he begin understand story this
     He began to understand the story.
The greatest difference between Vietnamese and English here is that the English aspectual verbs require the following verbs to be either in their to-infinitive form or ing-form, whereas no other form than the verb itself is necessary in Vietnamese.

2.3 The uses of Time Auxiliaries

2.3.1 Đã

2.3.1.1 The Meaning of Đã

The auxiliary đã identifies an event or state the beginning of which precedes a basic time. That basic time can be the speaker's time of utterance, but is can also be a time in the past or future. Thus, đã indicates an accomplished fact or situation, an achievement: or a completion of an action or state. The following example is quoted from President Ho Chi Minh's Testament, which was written in May 1969, four months before he died, as his last instructions for the Vietnamese people:

Ông Đô Prù là người làm thơ rất nổi tiếng ở Trung Quốc đôi nhà Dương, có câu rằng: Nhân sinh thật thấp có lại hay, nghĩa là: người thọ 70 xua nay hiêm.
Tu Fu, a well-known Chinese poet of the T'ang Dynasty, wrote: "Few have ever reached the age of seventy". This year, being 79, I have already become a member of the few, but my mind remains very lucid ...

The fact that the President was among the "few" who had reached the age of 70 was an accomplished fact at the time he wrote the Testament. The basic time here was May, 1969 when the Testament was being written. Ho Chi Minh was born in May, 1890. At that basic time he had reached the age of 79. By Tu Fu's standard he had already been among the "few", namely, those who have lived 70 years of life. The word da in "da là lớp người xưa nay hiêm" indicates that accomplished fact.

The basic time that da refers to is usually the time of utterance. For example, in a lecture on Modern Physics, the lecturer, talking about the achievements that man has gained in science, say:

Giờ đây con người đã hiểu biết khá hour now man already understand relatively
So far, man has gained a relatively thorough understanding on the structure of the atom and the molecule.

The basic time here is the present time, that is, the time when the lecture is being given.

The use of da in a present context like this corresponds to the use of the present perfect comprising have+past participle in English. As the examples above show, the word already can often be used in the English translation. Here is another example illustrating the use of da in a present context:

- Những thanh niên này đã tốt nghiệp plural youth this already graduate phổ thông.

These young men and women have already finished school.

However, the basic time associated with da can be in the past, that is, it can be prior to the moment of speaking. In this case, da can be rendered into English by means of the past perfect (Had+past participle). Again, the word already can be used in the English translation:
- Hôm qua khi tôi đến (thì) nó
  yesterday when I arrive then he
  đã ra khỏi nhà.
  already leave out house
  Yesterday when I came he had already left.

In a future context, đã indicates that an action or
state will have been completed before a basic future time.
In translating đã in such a future context into English
the expression will/shall + past participle can be used:
- Bằng giờ này sang năm chúng tôi
  by hour this cross year we
  đã tốt nghiệp.
  already graduate
  By this time next year, we'll have graduated
  already.

2.3.1.2 The Use of Đã with Other Word-Classes

Đã can sometimes be used with nouns, adjectives or
adverbs. Here the meaning of completion or anteriority
still remains. In this case đã does not have an exact
equivalent in English, although in some instances, the
perfect aspect, together with already, can be used in
the English translation:
- Đã nhiều năm nay họ sống ở thành phố này
  already many year now they live in city this
  For many years now they've lived in this city.
- Cô ta đã khôn nhưng không lừa
she already cunning but not deceive
duợc họ
possible them
Cunning as she was she couldn't have them trapped.
- Vì giáo sư đã ngoài 70 tuổi ấy
Mr. professor already beyond 70 age that
hiện nay vẫn làm việc rất cần cù.
present still do work very hard.
That professor, who is already over 70, still works
very hard.
- Đã lâu, tôi không gặp họ.
already long I not meet them
I haven't seen them for a long time.

2.3.1.3 Đã từng, Vọn đã and Sân đã

It is common for đã to be used with từng (once),
vọn (original) and sân (already). Thus, there are the
combinations đã từng, von đã and sân đã.

2.3.1.3.1 Đã từng

Đã từng indicates that an event or state once
happened or existed at some point in the past, with the
implication that the event or state is worth mentioning.
Đã từng can be translated into English by means of a
past tense form together with the word once:
- Nó đã từng làm việc này mà
he already once do work this but
He once did that sort of thing without help from anybody.

- Chúng tôi đã từng cùng làm

we already once together do

việc trong một cơ quan.

work in one office

We were once working in the same office.

- Tác phẩm này đã từng được

work this already once gain

nhiều người ca ngợi.

many person praise

The work was once praised by many people.

- Ai-cập và Ấn-dô đã từng là

Egypt and India already once be

những trung tâm nổi tiếng

plural centre famous

của văn minh nhân loại.

of civilization mankind.

Egypt and India were once famous centres of mankind's civilization.

- Tôi đã từng sống ở đây.

I already once live in here

I used to live here.
Those were people who had once been rich and happy.

2.3.1.3 Von da and San da

Von da and san da both convey the implication that there already exists a circumstance at a basic time, and that the existence of that circumstance can be the cause of another circumstance. Since both von da and san da tend to relate a circumstance to the inherent nature of the subject, they are commonly used to introduce adverbial clauses of cause without subject. These cause clauses can be rendered into English with clauses introduced by since, as and because:

- Von da khong ua nhung ke
  original already not like plural person
  xao quyet toi quyet dinh khong
  sly I decide not
giao thiep voi no nu
  associate with him more

Since I don't like sly people I've decided not to associate with him any more.

- San da co nhieu thin cam voi ho
  ready already have much sympathy with them
I want win help them much more
As I already have much sympathy for them I want
to give them more help.

2.3.1.4 Đã...Lại and Đã...Thì

Đã is commonly used in the correlatives đã (already)
...lai (again), đã (already) ...thì (then).

2.3.1.4.1 Đã ... Lại

Đã ...lai indicates the simultaneity of two circum-
stances with emphasis on the second following lai (again).
The correlative construction with đã ... lai can be
translated into English by means of not only...but also,
or by conjuncts such as what's more, besides etc.

- No đã đót lai luội.
he already stupid again lazy
He's stupid, and what's more, he's lazy.

- Họ đã cho nó tiền lai bảo nó	hey already give him money again tell him
cách làm ăn.
way work eat
They not only gave him money but also showed
him how to earn a living.
2.3.1.4.2  Đã ... Thì

Đã (already) ... thì (then) shows temporal, conditional or causal relationship between two circumstances. In translating  đá ... thì construction into English, subordinating conjunctions such as once, since, now that, as can be used:

- Đã học thì học cho nghiêm túc
  already study then study give serious
  Once you study you must study seriously
- Nó đã đốt như thế thì tôi
  he already stupid as that then I
  cũng chịu!
  also give up
  Since he is so stupid I give up!
- Họ đã đồng ý thì chúng ta ở lại.
  they already agree then we live again
  Since they've agreed, let's stay.

2.3.1.5 Imperative Đã

Đã can be used to form a command. In this case, it occurs after the verb head. Such commands usually involve less authority on the part of the speaker than those expressed by đi and hay. These commands can be rendered into English with imperative sentences of the type let's:

- Nghỉ đã.
  rest already. Let's take a rest.
Let's have a cup of tea, then we'll go on with the work.

The use of da like this contrasts with:

- Làm bài đi!
do lesson go

Do your homework!

- (Hãy) giữ trật tự!
please keep order

Keep quiet please!

where the imperative force of the command is stronger.

2.3.1.6 đa in Questions

In questions it is common for đa to be used with chưa (yet). These questions can be translated into English by means of the perfect aspect together with the word yet:

- Anh đã làm bài chưa?
you already do lesson yet

Have you done your homework yet?

In a future context, however, questions with chưa can be rendered into English without the use of the word yet. Instead of the perfect aspect, the simple present or the simple progressive or construction with
will/shall can be used in the English translation:

- Ngay mai no da di chưa?
  tomorrow he already go yet
  Is he going tomorrow?
- Tuần sau họ đã về chưa?
  week after they already back yet
  Will they return next week?

Note: Chưa, as a negative auxiliary, is the opposite of
đã. It corresponds to not...yet in English:
- No chưa đi.
  he not yet go
  He hasn’t gone yet.

2.3.2 Từng

Từng indicates that an event or state once happened
in the past, with the implication that such a happening
is worth mentioning. Từng can be translated into English
by means of a past tense form together with the word
once. It is common for tung to occur with đã. Thus there
are the combinations đã tung and tung đã, the use of
which was discussed in (2.4.1.3.1). In fact, tung,
dã tung and tung đã are almost completely interchangeable:
- No (đã) tung sống ở đây.
  he already once live in here
  He once lived here.
- Thành phố này từng sậm uất một thời,
   city this once busy one time
   This was once a busy city.

   Except for da tung and tung da, it is unusual for
tung to occur with other auxiliaries. Unlike da, tung
does not convey the idea of completion and it cannot be
used with nouns, although it can precede adjectives,
usually as predicate.

2.3.3 Vua

Vua indicates a recent event, usually with the im-
plication that the result of the event is still felt at
present. In rendering vua into English, adverbs such as
just, lately, recently etc.can be used together with the
present perfect:
- Họ vua hoàn thành công việc đó.
they just finish task that
They've just finished that work.
- No vua đã nước ngoài về.
he just in country outside back
He's just got back from abroad.

In a past context, however, vua corresponds to the
past perfect in English:
- Lúc đó, chúng tôi vua đi khỏi thì họ đến
moment that we just go off then they come
We had just left when they came.
Vua is often used with other words to form phrases acting as time adverbs. Thus there are phrases such as vua luc, vua khi (just when), vua luc (khi) do (just at that time), vua kip (just in time), vua-nav (just a moment ago) etc.

- Chung toi den vua kip,
  we arrive just in time
  We came just in time.
- Vua nav toi con trong thay no.
  just then I still look see him
  I saw him just a moment ago.

Vua is commonly used with moi (newly). The combination vua moi also denotes a fresh event which took place not long ago. It corresponds to the adverbs just (now), recently, not long ago etc.in English:

- Hop vua moi lam xong bai tap.
  they just do finish exercise
  They've just done their exercises
- Chung toi vua moi gap no
  we just meet him
  We saw him just now.

Note: The correlative vua ... vua indicates that two circumstances exist at the same time. In rendering vua ... vua construction into English, items such as not only ... but also, at the same time can be used:
- Ngôi nhà vừa to vừa đẹp.
  house just big just beautiful
  The house is not only big but also beautiful.
- Nó vừa nghiên cứu văn học vừa học nhạc.
  he just study literature just learn music
  He studied literature and learned music at the same time.

2.3.4 Mới

Mới is used almost in the same way as vừa indicating a recent past event. Mới is commonly used with vừa. Thus there are two combinations vừa mới and mới vừa. All these correspond to just, recently, not long ago etc. in English:

- Tôi mới mua cái áo này.
  I newly buy this shirt
  I've just bought this shirt.
- Tôi mới gặp nó hôm qua.
  I newly meet him yesterday
  I saw him only yesterday.
- Họ vừa mới ở đây về.
  they just newly in here back
  They left just a moment ago.

In general, mới, vừa, vừa mới, mới vừa can be used interchangeably indicating that an event took place not long ago. They all correspond to time adverbs such as just, recently, just a moment ago etc. in English.
Note: Mói has an emphatic use that is not to be found with vùa. Mói in this sense conveys the implication that some event is likely to occur contrary to what may have been expected by the listener. Thus when someone says:

- Ngày mai tôi mới đi Hải Phòng.
  tomorrow I newly go Haiphong
  I'm not going to Hai Phong until tomorrow.

He may imply that the day of his departure is tomorrow, which is later than the time the listener may have expected: that is, today or yesterday.

In this case mới is an opposite of da and it does not have an exact equivalent in English.

Mói can be used with nouns, meaning "exactly at that point". Here it corresponds to just in English:

- Nó mới 16 tuổi.
  he newly 16 age
  He is just 16.
- Mới chiều mà trời đã lạnh.
  newly evening but sky already cold
  It was just evening, but it was already very cold.

2.3.5. Se

2.3.5.1 The Meaning of Se

Se identifies an event or state which begins later
than the basic time. For this reason, it often conveys the idea of futurity or prediction. In this sense it corresponds to will, shall, be going to etc. which are means of expressing future time in English:

- Ngày mai họ sẽ đến đây.
  tomorrow they will arrive here
  They'll be here tomorrow.
- Tuần tới công việc sẽ hoàn thành.
  week next work will finish
  The work will be accomplished/completed next week.
- Ngày mai Phái đoàn sẽ đến.
  tomorrow delegation will arrive
  The delegation is going to arrive tomorrow.
  or  The delegation is arriving tomorrow.
  or  The delegation arrives tomorrow.

2.3.5.2 Se in Negative Clauses

In negative clauses se precedes the negative không (not):

- Kì thi tôi sẽ không tổ chức đây.
  examination next will not organize in here
  The next examination will not be held here.
- Chúng tôi sẽ không ở đây lâu.
  we will not live here long
  We won't be here long

This is similar to English where not is used after
will or shall or other auxiliaries acting as operator, as in:

- The parcel will not arrive tomorrow.
- The parcel is not arriving tomorrow.
- The parcel does not arrive tomorrow.

(Vietnamese translation:

Gọi hàng sẽ không đến trong ngày mai.
parcel will not arrive in tomorrow)

2.3.5.3 Sẽ Con and Sẽ Dang

Sẽ can be used with con (still), and sometimes with dang (still in progress) to denote an action that will be going on after the basic time. This is commonly equivalent to the future progressive in English:

- Tôi sẽ con làm việc ở đây trong năm tới.
I will still do work in here in year come
I'll still be working here next year.
- Bằng giờ này ngày mai họ sẽ dang
by hour this tomorrow they will still
discuss problem that
They'll be discussing the issue by this time
tomorrow.

However, with messages of state or quality, sẽ con and sẽ dang will correspond to the simple future in English:
2.3.5.4 The Use of Sẽ With Và̂n, Cú̂, Cò̄n.

Sẽ is also used with và̂n (still), cò̄n (still) and cū cò̄n (still- emphatic use) to express the prediction that an event will certainly be in progress during a period of time in the future. Combinations of sẽ with và̂n and cū cò̄n all correspond to the future progressive in English. Thus the following Vietnamese sentences:

- Trời sẽ và̂n mua.
  sky will still rain
- Trời và̂n sẽ mua.
  sky still will rain
- Trời sẽ cū cò̄n mua.
  sky will still still rain
- Trời sẽ và̂n cū cò̄n mua.
  sky will still still still rain

are all equivalent to: "It'll certainly still be raining" in English.
2.3.5.5 Se and Future Completion

Se does not occur with da', which denotes completion or anteriority. For expressing completion in future time se can either be used with the aspectual verb hoàn thành (finish) or with the post auxiliary xong (finish, already)

This corresponds to the use of the future perfect in English consisting of will/shall + have+past participle:

- Ngay mai toi se hoàn thành tất cả các
tomorrow I will finish all plural
bài tập này.
exercise this
I'll have done all these exercises tomorrow.
- Muoi ngay nua no se viết xong cuon sách
ten day more he will write finish book
nay.
this
He'll have finished writing this book in ten days.

2.3.5.6 Futurity in Time Clauses, Conditional Clauses and Concessive Clauses

Se as a future marker is not used in time clauses, conditional clauses and concessive clauses. Here the basic form of the main verb is used instead. This corresponds to the use of the simple present in subordinate clauses in English:
51.

- Khi nó đến tôi sẽ nói cho nó tất cả when he arrive I will say for him all
  mọi chuyện.
every story
When he comes, I'll tell him everything.

- Nếu họ đồng ý chúng ta sẽ khởi hành vào if they agree we will start go at
  chủ nhật tới.
Sunday next
If they agree we'll start the journey next Sunday.

- Dù họ phản đối chúng ta vẫn sẽ tổ chức even they oppose we still will hold
  cuộc họp ở đây.
meeting in here.
Even if they don't agree we shall hold the
meeting here.

2.3.5.7 Modal Use of Sẽ

Sẽ, like the English modal will, is also used for
willingness, insistence and intention. Discussion of the
modal uses of sẽ will be postponed till chapter 4.

2.3.6 Sắp

Sắp refers to an immediate future. It conveys the
idea that in the speaker's opinion, an event is sure to
take place soon. Here sắp corresponds to.
be about to + infinitive, be on the point of + present participle together with the use of the adverb soon, in English:

- Họ sắp đi.  
  They soon go  
  They are about to leave soon.

- Chung tôi sắp hoàn thành công trình này.  
  we soon finish project this  
  We are now on the point of finishing this project.

In a situation where a circumstance is already underway, although it has not reached its final stage yet, sắp can be rendered into English with the present progressive:

- Ngài sắp chết.  
  he soon die  
  He's dying.

Sắp sửa is used almost in the same way as sắp. It differs from sắp in that it denotes the future of present intention rather than the future of present cause. For this reason, it is more common with human subjects than non-human ones. Like sắp, sắp sửa also corresponds to be about to, be going to in English:

- Chung tôi sắp sửa bán ngôi nhà này.  
  we near future sell house this  
  We're going to sell this house soon.
2.3.7 Dang, Cơn, Văn, Cú'

The four auxiliaries dang, cơn, văn, cú all have the meaning of continuation. They indicate that an event or state is still going on.

2.3.7.1 Dang

Dang denotes the continuation of a circumstance at the basic time. It usually corresponds to the progressive aspect realized by be + present participle in English:
- Dùng làm ơn, nó dang ngủ.
  don't make noise, he still sleep
  Please keep quiet, he's sleeping.
- Tôi dang làm việc thì nó đến.
  I still do work then he arrive
  I was working when he came.

Đã và dang (already and still) is used to denote an event that began at some point in the past, has continued up to the present and is still going on. Phrases with đã và dang can be rendered into English with the present perfect progressive realized with have been-present participle:
- Chung ta đã và dang xây dụng một xã hội
  we already and still build one society
  new on fatherland we in 40 year past
  For the past 40 years we have been building a new society in our fatherland
2.3.7.2 Con

2.3.7.2.1 Con, like dang, is used to denote the continuation of a circumstance, but with the implication that the circumstance is likely to continue into the future.

Con can be rendered into English with the word still:

- Nó còn rất trẻ.
  he still very young
  He's still very young.
- Trời còn mưa nữa.
  sky still rain more
  It'll still be raining
- Họ còn làm việc ở đây không?
  they still do work in here not
  Are they still working here?

2.3.7.2.2 Con as a Main Verb

Con can be also used as a main verb acting as a head of the verb phrase. Here it corresponds to remain, exist, be left etc in English:

- Ý nghĩ do chỉ còn trong đầu óc những
  idea that only exist in brain plural
  person backward
  The idea exists only in the mind of those behind the time.
- Con nhieu viec phai giao quyet.  
remain much work must settle  
Much remains to be settled.
- No con mot ngoi nha nu.
he remain one house more  
He has a house left.
- Khong con gi co tren ban ca.
not remain what in on table all  
Nothing is left on the table.
or There's nothing left on the table.

2.3.7.2.3 Khong Con

Khong con (not still) corresponds to no longer in English:
- Toi khong con song do do nu.
I not still live in there more  
I no longer live there.

2.3.7.2.4 Con as a Conjunction

Con is also a conjunction used to connect two free clauses. Here it corresponds to while, and or but in English:
- Toi nghe dai con no hoc bai.
I listen radio while he learn lesson  
I'm listening to the radio while he's learning his lesson.
- Ông ta rộng rãi con bà vợ thì lại kẻ kịch.
  He's generous while wife then again mean
- Đây là chú tôi, con đây là em tôi.
  This is my uncle and here be brother I

2.3.7.3 Van

Van denotes continuation, with the implication that a circumstance began at some point in the past and is still going on. Unlike đa và đang (2.4.7.1) which is very formal and is found in written texts only, van is much less formal and is widely used in both writing and speaking. In translating van into English, the word still can be used:

- Họ van từ chối không chịu hợp tác.
  They are still refusing to cooperate.

With verbs denoting habitual activity such as sống (live), làm việc (work) etc. especially when the activity is long and there is a duration adverbial, van can be rendered into English by means of the perfect progressive

- Họ van làm việc ở đây từ đó ấy.
  They've been working here since then.
2.3.7.4 Cu'

Cu' conveys the idea that an event continues to occur despite any preventing circumstance. The modal implication of cu' here is obvious: it denotes persistence on the part of the subject. Cu' can be translated into English by keep(doing), and when it occurs in concessive constructions, the main clauses containing cu' can be rendered into English with clauses introduced by markers such as still, nevertheless etc.

- No cu' nói chuyện trong khi thày giáo  he still talk story while teacher
  giảng bài .
  explain lesson
  He just kept talking while the teacher was explaining the lesson.
- Mặc dù anh nói thế' tôi cu' đi .
  although you say that I still go
  For all you say still I'm going.
- Mặc dù không có tin gì chung tôi
  although not have news what we
  cu' hy vọng
  still hope
  There was no news, nevertheless we went on hoping.
2.3.7.5 Văn Cu

Văn cu', like cu', conveys the idea that an event is still going on despite any preventing circumstance. It is commonly used in concessive constructions, which can be rendered into English with clauses introduced by items such as still, nevertheless, all the same etc.

- Mặc dù sức khỏe không tốt nó vẫn cu'
  although health not good he still
  dat kết quả xuất sắc trong ki thi.
  win result outstanding in examination
  His health was not good. Nevertheless he passed
  the examination with distinction.

- Dù anh ta nghèo chúng tôi vẫn cu’ kính trọng anh ta.
  although he poor we still still respect him
  Although he may be poor, still we respect him.

- Nói tủy châm chập tôi vẫn cu’ thích nó
  he although slow I still still like him
  He's slow but I like him all the same.

Văn, cu' and văn cu' with their modal implication
will be discussed in chapter 3.

2.3.7.6 The Combinations Văn Con, Văn Dang etc.

The three auxiliaries dang, văn, con are often used together in a verb phrase to indicate that a circumstance is still going on at the basic time. Thus there are the following combinations: văn con, văn dang, dang con,
văn dang còn, còn dang, văn còn dang. All these can be rendered into English with the progressive form together with the word still:

- Nó văn còn học bài
- Nó văn dang học bài
- Nó văn còn dang học bài
- Nó văn dang còn học bài) He's still learning
- Nó dang còn học bài) his lesson.
- Nó còn dang học bài)
2.4 Time Adverbials In Vietnamese

2.4.1 The Role of the Time Adverbial

Since there is no tense distinction in the Vietnamese verb itself, the time adverbial is a very important element in the sentence in that it helps indicate whether a circumstance belongs to the present, past or future.

2.4.2 Types of Time Adverbials

Four classes of items are usually used as time adverbials

2.4.2.1 Noun Phrases

Nouns are very common as time adverbials. What follows are Vietnamese noun phrases that can function as time adverbials with their English equivalents:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vietnamese</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sáng</td>
<td>in the morning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trưa</td>
<td>at noon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chiều</td>
<td>in the afternoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tối</td>
<td>in the evening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ngày</td>
<td>in the day time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>đêm</td>
<td>at night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>buổi sáng</td>
<td>in the morning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>buổi chiều</td>
<td>in the afternoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ban ngày</td>
<td>in the day time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ban đêm</td>
<td>at night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hôm qua</td>
<td>yesterday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hôm nay</td>
<td>today</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hom kia</td>
<td>two days ago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ngay mai</td>
<td>tomorrow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ngay kia</td>
<td>the day after tomorrow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sang nay</td>
<td>this morning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>toi nay</td>
<td>this evening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dem nay</td>
<td>tonight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sang qua</td>
<td>yesterday morning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dem qua</td>
<td>last night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tuan nay</td>
<td>this week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thang truoc</td>
<td>last month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nam nay</td>
<td>this year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nam ngoai</td>
<td>last year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sang nam/ nam toi</td>
<td>next year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>luc nay</td>
<td>now/ at present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>luc do'</td>
<td>then/ at that time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dao nay</td>
<td>now/ at present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dao ay'</td>
<td>then/ at that time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nam kia</td>
<td>two years ago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nhung ngay nay</td>
<td>these days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nhung ngay ay'</td>
<td>those days</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the list above shows, most of the Vietnamese noun phrases correspond to noun phrases in English, but some may be equivalent to English prepositional
phrases. These time adverbials in Vietnamese are common in initial position, although they can also be in medial position or final position. As in English, the initial positioning of the adverbial in Vietnamese implies that it is more important in the discourse than when it is used in other positions in the sentence:

- Năm nay em tới vào đại học.
  This year my brother enters university.
  \[ \text{This year my brother enters university.} \]
- Tuần trước tôi gặp nó ở Hà Nội.
  last week I met him in Hanoi.
  \[ \text{Last week I met him in Hanoi.} \]
- Ngày họ làm việc.
  They work in the day time.
  \[ \text{They work in the day time.} \]
- Chiều nó mới về.
  He'll be back in the afternoon.
  \[ \text{He'll be back in the afternoon.} \]

2.4.2.2 Prepositional Phrases

The most common prepositions of time in Vietnamese are vào (at, in, by), trong (for, in), đến, cho đến (to, till), trước (before), sau (after), từ (from/since). Usually phrases with these prepositions correspond to prepositional phrases in English, although such correspondence is by no means a one-to-one relation. In
different contexts, a time preposition in Vietnamese may correspond to more than one preposition in English. Vào, for instance, can be translated into English with in, at, by, on, between depending on the different kinds of time it refers to:

- Nó thường tập thể dục vào buổi sáng.
  He usually does exercise in the morning.
  He usually does some physical exercises in the morning.

- Nó đến đây vào lúc 5 giờ.
  He came here at 5 o'clock.

- Chúng ta sẽ gặp nhau vào ngày đầu mới.
  Let's meet on New Year's Day.

- Vào giờ này ngày mai chúng ta sẽ ở Hà Nội.
  We'll be in Hanoi by this time tomorrow.

- Tôi sẽ đến, tìm anh vào khoảng 2 đến 3 giờ.
  I'll call on you between 2 and 3 o'clock.

2.4.2.3 Time Adverbs

Time adverbs in Vietnamese are distinguished from nouns in that they cannot occur as head of noun phrases.
Here belong items such as **chốt**, **bông** (suddenly), **mãi** (for a long time), **thường** (usually), **luôn** (often) **lại**, **nữa** (again) etc. Many of these adverbs correspond to time adverbs in English, but some are equivalent to English prepositional phrases:

- **No** đến đây **luôn**.
  He arrive here often
  He **often** comes here.

- **Tôi** đợi **mãi** mà chẳng thấy ai.
  I wait long but not see who
  I waited for a long time but nobody came.

### 2.4.2.4 Adverbial Clauses of Time

Time clauses in Vietnamese are introduced by **khi** (when), **trong khi** (when/while) **khi mà** (when), **dang khi** (while when), **cho đến khi** (till), **mỗi khi**, **khi nào** (whenever), **vừa khi** (just when), **giữa khi**, **lúc**, **trong lúc**, **giữa lúc** (while), **trước khi** (before), **sau khi** (after) etc. Generally, these clauses correspond to time clauses in English introduced by the corresponding conjunctions:

- **Khi** anh ta nói mọi người đều chú ý nghe.
  when he say everybody all attentively listen
  While he was talking everybody listened attentively.

- **Trong lúc** mọi người đang học bài, cô ta while everybody still learn lesson she
When everybody was learning their lesson she listened to music.

When the subject of the time clause is identical with the subject of the sentence, the time clause subject can be omitted, and this is equivalent to the ing-construction without subject in English:

- Mãi khi đọc sách tiếng Anh, tôi đều dùng
  every when read book English I all use
cuốn từ điển này.
dictionary this
  When reading an English book I use this dictionary.

- Sau khi hoàn thành công việc họ
  after when finish work they
trở về nhà.
return home
  Having finished the work, they went home.

Many time clauses in Vietnamese can be translated into English with verbless constructions:

- Khi nào gặp khó khăn hãy dùng
  whenever meet difficulty please use
cuốn cảm nang này
  manual this
  Whenever in difficulty, consult the manual.

As in English, Vietnamese time clauses tend to occur in
initial position.

Note: The conjunction thì (then/when) is commonly used to link two clauses having temporal relation with each other. Here thì corresponds to: when in English:
- No đến thì mọi người đã đi cả.
  he arrive then everybody already go all
  He came when everybody had gone
Thì is also used for conditional relation showing the dependence of one circumstance on the other, especially when thì is preceded by words such as nếu, mà expressing condition. In this case thì can be translated into English by then:
- Nếu vậy thì tôi sẽ không đi nữa.
  if so then I will not go more
  If so then I'll not go.
- Anh mà nghe tôi thì mọi việc đều ổn thỏa.
  you if listen me then everything all good
  If you will listen to me (then) everything will be all right.

2.4.3 Present Time Adverbials, Past Time Adverbials and Future Time Adverbials

According to the time they refer to, Vietnamese time adverbials can be divided into three groups:
a) Group A: Present time adverbials referring to present occurrences
b) Group B: Past time adverbials referring to past occurrences
c) Group C: Future time adverbials referring to future occurrences

2.4.3.1 Present Time Adverbials

The most common present time adverbials are bây giờ hiện nay, hiện tại, giờ đây, hiện giờ (now, nowadays, at present), hôm nay (today), tuần này (this week), năm nay (this year), những ngày này (these days).

- Bây giờ đang là mùa đông.
now still be winter
It's winter now.
- Những ngày này họ đang sống ở Hà Nội.
plural day this they still live in Hanoi
They're living in Hanoi these days.

2.4.3.2 Past Time Adverbials

The most common past time adverbials are lúc này (a while ago), lúc đó (at that time), hôm nay (the other day), hôm ấy (that day), ngày nay, ngày ấy (at that time) hôm qua (yesterday), hôm kia (the day before yesterday), gần đây (recently, of late), các trưa, khi trước, khi xưa (in the past, formerly), tuần trước (last week), năm trước (5 years ago) etc.
I heard about this story the other day.

We started building this factory 10 years ago.

2.4.3.3 Future Time Adverbials

The most common future time adverbials are:  

- Chốc nua (in a while, soon)  
- Luc nua (in a while)  
- Ngay mai (tomorrow)  
- Tuan sau, tuan toi (next week)  
- Sang nam, nham toi (next year)  
- 3 ngay nua (in three days)  
- Trong tuong lai (in the future)  
- Sap toi (in the near future)  

- Choc nua se co tin moi.  
While more will have news new  
There'll be some news in a while  

- Tuann sau chung toi se thi.  
Week after we will compete  
We'll have an exam next week  

- Ba thang nua tinh hinh se thay doi hoan toan.  
Three month more situation will change complete  
In three months the situation will have completely changed.
2.4.4 Duration Time Adverbials

To express duration, the word trong is used. Trong here is equivalent to for in English:

- Nó làm việc trong 3 giờ.
  he do work for 3 hour
  He worked for three hours

Other words for duration are mai, lâu (long, for a long time), từ ... đến (from ... to), đến, cho đến (till):

- Tôi đọc mãi mà vẫn không hiểu.
  I read long but still not understand
  meaning passage this
  I read for a long time (again and again) but could not understand this passage.

- Nó chờ ở đây đã lâu.
  he wait in here already long
  He's been waiting here a long time.

- Nó làm việc ở đây từ năm 1963 đến
  he do work in here from year 1963 to
  year 1968
  He worked here from 1963 to 1968.

- Nó làm việc ở đây từ khi thôi học.
  he do work in here from when cease learn
  He's been working here since he left school.
Like English, time adverbials of duration in Vietnamese are common in final position.

2.4.5 Time Frequency Adverbials

Adverbials of frequency are of two classes: those expressing **definite frequency** and those expressing **indefinite frequency**.

2.4.5.1 Definite Frequency Adverbs

The most common adverbs of definite frequency in Vietnamese are: 
- **hằng ngày, mỗi ngày** (everyday/ daily)  
- **hàng tuần, mỗi tuần** (every week/ weekly/ per week),  
- **hàng tháng, mỗi tháng** (every month/ monthly) , **hàng năm, mỗi năm** (every year/ per year/ annually), **nữa, lại** (once more), **hai lần** (twice), **bảy lần** (three times) etc.

- **Hằng ngày chúng tôi lên lớp vào buổi sáng.**
  *Everyday we have classes in the morning*
- **Mỗi tuần họ đi bơi một lần.**
  *They go swimming once a week*
- **Cuộc họp của họ được tiến hành hàng tháng.**
  *Their meetings take place monthly.*
- Anh có đi nữa không?
you have go more not
Are you going there once more?

Adverbials of definite frequency in Vietnamese can
occur in final or initial position, while the corresponding
adverbs in English tend to occur finally.

2.4.5.2 Indefinite Frequency Adverbs

The most common adverbials of indefinite frequency
in Vietnamese are: thường, thường thường, thông thường
(usually, normally, commonly), như thường lệ (as usual),
không ngừng, liên miên (unceasingly, endlessly), liên
tục, liên tiếp (repeatedly, continuously), luôn, luôn
luôn (always, often), nhiều lần (many times), ngày ngày
(day after day), đêm đêm (night after night), lúc nào
cũng (always), thỉnh thoảng (from time to time), đôi lúc
có lúc, đôi khi, có khi (sometimes), hiếm khi (seldom,
rarely), không hề, chưa hề (never):

- Họ thường dậy sớm.
they usually rise early
They usually get up early

- Ông ta luôn luôn được mọi người ca ngợi.
he often win everybody praise
He was often highly spoken of by everybody

- Thỉnh thoảng chúng tôi lại về quê.
from time to time we again back country
From time to time we'll go to our home village for a visit.

As in English, adverbials of indefinite frequency in Vietnamese are common in medial position, although they can also occur initially.

2.4.6 Questions With Time in Vietnamese

2.4.6.1 Time When Questions

Time when questions in Vietnamese are formed with such items as bao giờ, khi nào, lúc nào, độ nào, chúng nào etc. All these can be translated into English by when. While when in English is always used at the beginning of the question and is followed by an operator (do, did, have etc), the question word in Vietnamese may occur either at the beginning or at the end of the interrogative sentence:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vietnamese</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Either question word</td>
<td>When operator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or</td>
<td>SV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SV question word</td>
<td>SV</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, change in the position of the question word in Vietnamese often results in the change of time reference. The initial position usually refers to the future, while the final position often refers to the past.
Vietnamese:  
- Khi nào anh đi?  
  - Anh đi khi nào?

English:  
- When will you go?  
  - When did you go?

Since there is no tense distinction in the Vietnamese verb, such change of time reference can be explained in terms of the relative importance of the positioning of the question word in discourse: it might be the case that a future happening could be regarded as more important and relevant in the discourse than a past happening, therefore the initial positioning of the question word is associated with a future event, while final positioning is associated with the past.

Nevertheless, when the question contains a modal auxiliary, such as phai (must), có thể (can, may), it is the future that is referred to, no matter in what position the question word is:

Vietnamese:  
- Khi nào anh có thể bat dau?

English:  
- When can you start?

- Anh có thể bat dau khi nào?
When it is necessary to be more specific about the point of time, there are phrases such as **lúc mấy giờ** (what time), **hôm nay, ngày nay** (which day), **tháng nay** (which month) etc. Usually the Vietnamese item **nào** corresponds to what or which in English:

- **Nó ra lúc mấy giờ?**
  
  he out go when how many hour
  
  What time did he leave?

- **Cách mạng Pháp nó ra năm nào?**
  
  revolution French explode out year what
  
  In what year did the French Revolution break out?

### 2.4.6.2 Time Duration Questions

Time duration questions in Vietnamese are formed with **(trong) bao lâu**, which is equivalent to how long in English. The Vietnamese question word here is always in final position, while **how long** in English must always occur initially:

- **Anh sẽ ở đây (trong) bao lâu?**
  
  you will in here in how long
  
  How long are you staying here?
2.4.6.3 Time Frequency Questions

Time frequency questions are formed with **mấy lần** (how many times), **bao lâu** (thi) ... **lại** (how often). **Mấy lần** is used finally, while **bao lâu** thi ... **lại** can occur initially or medially:

- Một tháng anh đi Hà Nội **mấy** lần?
  one month you go Hanoi how many time
  **How many times** do you go to Hanoi every month?
  or
  - **How often** do you go to Hanoi?

- **Bao** lâu thi ủy ban lại họp?
  how long then committee again meet
  or
  **Ưy ban bao** lâu thi lại họp?
  committee how long then again meet
  **How often** does the committee meet?

Time frequency questions can also be formed with **thường**, **hay**, **luôn** (often, frequently). These questions correspond to yes-no questions in English:

- Anh có **hay** đi nghe nhạc không?
  you have often go listen music not
  Do you **sometimes** go to the concert?

- **No** có đến đây **luôn** không?
  he has arrive here often not
Does he often come here?

Chapter 2: FOOTNOTE

1 This section draws on several sources, especially on accounts and ideas of Thompson (1965: chapter 9) and Dai Xuan Ninh (1978: chapter II).
CHAPTER 3

MODALITY IN VIETNAMESE

3.1 Modal Expression in Vietnamese

Vietnamese students of English often find it hard to express modal meanings in English. Especially the English modal auxiliaries will, shall, must, can, may, would, should, could, might always constitute a significant problem for the Vietnamese learner, who often makes mistakes by using the wrong English modal or not using any modal at all when it is necessary to use one. The cause of the problem here seems to be that there are fundamental differences between Vietnamese and English in this area of grammar that hinder the Vietnamese student from acquiring a sufficient understanding of how modality is realized in English.

Apparently, there are not so many ways to express modal meanings in Vietnamese as there are in English. Further, the Vietnamese items which can be used for ability, possibility, permission, certainty, obligation, etc. do not seem to fit into any grammatical system. Syntactically, many of these items, such as có lẽ (perhaps, maybe), chắc là (certainly, surely), đương nhiên (seemingly, it seems), appear to behave very much
like attitudinal disjuncts in English, which are linguistic units of different types showing the speaker's attitude towards the proposition in terms of its truth value, such as perhaps, certainly, etc. Some others, however, notably phải (must), nên (should), cần (need) bi, được (items with passive function) in most cases correspond to auxiliaries in English.

3.2 Classification of Modality Markers

Thus from the point of view of syntactic distribution, modality markers in Vietnamese can be divided into two groups.

3.2.1 Group A.

Markers of this group tend to occur immediately before the head of the verb phrase; thus their position in the sentence is rather fixed. In most instances, these markers correspond to modal auxiliaries in English. Here belong phải (must), nên (should), cần (need). The two items bi, được with their passive meaning, and some temporal auxiliaries and negatives (such as se, vẫn, cụ, dùng, chờ) when used with modal implication also belong to this group.

For example:

- Anh phải về ngay.
  you must back immediately.
You must return at once.

- Ngôi nhà này được làm đã lâu.
  This house was built long ago.

- Anh đừng tin câu chuyện này.
  You should not believe this story.

- Chúng tôi sẽ thực hiện lời hứa của mình.
  We will keep our promise.

3.2.2 Group B

Markers of this group can either occur at the beginning of the sentence before the subject or come immediately after the subject and precede other auxiliaries. Here belong items such as có thể, có lẽ (maybe, perhaps), chắc là (certainly), nhất định (là) (surely) etc. For the most part these markers correspond to attitudinal disjuncts in English.

- Họ có thể đến đây rồi.
  They may have arrived here already.

- Có thể họ đến đây rồi.
  Maybe they've come already.

- Có thể họ đến đây rồi.
  Maybe they've come already.
3.3 The Uses of Vietnamese Modal Auxiliaries

3.3.1 Phải

Phải expresses obligation or compulsion. In some cases, such obligation or compulsion is imposed by the speaker, who is the person in authority. Here phái corresponds to must in English:

- Anh phải cho tôi biết sự thật.
  
you must let me know truth
  You must tell me the truth

- Họ phải hoàn thành việc này ngay.
  they must finish task this immediately
  They must finish this work right away.

In other cases, the obligation or compulsion expressed by phải does not involve the speaker's authority. Now phải conveys obligation generally, without specifying who does the compelling, and it corresponds to have (got) to, be obliged to in English:

- Ông phải làm việc rất vất vả để giúp đỡ gia đình.
  he must do work very hard aim help family
  He had to work hard to support his family.

- Ông phải bán nhà để trả nợ.
  he must sell house aim pay debt
  He was obliged to sell his house to pay his debt.
In the negative, phải is preceded by không (not) and không phải corresponds to needn't, do not need to, don't have to in English:

- Anh không phải cần thận như vậy.
you not must careful as so
You needn't be so careful.
or - You don't need to be so careful.
- Chung ta không phải đọc toàn bộ cuốn sách này.
we not must read whole book this
We don't have to read the whole book.

Phải is also used for necessity to express an estimate with a high degree of probability, and in this sense it is also equivalent to must in English:

- Năm nay ông ta phải ngoài 60 rồi.
year this he must outside 60 already
He must be over 60 now.

It is common for phải in its necessity sense to be preceded by chắc, hẳn, ắt expressing certainty. Thus there are the combinations chắc phải, hắn phải, ắt phải. All these can be translated into English with must, surely or for sure:

- Anh chắc phải biết cô ta rõ lắm.
you sure must know her clear! very
You must have known her very well.
- Việc này ắt phải rất tốn kém.
task this sure must very costly
This will cost a lot of money for sure.

As a necessity marker, phái does not appear in the negative. Here phái can be substituted by chắc, hẳn, ắt (sure). Such negative clauses can be rendered into English by using cannot:

- No chắc không hiểu đoạn văn này.
  he sure not understand passage this
  He cannot have understood the passage
  or Certainty he did not understand the passage.

Phái with its passive function will be discussed in 3.3.9.

3.3.2 Nên

Nên is used for advice or recommendation that the speaker wishes to convey to the addressee or someone else. In translating nên into English, should, ought to, had better and constructions such as it is advisable that, it is better for etc. can be used:

- Anh nên đọc sách nhiều hơn.
  you should read book much more
  You should read more
- Chung ta nên giành nhiều thời gian
  we should get much time
  vao việc đó.
  into task that.
  We'd better give more time to it.
- Họ nên hoàn chuyến đi đến tuần sau.
  they should postpone journey till week next
  It's advisable what they should put off the
  journey till next week.
- Bà ta nên sống ở những vùng yên tĩnh
  she should live in plural place quiet
  It's better for her to live in a quiet place

Note:

a) Nên as a modal auxiliary should be distinguished
  from the post particle nên which is used after
  a verb to express result. Nên here conveys the
  idea that the following noun is the result of
  the process denoted by the verb. Apparently,
  nên in this case does not have an exact equiva-
  lent in English. Combinations such as trở nên
  (become), tạo nên (create, make) etc. consist-
  ing of a verb followed by the particle simply
  correspond to a verb in English:
  - Nó sẽ trở nên một người chồng tốt.
    he will turn into one person husband good
    He'll become a good husband.
  - Thời thế tạo nên anh hùng.
    time make into hero
    Circumstances make heroes
b) Nên is commonly used as a conjunction showing
  some causal relation between two circumstances.
  In this function, nên corresponds to that's why
for that reason, so etc.in English:

- Ông ta hiền lành nên mọi người đều
  he good-natured so all person all
  quý ông .
  like him

He's good-natured, that's why (for that reason,
so) everybody likes him.

Another way to translate constructions with nên
is to use causal markers such as because, since
and as :

- Trời lạnh quá nên không ai muốn
  sky cold very so no who want
  ra ngoài cả .
  out outside at all
  Since (as) it was very cold noone wanted
to go out.

3.3.3 Cân`

3.3.3.1 The Meaning of Cân`

In terms of meaning, cân` is half way between phái
(must) and nên (had better, should). It conveys the idea
of obligation and necessity, compulsion arising from
circumstance rather than imposed by the speaker. Cân` can
be rendered into English by need to, or it is necessary for
- Anh cân` trả lời họ ngay hôm nay .
you need answer them right today
You need to answer them right away.
- Chúng ta cần thực hiện chương trình đó.
we need implement programme that
more early more good

It's necessary for us to carry out that programme
the sooner the better.

In the negative, cần is preceded by không (not),
and không cần can be translated into English with needn't, do not need to or it is not necessary for:

- Nó không cần d' dây lâu
he not need live here long
He needn't be here long.
or He doesn't need to be here long
or It's not necessary for him to be here long.

In cases where a passive meaning is implied,
especially when cần is used before the passive marker được, constructions with cần correspond to need + V -ing constructions in English:

- Ngôi nhà cần (dược) sửa chữa ngay
house need (win) repair at once
The house needs repairing at once.

3.3.3.2 Cân As a Full Verb

Cân is also used as a full verb acting as head of a
verb phrase. In this case, cần is equivalent to need and want in English:

- Họ cần tiền và kỹ thuật.
  they need money and technology
  They need money and technology.
- Trường tôi cần một giáo viên tiếng Anh.
  school I need one teacher English
  Our school wants a teacher of English.

3.3.3.3 Cần Phải

It is common for cần to be used with phải. The combination cần phải conveys the idea that although obligation or necessity is asserted, the speaker is somewhat cautious about imposing his authority. Cần phải can be rendered into English with should or ought to:

- Việc đã gặp rồi. Chúng ta cần phải
  task already urgent finish. We need must
  hành động ngay.
  act immediately
  The situation is now very urgent. We should take
  action without delay.
- Trẻ em cần phải vâng lìi cha mẹ.
  children need must obey word father mother
  Children should obey their parents
- Thầy giáo cần phải thường xuyên yêu học sinh.
  teacher need must love pupil
  Teachers should have love for their pupils.
- Anh **cần phải** thực hành nhiều hơn nữa.
  you need must practice much more more
  You should practice more.
  **or**
  It's necessary for you to practice more.

3.3.3.4 Phải, Nên, Căn in Impersonal Constructions

Phải, nên, cần are commonly used initially in impersonal constructions without subject. These constructions can be translated into English with it is necessary to:

- Phải cho họ biết tin này.
  must let them know news this
  It is necessary to inform them of the news.

- Nên có nhiều sách cho trẻ em đọc
  should have many books for children read
  It's necessary to supply children with enough books to read.

- Không cần dùng những định nghĩa này đâu.
  not need use plural definition this for
  It's not necessary to use these definitions to explain the passage.

These impersonal constructions can also be rendered into English with sentences containing the we or you subject, since the deleted subject of these Vietnamese
constructions is usually understood to be the first person plural **chúng ta** (we) or the second person **anh, các anh** (you). Thus "phải cho họ biết tin này" can be translated into English as **We must inform them of the news,** or **You must inform them of the news.**

3.3.4 **Se**

The auxiliary **se**, apart from denoting futurity (2.3.5.), is also used with modal implication to express **willingness, intention and insistence**. In these senses, **se** occurs in sentences of which the subject is capable of volition and the action denoted by the main verb can be thought of as compatible with willingness, intention, or insistence. Here **se** corresponds to **will** in English:

**Willingness:**
- Anh không phải lo. Chung tôi **se** đi với anh.
  you not must worry we **will** go with you.
  Please don't worry. We'll go with you.

**Intention:**
- Chung ta **se** xây dựng một nhà máy ở đây.
  we **will** build one factory in here.
  We'll build a factory here.

**Insistence:**
- Nó **se** lấy cô ta, dù cho bố mẹ nó không đồng ý.
  he **will** marry her despite parents he not agree.
He will marry her, even if his parents are opposed to it.

3.3.5 Văn, Cú́

Văn, cú́, as time auxiliaries, denote continuation (2.3.7). These items can also be used for insistence to indicate some sort of determination on the part of the sentence subject to perform the action denoted by the main verb, despite whatever preventing circumstance. Here the meaning of strong volition is felt to be more marked with cú́ than văn. That is the reason why cú́ can be translated into English by will, while văn often corresponds to still in English:

- Dù́ trời mưa nó cú́ đi.
  though sky rain he still go
  He will go despite the rain
- Rṍ ràng là họ́ đã thất bại, ấý thể́ mà
  clear that they already fail, nevertheless
  họ́ văn sử dụng phương pháp cú́.
  they still use method old
  (It's clear that) No doubt they were unsuccessful
  but they are still using the old method.

In other contexts, however, the meaning of insistence with văn is obvious, and like cú́, it is now equivalent to will in English. The following is quoted from a poem by To Huu, a well-known poet and high-ranking leader of Vietnam. The poem is entitled "Ta Bi Tôi"
We March Forward), which was written in October, 1954, when the war against the French in Vietnam had ended and the country was divided into North and South according to the Geneva Agreements. In this poem To Huu praises the revolutionary heroism of the Vietnamese people and expresses the determination to be loyal to President Ho Chi Minh and reunify the country. The verses read as follows:

"Dù ai nói ngã nói nghiêng
despite who say bending say slanting
Lòng ta vẫn vưng như kiêng ba chân
heart we still firm as trivet three leg
Dù ai rào đầu ngăn sên
despite who make fence divide yard
Lòng ta vẫn vưng là dân Cụ Hồ"
heart we still firm be people Uncle Ho
Despite whatever distortions or dissuations
we will forever hold firm to our beliefs
Despite whatever partition or division
we will forever be Uncle Ho's people.

3.3.6 Dưng, Chở'

Dưng, chở' are used for advising someone not to do something, although the advice appears in the form of a command. Here the speaker, while imposing his authority on the hearer, is trying to be less imperious, so that
what he says could be taken as an opinion to be recommended, a counsel worthy to be followed. Such advice corresponds to "please don't ..." in English.

- **Dừng** tin câu chuyện đó!
  Don't believe story that
  Please don't believe that story!

- **Chớ** dùng thuốc khi không cần thiết.
  don't use medicine when not necessary
  Please don't use medicine unless necessary.

The use of **dừng, chớ** for advice here contrasts with the use of the negative **không** (not), often followed by **được** (allowed) to express negative commands where strict orders are given: there is no way the hearer could do otherwise but obey what the speaker requests. Let us compare:

- **Dừng** hát bài hát đó!
  don't sing song that
  Please don't sing that song
(advice: the hearer can take this as an opinion to be recommended)

- **Không** (được) hát bài hát đó!
  not (allowed) sing song that
  Don't sing that song!
(command: the hearer is not allowed to sing that song)
3.3.7 Được, Mắt as Post Auxiliaries

3.3.7.1 Được

Dược when following a main verb expresses ability. It corresponds to can or be able in English:

- Nó làm được việc này.
  he do possible task this
  He can do this work
  or He is able to do this work.

Dược can also occur after the object of the main verb:

- Nó làm việc này được.
  he do task this possible
  He can do this work.

3.3.7.2 Mắt

Mắt as a post-auxiliary always occurs finally following the object of the main verb. It expresses possibility, conjecture that something is likely to happen. Here mắt corresponds to may in English:

- Cần thận dâng. Nó lừa anh mắt.
  careful there. he deceive you possible
  Please be careful. He may get you trapped.

- Dừng làm ơn. Thằng bé dậy mắt.
  don't make noise. Child wake possible
  Please keep quiet. The child may wake up.
Note: Both đúc and mất are also used as full verbs. Dúc means gain, win, obtain and mất means lose:

- No' đúc' ba văn có' lién',
  he win three game chess successively
  He won three games of chess successively.
- Ho' không bao giờ mất hy vọng,
  they never lose hope
  They've never lost hope

3.3.8 Có thể'

Có thể' as a modal auxiliary is used for ability. In this sense it is equivalent to can, may, be able to, be capable of in English:

- Tôi có thể giải quyết vấn đề này.
  I can settle problem this
  I can settle this problem
- Ngựa có thể chạy 40 cây số một giờ.
  horse can run 40 km one hour
  A horse can run at 40 kms per hour
Có thể' in its ability sense always occurs immediately before the verb head after other auxiliaries and it is commonly used with the post auxiliary đúc. (3.3.7.1)

- Chúng tôi có thể dịch đúc tác phẩm này.
  we can translate possible work this
  We can (are able to) translate this work
Có thể' is also used for both factual possibility and theoretical possibility. With factual possibility, the speaker puts forward a conjecture, that is, a guess or inference based on some supposed possibility or probability of a fact. In this case có thể' corresponds to may in English. Whereas with theoretical possibility, the speaker is theorizing about a possibility in general, rather than talking about its actual occurrence. Here a strong notion of hypothesis and conditionality is included. Có thể'in this sense corresponds to can in English:

**Factual possibility**
- Họ có thể đang làm việc thư viện.
  They may still do task in library
- Họ có thể làm việc thư viện.
  They may be still working in the library
- Có thể làm việc thư viện.
  It's possible that they are still working in the library.

**Theoretical possibility**
- Trời lạnh có thể làm chết hoa màu.
  Cold weather can make dead crop
- Có thể làm chết hoa màu.
  It's possible for cold weather to kill crops

When used for factual possibility, có thể' can also occur initially preceding the subject of the sentence. Now it behaves very much like attitudinal disjuncts in English, such as perhaps, maybe, possibly etc.
- Có thể ông ta là người Pháp.

Maybe he be person French

Maybe (perhaps) he is French

Có thể', like can and may in English, can also be used for permission:

- Anh có thể sử dụng những tài liệu này.
  you can use plural document this
  chư báo cáo của anh
  for report of you

You can use these documents for your report.

- Tôi có thể hút thuốc ở đây (được) không?
  I can smoke in here (possible) not
  May I smoke here?

2.3.9 Được, Bi, Phái

2.3.9.1 Được, Bi, Phái as Modal Auxiliaries

The three items được, bi, phải all have in them a passive meaning. They indicate that the subject of the sentence has a recipient or passive role rather than an active one.

In this study, these three items are treated as modal auxiliaries on the ground that they not only help to form passive sentences in Vietnamese, but also show the speaker's attitude towards the proposition he is asserting: được conveys the idea that what is expressed
by the predication is good or advantageous to the subject of the sentence, while **bi** and **phải** suggest the opposite, implying that the event or state expressed by the predication is bad or unpleasant. Although many sentences with **duộc**, **bi**, **phải** can be translated into English with active constructions, there is usually the implication that the proposition is made possible because of some agent distinct from the subject. Thus in:

- **Nó duốc sống với những người tử tế**.
  He's lucky to live with respectable people.

The speaker means to say that someone makes it possible for the subject (he) to do so, and he likes it.

Whereas in:

- **Tôi bi làm việc với một người ngu ngốc**,  
  I have to work with a stupid person.

There is the implication that someone has caused me to work with that stupid person, and I don't like it.

Similarly in:

- **Họ phải học thuộc lòng đoạn văn này**,  
  They had to learn this passage by heart.

We can infer that perhaps their teacher made them do so, and they didn't like it.
3.3.9.2 Passive Constructions With Được, Bi, Phải

Được, bi, and sometimes phải when used with transitive verbs help to make up what may be called "passive sentences" in Vietnamese. These passive sentences correspond to passive constructions in English where a form of the auxiliary be is used before the past participle of the main verb. Like English, the subject of the passive Vietnamese sentence is now on the "receiving end" of the process, that is, it is acted upon rather than performing the action. In this passive function, được and bi are much more common than phải:

- Cuốn sách đã được dịch ra nhiều thứ tiếng.
  The book has been translated into many languages.
- Ngôi nhà bị phá ngày hôm qua.
  The house was destroyed yesterday.
- Ai phải phạt tuần trước?
  Who was punished last week?

The passive sentences above contrast with:

- Chúng tôi đã dịch cuốn sách ra nhiều
  We have translated the book into many
  thứ tiếng.
  kind language
  We have translated the book into many languages.
- Họ phá ngôi nhà ngay hôm qua.
  they destroy house yesterday

  They destroyed the house yesterday

- Tuần trước thầy giáo phạt ai?
  week before teacher punish who

  Whom did the teacher punish last week?

in which there are no bi, được and phải and the subject of the sentence is the doer of the action. When it is necessary to mention an agent, the agent is to appear immediately after được and bi before the main verb. Thus

"Người Việt Nam xây dựng thành Thăng Long cách đây hơn 1000 năm"

1000 year

The Vietnamese first built the City of Thanglong more than 1000 years ago.

can be changed into passive as:

Thành Thăng long được người Việt Nam xây dựng
city Thang long win man Vietnamese build
cách đây hơn 1000 năm.
separate now more 1000 year

The city of Thang Long was first built by the Vietnamese more than 1,000 years ago.

The corresponding English passive construction has a by-phrase expressing agency. Other examples:
Active:
- Một số nhà nghiên cứu đã hiểu sai
  one number expert already understand wrong
nguồn gốc tác phẩm này.
origin work this
Some experts have mistaken the origin of this work

Passive:
- Ngồn gốc tác phẩm này đã bị một
  origin work this already suffer one
số nhà nghiên cứu hiểu sai.
number expert understand wrong
The origin of this work has been mistaken by
some experts.

Apart from được, bị, phải, passivity in Vietnamese
can also be realized with the word do, which literally
means by, owing to. However, this type of construction
is not very common. A passive sentence with do can also
be translated into English by using a passive construction
consisting of be + past participle:
- Đây là ngôi nhà đẹp nhất thành phố chúng tôi.
  this is house beautiful most city we
Ngôi nhà do những công nhân làm nghề
house by plural worker experienced
xây dựng.
build
This is the most beautiful building in our city. It was built by very skillful workers.

Although a do-construction can be used as an independent sentence as the example above, it is more common as a postmodifying clause to a noun head of a complex noun phrase. In this function, it corresponds to a past participle modifying clause or a nominal relative clause in English:

- Những thí nghiệm do hai nhà khoa học đó thực hiện có giá trị thực tế lớn.

The experiments conducted by those two scientists have great practical value.

- Những tư liệu do các anh cung cấp rất bồi ích cho công trình của chúng tôi.

Those facts that you supplied are very useful to our research.

3.3.9.3 Voice Distinction in Vietnamese

Since Vietnamese is a purely isolating language, there is no voice distinction in the form of the verb itself. This is different from English, in which there is a contrast between active and passive, as in:
- The man *training* the pilot is my uncle (active)
- The man *trained* by the pilot is my uncle (passive)
- The man *to investigate* the case is Bill (active)
- The case *to be investigated* is a difficult one (passive).

Such a contrast can be realized in Vietnamese by means of *được*, *bi*, *do*:

**Active:**

- Người duyệt cuốn sách này là ông Nam.
  
  The man examining the book is Mr. Nam.

**Passive:**

- Cuốn sách được (do) ông Nam duyệt là một cuốn sách về hóa học.
  
  The book examined by Mr. Nam is a book about chemistry.

**Active:**

- Người sẽ giải quyết vấn đề là ông Ba.
  
  The man to solve the problem is Mr. Ba.

**Passive:**

- Vấn đề sẽ được ông Ba giải quyết liên quan đến nhiều người ở đây.
  
  The issue will be solved by Mr. Ba concerning to many people here.
The problem to be solved by Mr. Ba concerns many people here.

However, in cases where a passive meaning is obvious düơc, bi can be omitted. Here a passive form is again necessary in the English translation:

- Thái độ đó cần phê phán.
  attitude that need criticize
  Such an attitude should be criticized.
- Tiết mục trình diễn kém quá.
  item perform bad very
  The item was performed very badly.

Dược, bi in their passive function can also be used in subordinate clauses without subject, most commonly in time clauses, conditional clauses and concessive clauses introduced by khi (when), nếu (if) and mặc dù (although). These are equivalent to past participle clauses of time, condition and concession without subject in English:

- Khi được vận dụng, phương pháp đó đã
  when win apply method that already
t'o ra có hiệu quả.
  prove have effect
  When applied the method proved to be effective.
- Khi bị hỏi về vấn đề đó nó trở nên
  when suffer ask about matter that he become
  lúng túng.
  embarrassed.
When asked about the matter he became embarrassed.

- Nếu được mời tôi sẽ tham gia.
  if win invite I will participate
  If invited I'll participate.

- Mặc dù bị mọi người phê phán ông ta although suffer everybody criticize he
  vẫn giữ ý kiến của mình.
  still keep opinion of self
  Although criticized by everybody he kept holding
  to his opinion.

3.3.9.4 Sentences with Người Ta Subject and Other Impersonal Constructions

Although passivity can be realized with được, bị, phải, the use of passive clauses with these items is by far less common than the use of passive constructions in English. When Vietnamese speakers want to be less committed to what they say, they tend to use sentences with the người ta (one, people in general) subject. These sentences can be translated into English with passive constructions:

- Người ta thấy đứa bé chạy vào vườn.
  one see child run into garden
  The child was seen running into the garden.

- Người ta tin rằng cuốn sách được viết.
  one believe that book win write
The book is believed to have been written in the 15th century.

Sentences with the *người ta* subject are commonly used in Vietnamese in cases where specification of agency is not necessary. Such sentences can be translated into English with passive it-constructions:

- Xưa kia người ta cho rằng quá đất là trung tâm của vũ trụ.
  
  In the old times it was believed that the Earth was the centre of the universe.

Again, impersonal constructions in Vietnamese of the type *cô thế cho rằng, cần lưu ý là* etc. can also be rendered into English with passive it-constructions:

- Có thể cho rằng hút thuốc là lạt một trong những nguyên nhân dẫn đến ung thư phổi.
  
  It can be thought (assumed) that smoking cigarette is one of the causes leading to cancer of the lungs.
It should be noted that many chain smokers suffer from cancer of the lungs.

3.3.9.5 Đỗc, Bi, Phái as Full Verbs

Đỗc, bi, phái, apart from being used as passive markers, can also occur as full verbs acting as head of the verb phrase. Đỗc corresponds to win, gain, acquire etc. and bi, phái are equivalent to suffer, undergo, have (something unpleasant) in English:

- **Nó đỗc số số’**.
  he win lottery
  He won in a lottery
- **Vùng nay bi bão luôn**.
  region this suffer storm often
  This part of the country often suffers from tempests
- **Sáng nay nó phái cảm’**.
  morning this he suffer cold
  He had (caught) a cold this morning
3.4 Attitudinal Disjuncts in Vietnamese

3.4.1 The Attitudinal Disjunct in the Sentence

Attitudinal disjuncts are used to show the speaker's attitude towards the proposition in terms of its truth-value, that is, they express the extent to which the speaker believes what he is saying is true. These disjuncts are common in initial position, but they can occur medially as well:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Co le no rât giau} & \quad \text{maybe he very rich} \\
\text{No có le rât giau} & \quad \text{he maybe very rich} \\
\text{Maybe he is very rich}
\end{align*}
\]

3.4.2 Two Groups of Attitudinal Disjuncts

Two groups of attitudinal disjuncts in Vietnamese can be distinguished: group A includes those items expressing conviction, and group B consists of those items expressing some degree of doubt.

3.4.2.1 Group A.

The most common disjuncts of group A are: chắc (răng), j, chắc (là), han (là), chắc han, nhất định (là), at han (surely, certainly), rõ ràng là, hiện nhiên là (clearly,
obviously), qua là, đúng là (indeed, really) etc. 

Like English, these disjuncts are common in initial position. In translating them into English, usually the corresponding English disjuncts (such as certainly, obviously) can be used, but an it-construction is also possible:

- Hắn là nó không muốn bị cô lập.
  Surely he not want suffer isolate
  Surely he doesn't want to be isolated.

or

- Rõ ràng là tiếng Việt đã thay đổi
don't want to be isolated.
  obviously language Vietnamese already change
  Vietnamese has undergone many changes
  in the past 50 years

or

- Rõ ràng là tiếng Việt đã thay đổi
  obviously language Vietnamese already change
  Vietnamese has undergone many changes
  in the past 50 years

or

- Rõ ràng là tiếng Việt đã thay đổi
  obviously language Vietnamese already change
  Vietnamese has undergone many changes
  in the past 50 years

3.4.2.2 Group B

Group B disjuncts express some degree of doubt.
Here belong có thể (là), có lẽ (là), để thay đổi (là) (maybe, perhaps, possibly), không thể nào, không có lẽ (it's not possible that, it is unlikely that), hình như (là) (it seems that, it looks as if) etc. These disjuncts are common in initial position. In translating them into
English, the corresponding English disjuncts such as maybe, perhaps, seemingly etc. can be used. Also, it-constructions of the type it is possible that, it seems, it is unlikely that etc. are again possible:

- Có thể (là) nó chưa đi.
  maybe that he not yet go
  Maybe he hasn't left yet.

- Hình như nó nói được cả tiếng Pháp
  seemingly he speak possible also language French
  It seems he is able to speak French too

- Không thể (nào) có chuyện này.
  not possible at all have story this
  It is impossible that such a thing could have happened.

- Không lẽ (nào) nó lại dài đột như vậy.
  not possible at all he again stupid as that
  It is unlikely that he could be so stupid

The compound item cùng nên, which always occurs finally, is used for conjecture with some degree of doubt. Cùng nên can be translated into English by may, maybe or it is possible that:

- Nó đang sống ở Hà Nội cùng nên.
  he still live in Hanoi also likely
  He may be living in Hanoi now.
  or - Maybe he's living in Hanoi now
  or - It is possible that he's living in Hanoi now.
3.5 Vietnamese Conditional Constructions

Clauses of condition are introduced by **nếu** (if), the word itself being neutral, in the sense that it can be used both for **open condition** and **hypothetical condition**:

- **Nếu** trời đẹp chúng tôi sẽ đi.
  
  if sky beautiful we will go
  
  *If* the weather is fine, *we'll* go.
  
  (open condition)

- **Nếu** hôm qua trời đẹp (thì) chúng tôi đã đi.
  
  if yesterday sky beautiful (then) we already go
  
  *If* the weather had been fine yesterday we'd have gone.
  
  (hypothetical condition)

**Whereas** in English, the distinction between open condition and hypothetical condition is indicated with a verb form, there is no such indication in the Vietnamese verb itself. The question of the fulfilment or non-fulfilment of the condition, and hence the truth of the proposition expressed by the main clause, is solved in Vietnamese by the context of the communication. Thus, without a situational setting, a Vietnamese conditional construction often admits of two interpretations, one implying an open condition and one a hypothetical condition. The following sentence, when given in isolation, can be understood in two ways:
(a) If he reads this letter, he will understand our attitude
(open condition: it is quite possible that he will read the letter, and if so, he will understand our attitude)

(b) If he read this letter, he would understand our attitude.
(hypothetical condition: it may be the case that he is so angry with us that he will never bother to read the letter. But suppose he read it, he would understand our attitude)

The Vietnamese student should be aware of such difference between Vietnamese and English in order to avoid mistakes in expressing open and hypothetical conditions in English.

However, although there is no distinction in the Vietnamese verb as regards the question of fact or non-fact, hypothetical conditions can be expressed in Vietnamese with the subordinators gia du (nhu), gia thu (nhu), vi thu, neu nhu etc. Clauses introduced by these subordinators correspond to clauses of hypothetical condition in English, in which the so-called
"modal past" is used:

- Gia` du nhu n` thay doi y` kien, chung ta
  supposing as he change opinion we
  sẽ phải làm gì?
  will must do what

  Supposing he changed his mind, what should we do?
- Vi` thu` chi có may` nguoi` nay`, cong vi`ec
  supposing only have several person this, task
  đã` khong tien hanh du`oc.
  already not undertake possible
  Had there been only these people the work would
  not have been done.

A negative condition is expressed with tru` phi
  corresponding to unless in English:

- Toi` se` khong cho phép tru` phi` co`
  I will not give permission unless have
  y` kien` cua` thu` truong`.
  opinion of boss

  I'll never give permission unless I have a word
  from the director himself.
Chapter 3 Footnote:

(1) We owe a debt here to Truong Van Chinh (1970: Chapter XIII) and Dai Xuan Ninh (1978: Chapter II) for discussions of modality markers in Vietnamese.
CHAPTER 4.

CONCLUSION

SOME IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING TIME AND MODALITY IN ENGLISH TO VIETNAMESE STUDENTS

4.1 In the previous chapters, we presented a description of how time and modality are expressed in Vietnamese and how such expressions can be rendered into English. In doing so we hope we have pointed out some areas where Vietnamese and English appear to differ most fundamentally from each other. In teaching English grammar to Vietnamese students we think it an important task for the teacher to discover the differences between English and Vietnamese, since these differences are usually the causes of problems that hinder the students' progress. This is the position adopted by Lado (1957:2) when he says:

We assume that the student who comes in contact with a foreign language will find some features of it quite easy and others extremely difficult. Those elements that are similar to his native language will be simple for him, and those elements that are different will be difficult.

Although it may be the case that not all features of the target language which are different from the learner's mother tongue are difficult for him to learn, our experience in teaching English to Vietnamese speakers has shown that differences more often than not do constitute
problems. In fact, many of the errors made by Vietnamese students can be explained in terms of mother tongue interference. In this respect, Pit Corder (1973:283-284) seems to be aware of the situation when he says:

It is generally maintained, and I have assumed it up to now, that many errors show signs of the influence of the mother tongue or other language possessed by the learner ... If you regard language as a matter of habit, then what he has resort to are the habits of his mother tongue ...

In view of the importance of differences between Vietnamese and English, we would like to draw the teacher's attention to the following points of English grammar, which, since they are so different from Vietnamese, are very likely among the most difficult features for Vietnamese students.

4.2 Apparently, the greatest difference between Vietnamese and English as regards time and modality is that while time and occurrence are two inter-related systems of English grammar (see Penhallurick: A Form-Content Analysis of the Modern English Systems of Time and Occurrence), it seems as if there are no such grammatical systems in Vietnamese, where the notions of time and mood are expressed by means of words, whose forms remain unchanged no matter in what contexts they happen to be used. Thus attention should first of all be given to the different tense-forms of the English verb. Distinction should first
be made between the simple present and the simple past, with emphasis on the formation of the latter including both regular verbs and irregular verbs. Next, students should be taught other compound forms, such as:

- have + past participle;
- be + present participle;
- be + going + to infinitive; etc.

The different forms of the modal auxiliaries (will - would; can - could; may - might; etc...) and their co-occurrence with other verbs should also be given particular attention.

Let me hasten to explain that by suggesting "attention should first of all be given to the different tense-forms", I do not in the least mean to say that one can neglect or overlook the question of the different uses of these forms. Rather, I believe that teaching forms should never be separated from teaching the uses of the forms. In fact, it would make no sense to make students produce one form after another without their understanding what the form means and what communicative function it performs. But since form changes in English are a morphological feature that does not exist in Vietnamese, it is a necessary procedure to acquaint students with that characteristic feature of English, especially at the beginning of their study.
4.3 Now for the uses of the forms. Most of authors of previous works on tense and mood in English seem to share the assumption that it is not possible to find a constant meaning signalled by each form and that units of form and meaning can be set up independently of each other. From that starting point, description of the semantics of the items in question is done in terms of multiple uses. Authors like Nesfield, Palmer, Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, Startvik all seem to have adopted that approach.

However, such an approach towards form and meaning is not the only approach. Other linguists, such as Perkin, Joos, Penhallurick, have argued that the normal relation between form and meaning in human languages is one-to-one: one form has a constant meaning; the association between a form and a certain message can be explained by postulating a constant meaning from which the message categories can be derived in some way. (See Penhallurick: A Form-Content Analysis of the Modern English Systems of Time and Occurrence).

In our opinion, while the first approach may seem to derive from a rather inappropriate theory, the multiple use solution may have certain significance and value, especially from the point of view of heuristic, practical purposes. In teaching English to Vietnamese speakers, we think it necessary to show the learner in what cases
a form can be used, so that with knowledge of the many "uses" of the form, he may achieve the ability to handle the form in appropriate contexts.

Strictly speaking, it is the different categories of messages that the teacher of English is now dealing with. One form can be used in different contexts to convey messages of different kinds. The so-called simple present, for instance, can be used for:

a) A state or event the extension of which into past and future time is not limited, as in:
   - Speech is silver, but silence is gold.
   - Many people in Asia live on rice.

b) A habitual action, as in:
   - He gets up early everyday.
   - Bill goes to work by bus.

c) An event simultaneous with the present moment, as in:
   - Here comes the train.
   - What do you mean?

d) A future event, as in:
   - The delegation leaves next Friday.
   - If he goes tomorrow we'll let him use the car.

e) A past happening, as in:
   - She tells me you are in trouble.

Actually, (a), (b), (c), (d), (e) are the most common five kinds of message that the simple present is
capable of conveying.

In principle, the teacher should show students all these kinds of messages, but not all of them at once. It is advisable that one kind should be taught at a time, and only after this kind has been learned and mastered by the students, then another kind can be attempted. Of course, it is necessary to show the students the relationships between these kinds of messages. However, since one kind of message may be more common than the other, it would be reasonable to give the most special attention to the kind that is most commonly used. For instance, of the five kinds above, (a) and (b) would seem to have more frequent use than (d) and (e). Thus more time should be spent on teaching the uses of the simple present denoting general truths and habitual actions.

Teaching the "uses" of tenses and modal auxiliaries in English must be a meaningful exercise. By this is meant that presentation and practice in using them must be done in meaningful contexts and situations, since we can define the kind of message that a form is used to convey only in a definite context. Thus an isolated sentence without a situational setting can be open to ambiguity, where more than one interpretation is possible. For example, the following sentence admits of at least two interpretations:
- He may come.
interpretable as:

a) It's possible that he'll come. (possibility)
b) He is allowed to come. (permission)

Such ambiguity, however, can be avoided if a context is given. Thus, we can infer possibility in:
- Let's wait for him. He may come soon.
but permission in:
- Please tell him he may come any time he likes.
We'd only be very glad to have him here.

4.4 Tense, Aspect and Mood are interrelated categories in English grammar. Discussing the interrelationships of these three categories, Quirk and Greenbaum (1973:40) point out:

Time is a universal, non-linguistic concept with three divisions: past, present and future; by tense we understand the correspondence between the form of the verb and our concept of time. Aspect concerns the manner in which the verbal action is experienced or regarded (for example as completed or in progress), while mood relates the verbal action to such conditions as certainty, obligation, necessity, possibility. In fact, however, to a great extent, these three categories impinge on each other: in particular, the expression of time present and past cannot be considered separately from aspect, and the expression of the future is bound up with mood.

All this leads us to suggesting that teaching tense, aspect and mood should be done together, although usually not more than one teaching point should be attempted at
a time. For instance, teaching expression of future time in English should include teaching the different modal implications that the various ways of expressing futurity may convey. It is necessary to make students aware of the differences between:

a) Harold will arrive tomorrow.
b) Harold is going to arrive tomorrow.
c) Harold is arriving tomorrow.
d) Harold arrives tomorrow.
e) Harold will be arriving tomorrow.
f) Harold may arrive tomorrow.

in which the speaker shows different kinds of attitude towards the proposition he is asserting. The teacher, through his meaningful teaching with clear, appropriate contexts, should bring home to the students the complex interrelationships involving tense, aspect and mood in English.

4.5 In (3.3.9) we presented a description of the use of the auxiliaries đuc, bi, phai in forming passive sentences in Vietnamese. It can be seen in this respect that voice as a grammatical category does not exist in Vietnamese. Đuc, bi, phai, apart from being used as grammatical words to form passive sentences, at the same time seem to have some lexical property in them.

The English passive voice is therefore a point that
should be given particular attention. Since the Vietnamese verb has in itself no voice distinction, and since the use of passive sentences with được, bị, phải is by far less common than the use of passive sentences in English, not to mention the fact that such passive sentences in Vietnamese differ a great deal from English passive sentences, teaching English passive constructions to Vietnamese speakers should be done carefully and extensively. Emphasis should be placed not only on sentence patterns, but also on the use of other past participle constructions in noun phrase modification as well as in clauses of time, condition and concession.

4.6 The last point we would like to draw the teacher's attention to is the use of the traditional "modal past" in English.

Unlike the Vietnamese verb, which always remains morphologically unchanged and so does not have in itself any mood distinction, the contrast between fact and non-fact can be realized in English with different verb-forms, as in:

- Harold is here now (fact)
- I wish Harold were here now (non-fact).

The Vietnamese speaker, on the other hand, does not seem to be so specific about the difference between factual meaning, theoretical meaning and hypothetical
meaning, and in fact Vietnamese grammar has rather limited power for expressing supposition.

The uses of hypothetical verb-forms including modal auxiliaries should therefore be given special attention in teaching English Grammar to Vietnamese students. The following types of construction with hypothetical verb-forms are the most important:

a) Conditional sentences in which unreal conditions are implied, as in:
   - If you told him that he would be very surprised.
   - If Harold had known the rule he wouldn't have made that error.
   - Had she received my note she would have been able to change the plan in time.

b) Dependent clauses of the types
   - It's time we stopped.
   - He talked as if he were my boss.
   - It's as though she were his mother
   - Just suppose we had the power of controlling these forces of nature!
   - If only she hadn't told him everything!
   - I wish I were his brother.
   - I'd rather you went with me.

Again, presenting these forms and practice in using them should be done in meaningful contexts and situations.
4.7 We have suggested some teaching points, which, through our comparison of Vietnamese and English and from our own experience in teaching English grammar to Vietnamese students, are likely to be some of the most difficult areas for the Vietnamese speaker, and therefore should be given the most particular attention. Certainly there are still many other important points that should be discussed, but because of the scope and nature of the present study, they are left untouched here, but we hope we shall have the opportunity to deal with some of them some day.

The teaching of English to Vietnamese speakers does not have a long history, and there are still many things to do and many problems to solve.

One of the many important tasks set for the teacher of English at present is the writing of a pedagogic grammar of English for Vietnamese students based on a thorough, comprehensive contrastive analysis of Vietnamese and English. Of course, such a work will require the wisdom and combined efforts of a number of teachers, and we hope the present study will have some things to contribute to it.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


